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<https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/zwe/ikg/international-conference/>

Symposium 1

Symposium 1: Resources, conflicts and climate change

Armed Groups, Mining, and Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Jotham Talemwa

I explore the occurrence of violence around mining sites in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), focusing on the role of armed groups activities. The DRC's rich mineral resources have led to increased conflict as armed groups fight for control over mining sites and the groups' increased interaction between miners, state bodies, and the armed groups at various mining sites. Using a panel dataset from 1997 to 2023, I found out that armed group ownership of mines increases conflict around a mine. My analysis also reveals that the type of mineral being mined, particularly gold, tin, tungsten, and tantalum, increases conflict occurrence, I attribute this to their high value, easy extraction, and read market. However, pillaging of mines by armed groups does not increase the occurrence of conflict. These findings highlight the relationship between armed group activities, conflict, and mining in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Living from Rivers, Defending with Fish: Armed Violence and Everyday Environmental Defense of Riverine Communities in Post-Peace Agreement Colombia (2021 – 2025)

Laura Betancur Alarcón

After the signing of the Peace Agreement (2016) in Colombia, the realignment of armed structures sparked major disputes over rural territories. Land-based conflicts, such as increasing deforestation in the Amazon, have received special academic and political attention. However, less is known about this period's socio-ecological relations in rivers. Based on ethnographic research, we address this gap by describing the everyday impacts of armed violence on riverine communities and the implications for riverine leadership. Drawing on the political ecology of violence, we focus on the Magdalena River basin, where riverine communities struggle amid evolving patterns of violence, large hydropower, export-oriented agribusinesses, and climate change. Our findings show how armed violence dynamics weaken the role of riverine leaders, eroding processes of collective action in the basin through the disarticulation of community processes and self-imposed constraints by leaders to narrow their advocacy. Against this background, we describe riverine communities' response through their traditional fishing knowledge, demanding their permanence in complex riverscapes.

Symposium 1

Local decision-making in times of accelerated resource extractivism: examples from Indonesia

Saskia Schäfer

This article examines local critiques of elite-driven resource extraction in Indonesia's post-reform liberal democracy, where oligarchs amass wealth at the expense of rural communities. Drawing from comparative political thought, area studies, interviews, and observations, it highlights alternative decision-making practices emerging in Central Sulawesi. Using interviews, observations, and discourse analysis, we (one of the co-authors being a local activist) show how rural women's political education initiatives create spaces for collective governance. The study explores how "demokrasi" has been co-opted to legitimize extractivism, diminishing its credibility among affected communities. By integrating post-development, ecofeminist, and democratic economic planning perspectives, we argue for more inclusive democratic models that foreground economic and environmental concerns. Against the backdrop of Indonesia's autocratization, this study reveals pathways toward democratization that move beyond narrow liberal frameworks, emphasizing the role of marginalized actors in shaping democratic futures.

Land for energy? Evolving conflicts around renewable energy in Colombia, India and Indonesia

Verena Lasso Mena, Chris Höhne, Markus Lederer & Jens Marquardt

Scaling up renewable energy is essential for achieving climate mitigation targets and transitioning to low-carbon societies. Efforts to expand renewables are progressing in both Global North and, increasingly, Global South countries. While crucial for mitigating climate change, its expansion gives rise to local conflicts, particularly over land use. In Colombia, India and Indonesia, renewable energy projects (wind, solar, and geothermal) are being rolled out on land already used for agriculture or holding cultural significance for local communities. Based on fieldwork and qualitative process tracing, this paper explores how these land-use conflicts evolve, under what conditions they may escalate, and how they can be mitigated. Drawing on data from site visits and interviews, we identify patterns of contestation that reflect broader tensions between national climate goals and local realities. These conflicts can undermine social cohesion, fuel political resistance, and in some cases involve threats or acts of violence. At the same time, inclusive planning and recognition of local land rights can reduce tensions and support peaceful transitions. By linking climate change mitigation efforts to emerging conflict dynamics, the paper contributes to a better understanding of the conditions that enable a more just and conflict-sensitive approach to renewable energy expansion.

Symposium 1

Identifying Peace Pathways: How Can Forest Conservation Contribute to Environmental Peacebuilding?

Janpeter Schilling, Rowan Alumasa Alusiola, Rebecca Froese & Paul Klär

A growing body of literature is analysing the conflict implications of forest conservation measures. However, the potential of forest conservation programs to contribute to cooperation and peace has barely been analysed besides individual case studies. We address this research gap in this review through the following question: How can forest conservation measures contribute to environmental peacebuilding? Specifically, we aim to identify so-called “peace pathways” from different case studies in the existing literature. Drawing on Dresse et al.’s (2019) framework, these peace pathways consist of (1) initial conditions, (2) peace mechanisms and, (3) outcomes. Based on a literature review, we select seven case studies and identify eight key peacebuilding approaches: (1) creating spaces for dialogue between community members and external actors; (2) strengthening the social capital of communities; (3) adopting traditional customs and norms; (4) promoting adaptive learning and deliberation; (5) involving communities in participatory action research; (6) initiating a collective choice arrangement system, (7) tackling uncertainty through knowledge sharing, and (8) including a neutral convenor to initiate dialogue processes.

Symposium 2

Symposium 2: Populism and climate change

The climate disaster as a criminological subject? Crime in the context of climate change with a focus on climate protest and its criminalization

Jens Struck

Climate change challenges the field of criminology. This theoretical presentation explores the multi-layered relationship between climate change and deviant behavior, with a particular focus on deviance and criminalization in the context of climate activism. It is necessary to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding climate change as a criminological issue, encompassing environmental crimes, resource scarcity crimes, corporate crimes related to global warming, and deviant behavior such as civil disobedience in climate protests. The main analysis focuses on the criminalization of climate activism and examines how different forms of protest are framed and policed. Using various examples of climate protests (in Germany and international), forms of activism, the dynamics of protest policing and the criminalization processes through political and media framing as well as effects on public perception are discussed.

Christian Fundamentalism and Climate Change Denial: A Socio-Political and Ideological Analysis

Rahel Sarai Kellich

In a period of socio-economic uncertainties and struggles for interpretative sovereignty, individuals seek stability. Conspiracy ideologies, authoritarian structures, and rigid cognitive frameworks serve as outlets for discontent, functioning as counter-movements to liberal democratic impulses. Christian fundamentalism (CF) exemplifies such opposition, often rejecting modern scientific consensus, including climate science. The paper examines the intersection of CF beliefs and climate change denial, focusing on the USA while addressing European trends. It explores how CF teachings foster skepticism toward science, opposing climate protection policies and aligning with broader patterns of anti-modernist sentiment, and conspiratorial thinking. Specifically, it highlights how CF worldviews, rejecting secular scientific authority, often correlate with distrust in democratic institutions and support for political actors opposing climate action. This study fills a research gap in understanding CF movements' role in shaping climate discourse. It provides a theoretical framework for examining how CF beliefs can influence public attitudes toward climate change and environmental policies, contributing to discussions on conflict and division.

Symposium 2

Climate change and Energy Populism

Beate Küpper & Fritz Reusswig

Climate change is highly complex, invisible and insidious, but harbours existential force. Psychologically, this constellation is very threatening, but can be easily ignored. Energy transition is concrete, but means massive and expensive changes. This exposes the topic of climate change and energy transition to the temptation of populism that relies on simplification, emotionalisation and personalisation, and tells the story of the people cheated by the corrupt elites and threatened by foreign others. We present an indicator for climate change and energy transition populism, tested empirically in population surveys (Mercator project DEMOKON 2020; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung MITTE Study 2021, 2023, 2025). Climate and energy transition populism is closely correlated with general populism. While de facto affectedness by energy transition measures and poverty is less important, the feeling of being affected, as well as being disadvantaged and treated unfairly are relevant. The general political attitude towards the right spectrum is particularly influential as well as the impression that friends hold similar opinions. Overall, people more progressive than they think of others. We discuss challenges between facts and feelings.

From discrepancy to conflict: Populist strategies in dealing with climate change and climate policies

Fritz Reusswig & Wiebke Lass

For a long time it could seem that sustainability goals such as climate neutrality were rather undisputed in society. The major problem, it seemed, was the discrepancy between claim and reality, be it at the level of 'bad' individual habits, be it at the level of fossil path dependencies. But since a couple of years we observe a rise in open opposition against climate policy and anthropogenic climate change. The success of populist political parties has contributed to a massive polarization of 'green' political issues. Populists openly attack sustainability goals, discrediting them as projects of an 'evil' political elite, supported by 'nefarious' social 'minorities'. They appear and perform as defenders of the 'normal' lifestyle, and they are motivated by fear. On the other hand, they also offer an emotional home for all those that don't accept the moral appeal for sustainability. In our paper, we would like to highlight the growing polarization in climate issues, and we will try to illuminate the emotional facets of this polarization. We argue in favor of using the populist attack as involuntary sustainability learning opportunity.

Symposium 2

How Institutional Trust Shapes Antisemitism and Anti-Israel Attitudes in Sweden: Implications for Climate-Driven Polarization

Liliia Korol & Pieter Bevelander

The study examines antisemitic and anti-Israel attitudes in Sweden using survey data from 3,507 participants, identifying three distinct attitudinal profiles, including Neutral Moderates (low antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes), Critical Engagers (low antisemitism, moderate anti-Israel attitudes), and Distrustful Skeptics (high antisemitism and anti-Israel attitudes). Our analysis emphasizes Critical Engagers, whose moderate critique of Israeli government policies is significantly influenced by trust in government and media, reflecting Sweden's prevailing institutional narratives. Conversely, Distrustful Skeptics exhibit elevated levels of antisemitism, conspiracy beliefs, and prejudicial attitudes, signaling how institutional distrust might fuel polarization and societal conflict. The study underscores the critical role of institutional trust and media credibility in moderating societal polarization, which is highly relevant in the contexts of increasing misinformation, conspiracy myths, and ideological divisions—including those intensified by climate change. Understanding these profiles and underlying trust dynamics provides valuable insights into reducing polarization and conflict through targeted institutional communication and educational interventions, thus offering broader implications for managing climate-related conflicts and misinformation.

Symposium 3

Symposium 3: Societies in times of climate change: discourses and perceptions

Conflictual “nature” restoration and the politics of “green” rehabilitation narratives: A semiotic landscape study of Tagebau Hambach

Maida Kosatica

Tagebau Hambach, the world's largest opencast lignite mine, is a site of ongoing conflict where climate change, political struggle, and environmental destruction intersect. Associated with one of the dirtiest forms of energy, the open pit coal mining operation obliterates the entire ecosystem and triggers fierce disputes over land use, energy policy, and climate justice. Despite this, the mine has been repurposed as a tourist site, with visitors engaging in recreational activities while observing the massive excavation. The Aussichtspunkt Terra Nova observation deck exemplifies this paradox, sustaining the destruction-rehabilitation nexus and distinctively requesting a gaze at one of the largest man-made hole in the world. Grounded in the semiotic landscape approach (Jaworski & Thurlow, 2010), this study analyzes visual and material representations of Tagebau Hambach to examine how the transformation of environmental destruction into a tourist spectacle depoliticizes the environmental conflict.

Ideological Conflicts: Environmental Countermovements in Western Canada

Ashley Kohl

Climate change discourse in Alberta, Canada is deeply divisive. Ideological conflicts extend beyond environmental concerns to questions of identity, sovereignty, and the province's future. This research examines how pro-resource industry advocates and environmental countermovement supporters articulate and justify resistance to climate policies and environmental activism. Drawing on in-depth interviews and observations at rallies and public events, I explore how environmental skepticism, petronationalism, and anti-federalist sentiment fuel opposition to climate action. My findings highlight how western alienation – deeply embedded in Alberta's political consciousness – drives narratives of economic victimization and perceived threats to provincial autonomy. Many participants see climate initiatives not just as economic threats but as existential challenges to Albertan identity itself. The rhetoric of sovereignty and resistance against “globalist ideologues” has further solidified opposition to climate policies, deepening political polarization and undermining environmental initiatives. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for addressing regional grievances and fostering productive climate discourse in resource-dependent economies.

Symposium 3

Climate Injustice and Self-Settled Syrians in Ankara: Rising Vulnerabilities in an Era of Climate Change and Urban Conflict

Damila Karagöz

Climate change is not only an environmental crisis but also a driver of socio-political instability, particularly in fragile urban settings where resource scarcity fuels tension. As climate change intensifies extreme weather events and destabilizes food and water supplies, vulnerable populations face increased risks of displacement, economic hardship, and exclusion from essential services. In cities as Ankara, where Syrians and local people compete for limited supplies such as affordable housing and employment, climate-induced scarcity may escalate existing conflicts.

This study, based on 20 in-depth interviews with Syrians and 5 with local residents in Altındağ, Ankara examines how climate change exacerbates urban inequalities and social tensions. Findings reveal that Syrians, already marginalized in housing and labor markets, are particularly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks. As resources dwindle, competition intensifies, reinforcing negative perceptions and, at times, violent conflicts. From an environmental justice perspective, Syrians bear the brunt of climate change despite minimal contribution to its causes. Addressing these challenges requires climate adaptation measures and conflict-sensitive policies.

Examining the Effect of Conflict on Pregnancy Outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa: A Geospatial Analysis

Sarah Paul

Africa has one of the highest rates of adverse maternal health outcomes globally. A significant portion of these adverse outcomes in Africa occur in countries with recent histories of armed conflict and political instability. Yet, the impact of armed conflict on pregnancy outcomes on the continent remains poorly understood. This study aims to investigate this relationship. We hypothesize that proximity to conflict adversely impacts pregnancies and births. We tested our hypothesis by analyzing 21 years of maternal health data from women in 17 sub-Saharan African countries. Data was sourced from the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) and correlated with conflict events using the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Georeferenced Event Dataset. Our findings indicate that proximity to conflict events is associated with higher pregnancy terminations and low birth sizes. We discuss these findings and their implications for policy.

Symposium 4

Symposium 4: Violent conflicts & climate change

Why do some rebel groups fragment while others do not?

Amelie Freiberg

Why do some rebel groups fragment while others do not? Previous research suggests that rebel socialisation influences fragmentation. Socialisation methods, such as conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), can increase cohesion but also lead to fragmentation, while non-violent methods, like political education, can achieve similar cohesion without the fragmentation risk. This paper argues that political education, due to its top-down nature, better ties fighters to the rebel organization and is preferred by leaders. I test these claims using data from the novel Socialisation and Political Education in Rebel Groups project (1989-2021) on African rebel groups. The findings help predict rebel fragmentation and the occurrence of rebel violence and CRSV.

The Burden of War and Environmental Fragility: The Case of Sudan

Mohammed Gebrail & Anke Höffler

Sudan's ongoing war between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has created an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, yet its full human, economic and environmental costs remain unknown. Since the conflict erupted in April 2023 has caused over 150,000 deaths and displaced an estimated 11.4 million, with over 3 million fleeing to neighboring countries. Millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) live in safer Sudanese states, but lack access to adequate shelter and livelihoods. This paper estimates the war's economic burden. Using cross-country comparisons (De Groot et al., 2022) and the Synthetic Control Method, we construct a counterfactual to assess Sudan's economic trajectory in the war's absence. Additionally, drawing on Hoeffler & Fearon (forthcoming), we evaluate the human cost of death. Preliminary findings suggest a GDP contraction of at least 20% per year, with the human cost of direct deaths alone ranging from 15-45% of GDP. Beyond economic losses, we indicate the environmental fragility exacerbated by mass displacement. IDPs place significant strain on climate adaptation strategies by disrupting traditional livelihoods and intensifying competition for resources in host communities.

Symposium 4

Introducing Remote Sensing as a Tool in Climate Change – Conflict Studies

Sarah Feldmann & Franka Braun

In times of conflict, environmental changes, specifically in agriculture can be observed. Such changes can be traced back to conflict-related factors. Additionally, changes in the environment can be further disturbed by climate change which increases the frequency of extreme weather events and makes the conditions for crop production even harder. During conflict, access to food is often limited, which is why the local agricultural production is even more relevant for the local population. To examine the linkage between the different drivers of agricultural changes in the context of climate change and conflicts, we used satellite data to examine regions that have become inaccessible due to ongoing conflict circumstances. Our research focuses on rural areas in northwestern Syria, as these areas are often underrepresented in media coverage. We used remote sensing data to assess agricultural changes, vegetational health and the development of croplands, while comparing insights to climate data. Our findings emphasize the potential of remote sensing data to understand the link between climate change and conflict from a new perspective but also point out the importance of framing these results also within a political context.

CANVAS: A large-scale interdisciplinary project to investigate children's attitudes and norms around violence in the societies they live in

Katharina Gößmann

Violence in childhood is a global human rights and health concern. In light of wide international variation in what acts of violence are considered normal, acceptable or common, CANVAS aims to find out how violent acts are harmful to children when they are not perceived as 'violence' and thus considered 'normative'. Using ongoing cohort studies in Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda, Haiti and Pakistan and cross-sectional data from 96 countries, we explore how children define 'normative' acts of violence in a range of contexts, and the extent to which social norms, individual attitudes, and processing styles around violence affect the associations between violence and health, education, labor, and biomarker outcomes. Focusing on violent acts that are routine and commonplace seems relevant in a globalized world, as crises on structural levels and associated stress are likely to add to peoples' tendency for routine behaviors including interpersonal violence. This holds true not least in light of climate change, a global crisis that triggers more structural and social issues. We will present what has been achieved exploring children's and adolescents' individual cognitive appraisals and emotional reactions to experience of normative violence.

Symposium 5

Symposium 5: Gender and health as lenses to understand climate change-related processes

Climate change denial in Europe: Exploring the role of threatened masculinity and subgender backlash

Christiane Lübke & Anne-Kristin Kuhnt

Climate change denial in Europe: Exploring the role of threatened masculinity and gender backlash: The deep social conflict over climate change is most evident in the widespread denial of its existence and human causes. While the extent of climate change denial varies between countries, studies consistently show that men are generally more likely than women to deny/downplay anthropogenic climate change (often referred to as the white male effect). It has been hypothesized that a gender backlash contributes to these differences. Men are thought to be more likely to deny climate change as a way of dealing with perceived threats to their status and identity. However, evidence supporting this hypothesis has mainly come from individual countries, and it remains uncertain whether these findings can be generalized across European countries. Using data from the European Social Survey (Round 11), we examine how feelings of threatened masculinity and anti-feminist attitudes are related to climate change denial among men in 24 European countries. Our results from descriptive and multilevel analyses show that climate change denial is associated with a gendered backlash, although the magnitude of the effect varies across countries.

Compounding Crises: Mental Health Impacts of Climate Variability and Conflict on Refugee Mothers and Young Children in Uganda

Jonathan Hall & Stefan Döring

This study investigates the mental health consequences of climate variability and armed conflict for refugee mothers and their 3- to 4-year-old children (N=3,240) in Uganda's Nakivale and Rhino settlements. Drawing on baseline survey data, we assess exposure to traumatic events, including conflict and climate-related shocks, while controlling for a comprehensive set of socio-demographic factors. To enhance validity, we integrate self-reported data with geographically and temporally matched records of conflict events and climate hazards from refugees' places of origin. Our analysis addresses two objectives: (1) evaluating how these external stressors predict mental health outcomes, and (2) exploring interaction effects to determine if multiple stressors amplify psychological distress. Results reveal the compounding toll of environmental and conflict-related stressors on mental health, offering critical insights into the psychological burdens of climate change and conflict. These findings inform mental health interventions and refugee support programs for similarly affected populations.

Symposium 5

Condemnation, guilt and hope Religion and religious motifs as a layer in the climate conflict – obstacle or opportunity for reconciliation?

Georg Bucher

The social conflicts that the climate crisis has sparked and intensified are accompanied by struggles for the discursive dominance of metaphors and interpretations and their emotion-generating as well as their emotion-regulating effects. Religious motives play a central role here. Fear-related apocalyptic scenarios and semantics of guilt on the one hand or placating invocations of exclusive world salvation by God on the other hand can be observed. This even applies to non-religious actors. The presentation proposed here is given from a christian-theological speaker's position in an interdisciplinary context. Significant examples for religious motives within the international climate discourse will be analyzed on the methodological basis of the sociology of knowledge approach to discourse (SKAD). The core thesis is that certain conflict dynamics of the climate crisis can hardly be understood without religious hermeneutics. It will become clear that religion, religious institutions and religious rhetoric can have both a conflict-intensifying and a conflict-mitigating influence. Religious and interreligious education plays a key role in the latter. It is also crucial that theologies and theories of religious pedagogy open up to global ecological issues in order to become a resource for dealing with climate conflicts in the scientific community and in people's everyday lives. Finally, concrete perspectives are presented for both aspects by linking theology and action research.

The Gendered Wounds of Conflict: How Trauma Type Shapes Mental Health in Children and Adolescents

Florian Scharpf, Lars Dumke & Tobias Hecker

Objective: This study examined the moderating role of gender in the associations between cumulative exposure to interpersonal trauma (IPT) and noninterpersonal trauma (NIPT) and mental health outcomes in children and adolescents in conflict-affected areas. **Method:** Based on a sample of 980 children (rangeage = 6–12, Mage = 9.60, 471 girls) and 472 adolescents (rangeage = 13–18, Mage = 15.26, 218 girls) living in or near conflict-affected regions (Burundi, Northern Uganda, Iraq, Syria, and Sri Lanka), multigroup path analyses were conducted to examine whether cumulative exposure to IPT and NIPT was differentially associated with mental health problems (posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, internalizing and externalizing problems) in girls and boys. **Results:** Among adolescents, higher cumulative exposure to IPT was significantly more strongly associated with posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms in girls than in boys, and higher cumulative exposure to NIPT was significantly associated with externalizing problems in girls only. Among children, all independent associations between types of trauma exposure and mental health problems were significant and did not differ between girls and boys. **Conclusions:** The findings suggest that female vulnerability to traumatic stress after IPT exposure occurs in adolescence.

Symposium 6

Symposium 6: Political systems & ecological transformations

Socio-economic inequality and attitudes towards ecological sustainability: The moderating role of participation in a major sport event

Pamela Wicker, Lara Lesch & Christoph Breuer

The political fight against climate change requires favorable attitudes towards ecological sustainability in the population. This study examines the socio-economic correlates of such attitudes and the moderating role of participation in the UEFA EURO 2024. At the event, various measures were undertaken to promote ecological sustainability, meaning that experiencing some of these measures by participating in event-related activities (watching games at live sites, visiting a fan zone or a football village) might be a mechanism through which attitudes might be altered. Also, such participation might contribute to individuals' social capital, another predictor of environmental attitudes. The empirical analysis uses data from a representative post-event survey of the German resident population (n=10,934). The regression results (outcome: attitudes towards ecological sustainability) support the typical effects of socio-economic characteristics, creating potential for social conflicts. Participation in event-related activities has a moderating role, with all socio-economic characteristics turning insignificant or even positive. Thus, hosting major sport events can reduce social inequalities in environmental attitudes.

Does the Future Have a Lobby? Environmental Responsibility towards Future Generations

Isabell Diekmann

The climate crisis poses a significant threat to young people, with projections indicating that children today will experience the year 2100 and its associated challenges, e.g., more frequent extreme weather events and rising temperatures. As a result, young people are calling for intergenerational justice through protests and legal actions. This leads to a growing significance of the "today-tomorrow" inequality arena (Mau et al. 2023). This study examines intergenerational justice by exploring perceived environmental responsibility of current generations toward future ones. 77% of respondents are willing to reduce their living standards to protect the environment for future generations. Key predictors include perceiving climate change as a threat, acknowledging current impacts, and engaging in environmental stewardship. Religious individuals show greater responsibility than nonreligious ones. Surprisingly, trust in technological progress is (weakly) positively associated with intergenerational responsibility. The findings offer valuable insights into determinants of perceived responsibility, enhancing our understanding of intergenerational justice in the climate crisis and offering guidance on preventing intergenerational conflicts.

Symposium 6

Climate Change as a Catalyst for Non-State Armed Groups: Resource Scarcity and Radicalization in the Fragile States

Daniel Chigudu

Climate change exacerbates resource scarcity, particularly in fragile states with weak governance structures and limited social safety nets. This study, which values diverse perspectives, explores climate-induced resource depletion and the rise of non-state armed groups (NSAGs), focusing on how environmental stressors like water shortages catalyze radicalization. Using case studies from the Sahel region and East Africa, the research highlights how NSAGs exploit local grievances over resource access to strengthen their influence. According to the findings, NSAGs frequently present themselves as alternative governing structures and offer vital resources like food, water, and protection in return for allegiance. Due to this feedback cycle, conflict is exacerbated by climate-induced shortage, which further erodes state capacity and makes it possible for NSAGs to flourish. This study offers practical policy suggestions grounded in interdisciplinary methodologies, emphasizing the value of diverse perspectives. These include encouraging regional collaboration to address transboundary environmental concerns and incorporating climate adaptation measures into counter-radicalization initiatives.

Restorative Justice and the Kurdish Conflict: Preparing for Peace in Turkey

Dadlez Sabak

The Kurdish conflict, marked by cycles of violence and peace efforts, has resisted lasting resolution through traditional retributive and transitional justice approaches. This study, based on my master's thesis, explores restorative justice as an alternative, focusing on its role as a preparatory mechanism for peacebuilding and a complement to traditional justice. Engaging with global critiques of retributive justice and contextualizing them within the Kurdish experience, this research addresses a gap in the literature. Using a case study methodology with secondary data, including civil society reports, multimedia sources, and official documents, it evaluates how restorative practices can foster dialogue, reconciliation, and community healing before formal peace negotiations. As the first comprehensive examination of restorative justice as a framework for addressing the Kurdish conflict, this study offers critical insights into peace preparation and justice debates.

Symposium 7

Symposium 7: Migration & climate change: A macro-perspective on changing patterns and structures

Learning to survive at the borders of nations: Community pedagogies in the face of migratory necropolitics in the Americas

Maria Paulina Arnal

This paper examines the survival strategies developed by migrant communities on their journey to the United States, with a particular focus on children and the processes of learning and training for survival along the migration route. Based on ethnographic research conducted in a migrant shelter in Mexico City, the study explores the causes of forced displacement and the mechanisms of adaptation and resistance that emerge in response to structural violence. The research reveals a fundamental paradox in contemporary migration policy: while authorities and cartels create legal loopholes that force communities onto routes where rape and kidnapping become unwritten norms, a sophisticated pedagogy of survival is simultaneously developed. This pedagogy manifests itself in specific strategies for avoiding detection, avoiding death, managing interactions with authorities, and building community protection networks.

This paper contributes to the literature on migration in contexts of extreme violence, and the findings have critical implications for rethinking policy interventions aimed at protecting the rights of migrant communities and building resilience in host communities.

Navigating the Nexus of Climate Change and Migration Governance: Insights from Meso-Level Actors in Turkey

N. Ela Gokalp Aras

Climate change and migration are increasingly recognized as interconnected global challenges, yet the governance structures addressing these issues often remain fragmented. While climate change is shaping migration patterns through environmental displacement, migration-related institutions have yet to fully integrate climate considerations into their policies and practices. This study explores how state and non-state migration actors in Turkey perceive and engage with climate change, and conversely, how climate-focused institutions view migration as part of their agenda. Drawing on 12 meso-level interviews conducted in Ankara and Istanbul with state and non-state actors, this research provides an empirical assessment of institutional approaches, governance gaps, and emerging policy trends at the intersection of migration and climate change. By shedding light on how migration and climate governance actors in Turkey interact (and fail to interact), this study contributes to a broader understanding of the conflictual, fragmented, and evolving nature of climate-migration governance.

Symposium 7

Justice, Reintegration, and Power Dynamics in Conflict-Affected Northern Nigeria

Peter Thompson

Transitional justice mechanisms are essential in post-conflict societies, aiming to address past atrocities and foster societal healing. Research indicates that voluntary participation in these policies not only enhances satisfaction among stakeholders but also promotes the successful reintegration of offenders and reduces recidivism. With this in mind, we investigate the justice preferences of individuals in North Nigeria, particularly those most affected by the violence perpetrated by Boko Haram. Utilizing survey data from the Borno region in Nigeria, this paper scrutinizes how transitional justice preferences vary depending on the ethnoreligious group's political influence. Our analysis underscores how social rankings intersect with people's inclinations towards different transitional justice approaches, such as retributive and restorative justice. Our findings reveal that in communities like Borno, where religion plays a significant role and victims and offenders often share the same religious identity, perceived political power is strongly correlated with the type of transitional justice people prefer.

Migration and Political Climate Shifts: Who Becomes Most Vulnerable? Latent Profiles of PTSD, and Distress Acutely After the Iranian Bombing of Azadi Camp

Rezhna Mohammed, Sina Neldner, Frank Neuner

Armed conflict, political repression, and forced displacement expose migrants to cumulative stressors, yet psychosocial outcomes remain highly heterogeneous. The present study focuses on a politically targeted refugee population—exiled by Iran due to opposition to the government and further displaced when Iran bombed their camp, accusing them of responsibility for the Jin, Jiyan, Azadī (“Women, Life, Freedom”) revolution. Within this context of politically motivated violence and renewed exile, we apply latent profile analysis (LPA) to examine differential patterns of vulnerability among displaced individuals in Northern Iraq (N = 307). Three key indicators were included: cumulative trauma exposure (TLoad), distress (RHS), and post-traumatic stress symptoms (PCPTSD). Model comparisons retained a three-profile solution: (1) Resilient (low distress, moderate trauma; 40% of sample), (2) Distressed/At-Risk (moderate to high PTSD and distress symptoms; 53%), and (3) Low-Risk (low trauma, low distress; 7%). Multinomial regression showed that gender and age were the strongest predictors of profile membership. Women and younger participants were significantly more likely to fall within the Distressed group, whereas men and older individuals clustered within Resilient and Low-Risk profiles. Surprisingly, higher family separation counts predicted greater likelihood of resilience rather than distress. Closer inspection revealed this apparent paradox to be gendered: mothers separated from children were disproportionately Distressed, while fathers separated from children were more often Resilient. These findings demonstrate that vulnerability is not linearly tied to stressor counts but instead reflects complex interactions between gender, age, and relational roles. The results highlight the limitations of relying solely on cumulative adversity measures in migration research and underscore the need for precision mental health approaches. Tiered care models are recommended, ranging from preventive and community-based support for resilient groups to early intervention and targeted psychosocial services for those most at risk.

Symposium 8

Symposium 8: Social unrest in times of climate change

Threat to personal control as a reinforce of conformity to radical climate protest norms

Fabian Hess

The climate crisis motivates (especially young) people to take collective action, including radical protest (e.g., blocking roads). Acting in line with group norms (either supporting or opposing radical climate protest) may help cope with feelings of threat, such as climate threat. Group-based control theory (Fritzsche, 2022) suggests that norm conformity restores a sense of control through one's social self, particularly when personal control is deprived. Thus, if radicalism is normative for one's ingroup, personal control threat could even increase support of radicalism. We tested this assumption in two 2 × 2 experiments with young Germans (total N = 1,033), manipulating the salience of threat to personal control and whether or not the majority of the "young generation" would support radical climate protest. Across studies, the induction of proradical (vs. nonradical) ingroup protest norms increased support of radical action. Though salient control threat did not accelerate this effect for the overall samples, Study 2 found this interaction effect among highly climate-committed individuals. In other words, for those prioritizing climate action, we detected a social psychological mechanism that may drive polarization in society.

Climate Stressors and Insurgency: A Conflict Analysis of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin

Abiodun Olaleye

The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria epitomizes the complex relationship between climate change, resource scarcity, and violent conflict. The research will investigate how environmental stressors such as desertification, drought, and shrinking water resources in the Lake Chad Basin have contributed to socio-economic deprivation, displacement, and the rise of violent extremism. As the region's agricultural and fishing industries collapse under climate pressure, local communities face increased poverty and food insecurity, creating a fertile ground for Boko Haram's recruitment strategies.

Utilizing conflict analysis and environmental security frameworks, this research explores how climate-induced resource scarcity intensifies competition over land and water, aggravating communal tension and driving vulnerable populations toward insurgent groups. Additionally, it examines the Nigerian state's militarized responses and their impact on exacerbating violence and displacement.

The research contributes to the discourse on climate-security linkages by demonstrating how environmental degradation acts as a conflict multiplier, deepening socio-political grievances and perpetuating cycles of violence.

Symposium 8

Hiking as Radicalisation: Nature, Socialisation, and Far-Right Youth in Germany

Micha Bröckling

As ecological crises intensify and international climate politics are at an impasse, the climate justice movement faces a moment of deep strategic uncertainty. In the context of these challenges, some parts of the movement have discursively or practically explored militant action—the sabotage of infrastructure and private property—to challenge extractive industries and governmental inaction. In light of the prevailing academic emphasis on non-violent climate justice activism—particularly peaceful mass protests and blockades—there is a need to engage with the (de-)legitimation of, and underlying assumptions driving or inhibiting, militant action repertoires. This talk contours a research agenda for engaging with German climate justice groups and their internal debates around militant action forms. Herein, it will draw on first interviews with activists to investigate the meanings and valuations attributed to militancy and the socio-ecological context in which it is embedded. This will help to elucidate the contested space of ecological militancy, revealing novel perspectives on violence, socioecological transformations, and the evolving understandings of activism under ecological crises.

Symposium 9

Symposium 9: Migration & climate change: A micro-perspective on chances and challenges

Understanding and Preventing Violence Against Transit Workers: A Framework for Scholars, Policy and Practice

Leon Walter

Understanding and Preventing Violence Against Transit Workers: A Framework for Scholars, Policy and Practice / Recent increases in violent crimes in Germany reflect broader impacts of an ongoing political poly-crisis, characterized by intersecting political, economic, and social disruptions. Frontline workers in many fields are particularly vulnerable to violent attacks. This study develops a prevention framework addressing the risks transit workers face from violence by strangers in public spaces. In early 2025, more than 2,000 transit workers will participate in a survey on their experiences with violence over the past year. The study will collect data on demographics, working conditions, technical resources and psychological preparedness for conflict. Participants will be asked to report the frequency and context of violent incidents and their actions in these encounters. Anchored in criminological and social-psychological theories, this research explores how the political poly-crisis amplifies structural stressors, contributing to criminal decision-making and interpersonal violence.

Does climate change shape immigrants' return intentions? Evidence from a representative survey of West Africans in Germany

Daniel Meierriks

This study explores the role of climate conditions, specifically climate disasters, in shaping return migration intentions among international migrants. Using original survey data of over 1,000 first-generation migrants from West Africa living in Germany, by means of a survey experiment we investigate how cues about climate disasters in the migrants' origin countries might influence their desire to return home. We find that information on climate risks does not significantly alter return intentions, regardless of the migrants' socioeconomic status, education or attachment to their home countries. By contrast, economic factors are found to play a decisive role: migrants are more inclined to return if job prospects in their home country improve, whereas favorable employment in Germany reduces return intentions. This suggests that economic motivations trump environmental concerns in affecting return migration decisions.

Symposium 9

School-based support for refugee children in Germany: The project “SchulBasis”

Sarah Wüllner

Around one million refugees have fled to Germany since 2015. Common reasons for the flight were violent conflicts but also the effects of climate change. 50-60% of refugee children suffer from psychological stress that limits psychosocial functioning. These figures emphasize the need for early identification of children in need of treatment and the importance of reducing barriers to seeking treatment. The aim of the SchulBasis project is to develop and implement a school-based screening, support and referral structure for mentally distressed refugee children. The project consists of three sub-projects: (1) identifying psychosocial needs and barriers to the utilization of support services, (2) establishing a school-based stepped-care-approach for refugee children with mental distress, and (3) strengthening regional networks to develop a local referral structure for children with mental distress. Interviews will be conducted with children, their caregivers and experts (e.g. from education and health sectors) to record the psychosocial needs of refugee children. At the conference, the project concept and initial results of the interview surveys will be presented and placed in the context of the effects of climate change.

Experiences of socio-economic integration in Spain and Germany of refugees and immigrants from Middle Eastern and North African countries

Abd Alkader Alhag Fteah

Our article aims to analyze the experience of socio-economic integration in Spain and Germany for refugees and economic immigrants from Middle Eastern and North African countries – particularly that of Syrian and Syrian/Palestinian refugees who arrived between 2011 and 2019 and have been granted refugee status (international protection), as compared to Moroccan, Jordanian, Lebanese, and Egyptian economic immigrants who have obtained work permits. Drawing from empirical data derived from 40 semi-structured interviews conducted in Spain and Germany, we reveal certain similarities in framework as well as disparities in the labor market participation experience. By implementing the integration model developed by Ager and Strang (2008), we trace the path toward the labor market integration of refugees and economic immigrants.

All in all, we find there to be an overlap between social and labor market integration, and the combination paves the way for successful integration. In other words, successful integration is like a coin, where labor and social integration represent its two sides.

Symposium 10

Symposium 10: Societies in time of climate change: attitudes, negotiations and transformations

Prospects for the International Early Warning Regime?

Alina Isakova

The institutionalization of cooperation on early warning and response to violent conflicts has taken place in the past decades across state and non-state actors. As a result, the actors partake in such collaborative activities as toolbox exchanges, (in)formal information-sharing, joint fact-finding, or mediation efforts. In the paper, I ask: What is next for fulfilling the common purpose of conflict prevention? And is building of the international early warning regime under way? Focusing on not only nation-states but heavyweights in the field of conflict prevention as the UN, the EU, the OSCE, the AU, as well as the International Crisis Group, I find that some parts of the puzzle – such as shared values, common approaches, and language of conflict prevention – are in place. However, absence of trust, ever-changing interests and the existing political dynamics make it difficult to commit. First, early warning is a “politically sensitive” issue for both organizations and their member-states. Second, inequality of positions in the global peace and security architecture creates a constant need for (re)ordering, and thus often undermines a productive division of labour based on strengths and weaknesses of each individual actor.

Mapping complexity thinking and its effect on persuasiveness in online discourse

Philipp Ruppert

People perceive the same topics with widely differing levels of complexity. Their analyses may range from simplistic, black-and-white assessments, to highly nuanced, multidimensional views. Research has shown that complexity thinking is related to various markers of conflict outcomes as well as political polarization. We investigate a large social media dataset centred around 1000 conversations on “Change My View”, a Reddit forum on which users attempt to change each other’s perspectives on various socially relevant topics. Using a custom implementation of the AutoIC algorithm to score each text for integrative complexity (IC), a state measure of complexity thinking, we assess over 35 million texts created by 50,000 users, creating a multidimensional database of complexity thinking. We find that users successful at changing others’ opinions display higher average IC across their post history than their peers ($P < 0.0001$), while the IC of their individually successful statements does not deviate significantly from the conversation average. Our findings give insight into how complexity thinking affects online discourse and how polarization may be mitigated, while supporting the value of multidimensional analyses on social media data.

Symposium 10

The Swedish 1951 study of authoritarian upbringing; methods, results and ethical issues

Mats Deland & Paul Fuehrer

In 1947, at the second conference of the Unesco, it was decided that a large research project labeled "Tensions" would be funding studies in a number of countries. The aim was to understand the sociological and psychological underpinnings of the recent breakdown of European democracy. On the scientific board was Max Horkheimer, who at the same time led the famous Studies in prejudice project. This essay will discuss a Swedish study made within this framework, The Authoritarian Ideology of Upbringing (1951) by Joachim Israel (at the time Reichian psychologist) and Eskil Björklund (sociologist). Israel had contacts with Else Frenkel-Brunswik, and many themes in the study reminded of the famous The Authoritarian Personality (1950), which Frenkel-Brunswik co-authored with among others Horkheimer's colleague T W Adorno. It however especially emphasised the long-term, intergenerational effects of authoritarian upbringing. Using the perspectives of both parents and children with a mixed methods approach, the study displays both interesting results and dilemmas of research ethics that will be discussed within a broad comparison with modern literature.

The role of perceived efficacy on bystander support for confrontational climate action

Ece Sezen Bağcı

This study explores the factors influencing bystander support for confrontational collective action, a key tactic in the climate crisis. While motivations to join confrontational actions are well-studied, bystander perceptions remain underexplored. This gap is crucial, as negative or passive bystander attitudes hinder effectiveness and contribute to the criminalization of these tactics. Accordingly, this ongoing study examines how efficacy, hope, subjective political openness (SPO), and urgency shape bystander support for confrontational environmental activism. We experimentally manipulated efficacy to determine its impact on support and measured other variables via self-report. Drawing on prior research, we predict negative relationships between both hope and SPO and support for confrontational activism, while anticipating a positive relationship between urgency and support. Moreover, efficacy is expected to increase support and moderate these relationships, buffering negative and strengthening positive associations. Additionally, we developed a novel multi-item scale to measure support. Ultimately, this study aims to provide insights into mobilizing bystander support for diverse confrontational environmental activism tactics.

Keynote Lecture I

Keynote Lecture I: Environmental Justice research with the Karuk Tribe on the Klamath River

Global Violence and Climate Change: Themes and a Case Story of Indigenous led Success from the Klamath River Basin

Dr. Kari Marie Norgaard

Dr. Kari Marie Norgaard is Professor of Sociology at University of Oregon and affiliate faculty in Environmental Studies and Indigenous, Race and Ethnic Studies. Dr. Norgaard is a leading environmental sociologist, known internationally for her work on climate denial and environmental justice. She is the author of over three dozen articles and book chapters in the areas of environmental sociology, climate change, Indigenous environmental justice, gender and environment, and sociology of emotions including *Salmon and Acorns Feed Our People: Nature, Colonialism and Social Action* (Rutgers University Press, 2019) and *Living in Denial: Climate Change, Emotions and Everyday Life* (MIT Press, 2011). She is a recipient of the Fred Buttel Distinguished Contribution Award (the lifetime achievement award for the field of Environmental Sociology), a Sociology of Emotions Recent Contribution Award and the Pacific Sociological Association's Distinguished Practice Award. Her research has been internationally recognized through the award of research grants, speaking invitations, and coverage of research by high profile media outlets including the Washington Post, New York Times, National Geographic, British Broadcasting Corporation, The Guardian, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and National Public Radio. Dr. Norgaard Chaired the Section on Environmental Sociology of the American Sociological Association from 2018-2019 and is a founding member and former Secretary/Treasurer of the ASA Section on Indigenous Peoples and Native Nations. She has worked as a consultant for the Karuk Tribe on climate adaptation and tribal environmental policy since 2003.