

Call for Papers

Legacies of Civil Wars: Former armed actors' political participation and impact

22 – 24 May 2024 in Basel, Switzerland

As armed conflicts come to an end, whether through negotiated settlement or one-sided victory, armed movements that challenged state authority and legitimacy often take on important roles in post-war societies. Hence, the post-war trajectories of such movements have an important impact on the nature of peace and governance, and they are of great interest to both scholars and practitioners. The most discussed reconversion process has been that from rebel group to political party and from rebel to politician.

More than one-third of armed groups entering negotiated peace between 1975 and 2018 transformed into political parties.¹ Yet, the outcome is by no means uniform. While some, such as the FMLN in El Salvador and GAM in Indonesia's Aceh province, have adapted to pluralist multi-party democracy, in several contexts such as Ethiopia and Rwanda, rebel groups that emerged as victors, have evolved into authoritarian dominant parties. In other contexts, such as Lebanon and Palestine, armed groups participate in electoral politics without relinquishing their weapons.

While research has found that the political inclusion of armed groups into politics has a positive impact on peace and stability after civil wars, less is known about the diverse strategies and trajectories taken by former non-state armed groups and the wider implications for the post-war political order. Similarly, while it has been recognised that the political transformation of armed groups begin already during the peace negotiations – or even from the moment that the armed actor realises that the war may be drawing to an end –,² little is known about the ways in which different dynamics during the peace processes, as well as the content and the subsequent implementation of peace agreements, shape the pathways and legacies of armed groups.

The workshop welcomes contributions on the following themes:

- **Party politics and beyond:** Multiple trajectories of non-state armed actors during and after civil wars ranging from participation in party politics, civil society organisations, interest groups and community organising as well as individual career trajectories within or outside the state apparatus. We are also interested in studies of more varied socio-economic networks and constellations of interlinked formal/informal structures.
- **Into the black box of peace negotiations:** Peace negotiations can play a vital role in influencing the dynamics and outcomes of the political transformation of armed groups. We welcome contributions that explore the relationships between the different dimensions of the peace processes – including various elements of process design, as well as the content and the implementation of the peace agreements – and the political transformation of armed actors.
- **Various types of armed actors and violence:** Variations across diverse types of armed actors, from militias and criminal gangs to more 'conventional' rebel groups, with a particular attention to political economy, ideological changes and continuities, and legacies.

¹ <https://fba.se/globalassets/publikationer/peace-agreements-and-the-political-integration-of-armed-groups.pdf>

² https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/2022_04_WSRReport_MediatingPolTranfofNSAGs_reduced.pdf

We are also interested in different forms of post-war violence, beyond those commonly addressed in ‘peacebuilding’ frameworks.

- **Multiple temporalities:** Political, institutional, and ideational legacies of armed movements and histories of violence across different temporalities, in short, medium and/or long terms. This may include how histories and memories are constructed and negotiated by post-war societies, as well as their implications on more recent episodes of violence. We also welcome historical analysis of previous transitions, including of anti-colonial liberation movements.
- **Role of international engagements:** What do international interventions – peacebuilding and beyond, including ‘hard security’ approaches – mean for post-war political engagement by former armed actors and more broadly for post-war societies? We also encourage analyses of how support for armed groups’ political transformation might relate to other peacebuilding mechanisms, such as transitional justice.

We welcome papers that aim to make novel and original contributions that are theoretically informed, methodologically sound, and empirically oriented. Both single and comparative studies are welcomed, as well as both quantitative and qualitative research designs. The paper can be an early draft with preliminary ideas, an article near completion, or constitute part of a larger book project. However, you cannot present already published work, or policy reports and other papers not primarily intended for an academic audience.

Submission of Abstracts

Please submit a title and an abstract of up to 300 words to jacqui.cho@swisspeace.ch and politicsafterwar@gmail.com by **11 January 2024**. If you would be interested in publishing your research with swisspeace – as [swisspeace Working Papers or Policy Briefs](#) – please indicate your interest in your email.

Selection will be made on the basis of submitted abstracts. We are particularly interested in perspectives from scholars from the so-called ‘Global South’. swisspeace would be happy to provide support with the visa process for participants for whom this would be applicable. We particularly welcome submissions from advanced graduate students, as well as from members of the [Politics After War research network](#), but please do not hesitate to forward the invitation to other colleagues pursuing relevant academic research. Researchers based in Switzerland who are able to cover their own expenses are strongly encouraged to apply.

The workshop will include a research-policy-practice dialogue with policymakers and practitioners working on this subject. Participants of the research workshop are welcome to attend the dialogue, although not all may be granted speaker roles in the event.

This workshop is hosted by swisspeace, University of Basel, Folke Bernadotte Academy and the Politics After War research network. Funding is available to cover travel and accommodation for participants.

Organising Committee

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