



Seminar von **Gunnar Berkemeier** im Sommersemester 2012 am Zentrum für Internationale Studien zum Thema

Peace & Conflict in Africa

Contemporary challenges and approaches to peacekeeping & peacebuilding

Course Description

An often-used cliché suggests that Africa is a continent primarily characterised by constant conflict and heinous crimes. While reality undoubtedly is much more nuanced and despite encouraging signs, one needs to recognize that sub-Saharan Africa is indeed still marred by conflict and instability. Countries such as the DR Congo, the Chad and Somalia illustrate the endemic character of such phenomena. Arguably, these countries suffer from similar albeit slightly different root causes of conflict. Resource abundance, ethnic hatred, greed and grievances, religious extremism, warlordism and the ubiquitous notion of state failure have been cited as drivers of instability. It is therefore necessary to unpack these elements in order to systematically study contemporary developments in conflict-affected regions of Africa.

Since the end of the cold war, not only intra-state conflict in Africa proliferated. In parallel, the international community increasingly endeavoured to respond to many (but not all) crises erupting in Africa. An elaborated peacebuilding architecture was developed. While a number of mechanisms (such as peacekeeping forces) were deployed and new institutions (such as the Peacebuilding Commission) founded, the international community is still struggling to stop atrocities or to establish durable peace. Consequently, the reasons for such failures as well as the rare successes deserve particular attention. Is the idea of trying to bring about lasting peace to a war-ravaged region a mere illusion? Or do external interventions stand a chance to support a transition from war to peace? If so, what are the enabling or inhibiting political and practical factors?

Course Objectives

This course seeks to familiarize students with a number of analytical tools to dissect conflict dynamics in sub-Saharan Africa. Based on this necessarily brief overview, students will be able to apply these approaches to concrete cases. The course endeavours to also provide students with an opportunity to critically discuss the impact (or the lack thereof) of international efforts to bring an end to conflicts in Africa. In particular, the role of the United Nations as well as of regional organisations such as the African Union will be analysed. Students are encouraged to evaluate international responses to insecurity in Africa and to suggest smarter or more effective solutions.

Course Structure

The course will be divided into two main elements. The first element will be an introductory lecture. The lecture will take place **on 27 April, from 9:20 to 12:40 pm in room ZEU/114.**

The second element of the course will be delivered in seminar style and will be based on students' presentations and an interactive debate amongst course participants. The seminar will take place **on 2 June (11:10 to 18:10) and 3 June (9.20 to 16.40), on both days in room GER/07.**

Course Requirements

- **Class participation**

All students are expected to actively participate in every stage of the course. Having done the required readings is a pre-requisite.

- **In-class presentation**

Each student or a pair of students will be asked to give a presentation covering one of the topics detailed in the forthcoming complete syllabus. This presentation will serve as the basis for an in-depth discussion of the topic at hand in the respective sessions of the seminar.

- **Course paper**

The paper can be an elaboration of the in-class presentation but students are also free to choose any topic linked to the course's focus. Papers may cover particular types of conflicts or conflict resolution mechanisms, or may look into developments in a specific country. All papers are required to go beyond mere description and provide an analysis of the respective subject matter. The paper should have a minimum of 12-15 pages (1.5 spaced). **The paper is due on 15 August.**

- **Take home exercise**

Students will be expected to comment on a recent event or development in Africa related to peace and security. Drawing on the methodologies and approaches discussed during the course, students are to provide a short analysis of the situation at hand and suggest policy options. The written submission should not exceed 2 – 3 pages (1.5 spaced). **The take home exercise is scheduled for: tbd.**

Introductory Lecture

The introductory lecture will provide students with a broad overview of conflict dynamics as well peacebuilding interventions. Different approaches used and actors involved in solving conflicts will be introduced. Concepts such as “peacebuilding”, “peacebuilding”, “state failure” etc. will be unpacked. Together with the required readings, the session is designed to provide all participants with a solid understanding of the field, enabling them to conduct their own research prior to the seminar sessions.

List of *required* readings for the Introductory Lecture:

Paul D. Williams, 2011: “War & Conflict in Africa“, Cambridge: Polity.
Please read the Introduction and Part I. You might want to consider reading the entire book in the course of the seminar.

Claudia Major, Wanda Hummel, Tobias Pietz, Elisabeth Schöndorf (2011): “Toolbox Krisenmanagement. Von der zivilen Krisenprävention bis zum Peacebuilding: Prinzipien, Akteure, Instrumente“, Sonderveröffentlichung der Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) und des Zentrums für internationale Friedenseinsätze (ZiF), http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/sonstiges/ToolboxKrisenmanagementSWP_ZiF_2011_ks.pdf

Provides you with a hands-on overview of some of the important concepts and approaches.

If you have difficulties retrieving the readings, do not hesitate to get in touch.

It is suggested that you regularly update yourself on recent developments related to peace and security in Africa. The International Crisis Group is a valuable source; the newspapers *Jeune Afrique* and *The Economist* provide good coverage of African affairs.
