

Societal Conflicts

Collective Action in an Unequal World

Zentrumstage 2022, July 14-16

Call for Papers

Classical conflict theories often understand conflict as a universal feature of society. But there is variation. Over the last decades, in different countries and continents, we have seen a rise of societal conflicts, epitomized in a growing number of street-level collective action. At the same time, economists and social scientists have observed a fairly generalized increase in economic and concomitant political inequalities within societies. This begs the question of whether and how these trends are related. Does politics become more contentious when inequality increases? How does collective action unveil, contest, or even co-produce inequalities? What kind of inequalities are in the focus of collective action and which ones remain at different levels of conflict, and why? The *Zentrumstage 2022* conference seeks to bring together scholars to study societal conflicts, and the roles that inequality and collective action play in them.

The salience of inequality and collective action in conflict is apparent in different types of conflict and at different stages of the conflict process. Inequality can serve as an underlying driver for conflicts or can help prevent them. Inequality affects the resources available for parties in confrontation, and the strategies that actors take in conflict settings. Meanwhile, the conflict process redistributes resources and power in a way that reconfigures inequalities, and the aftermath of conflicts brings about new patterns. But inequalities themselves are usually not enough to explain conflict. In order to organize successful protests, disadvantaged actors need to frame their perceived injustices and overcome collective action problems. Their ability to negotiate these processes will influence conflict strategies and processes, and their capacity to stake new claims as conflict escalates and de-escalates.

By focusing on inequality and collective action in the study of conflict, we hope to enrich the academic debate in conflict studies. We invite contributions on the relationship of inequalities and collective action and their respective role for societal conflicts. We welcome papers from a variety of disciplines (conflict studies, social movement studies, political science, gender studies, area studies, economics, psychology, anthropology, sociology and others) drawing on a variety of methodologies (qualitative, theoretical, and quantitative). We also welcome research on topics associated with either high-intensity societal conflicts, such as armed conflict or violent protests, or low-intensity conflicts, such as peaceful protests, redistribution claims, coalition dynamics, etc. Examples of suitable topics would be:

- collective action in unequal societies
- social justice and inequalities
- different types of inequality and their contestation
- peaceful protests
- local peacebuilding
- democratic and anti-democratic social movements
- inequality in transitional justice movements
- social movements online

To apply, please submit an abstract of no more than 400 words to ccs2022@staff.uni-marburg.de by the 24th of January 2022. Please indicate if you are a PhD student, Postdoc, or (Assistant, Associate, or Full) Professor as well as if you are based in an institution in the Global South. The conference language will be English.

We are currently applying for funding and, if successful, we might be able to offer some travel and/ or accommodation grants for presenters. However, for the moment, we cannot guarantee any travel or accommodation funding.