

EVANGELISCHE AKADEMIE LOCCUM

In War as in Peace:
Youth Violence – A Challenge for International Co-operation
International Conference, 14 – 16 November 2007

In co-operation with
Institute for Development and Peace (INEF), Faculty of Social Sciences
at the University Duisburg-Essen and the sector project education and conflicttransformation
(gtz, Eschborn); sponsored by SDC-Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

**“Neither shall they learn war any more”
Youth, skill and peace in West Africa**

Paul Richards
Technology & Agrarian Development Group, Wageningen University, NL

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Technology & Agrarian Development Group
Wageningen University, NL

paul.richards@wur.nl

Was the prophet Isaiah misunderstood?

- Beating swords into ploughshares (Isaiah ch 2) is often taken to mean placing weapons, verifiably, beyond further use
- In West African wars the weapon of “mass destruction” deployed by impoverished rural youth is an (unmodified) farm implement (the bush knife or cutlass)
- Conversion from war to peace is in the user, not the implement; the key phrase (in Isaiah ch. 2) is “neither shall they learn war any more”

Mauss on magic (and technology)

- In the first decade of the 20th century the group of French sociologists around Emile Durkheim laid key foundation stones for modern analytic social science
- The culminating study was Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912)
- A key step on the way was a monograph on magic by Durkheim's nephew, Marcel Mauss (1972 [1903])
- Mauss saw magic as experiential learning, and the foundation of all science and religion
- The key insight is that religion (ritual) and science (experimentation) both derive from technique.

The (incomplete) Durkheimian synthesis

- The foundation of society (its elementary form) is religion (norms, sacred symbols, collective representations)
- The foundation of religion is ritual action (acting together for sacred ends)
- The foundation of science (its elementary form) is technique (skill, experimentation)
- The foundation of technique is skill (not tools, machines, weapons etc)
- The basic technologies are technologies of the body – how we learn to do things with our bodies
- Mauss offers as example “learning to sleep” (a mountaineer, he taught himself to sleep upright)

How do humans learn technique?

- Many techniques are taught (**supervised** learning, e.g. class room learning, apprenticeship, etc)
- Others are acquired through experience (**unsupervised** learning)
- Unsupervised learning (trial-and-error) is how many people learn to walk, swim, ride a bicycle, play an instrument, etc
- Theories of experiential (unsupervised) learning are less well developed than theories of supervised learning
- One approach to the understanding of unsupervised learning is through the analysis of situated action (cf. Chaiklin & Lave 1993)

War as technique and situated action

- War is full of technique (tactics, logistics, use of weapons, battlefield coordination, overcoming of fear and resistance to kill, learning of survival skills “on the march”, sleeping rough, etc., etc.)
- Some technique is taught in the class room; others are acquired in practice, and involve team work and distributed cognition (cf. Hutchins 1996)
- Other techniques of war are largely or entirely unsupervised learning; war is fluid and favours improvisation and cunning.
- Desperate circumstances give rise to the improvisation of desperate measures

An example from Sierra Leone

- Richards (1996) shows how a rebel movement (the RUF) first learnt to survive in the forest
- Supported by Gaddafi, the RUF attracted the attention of British military intelligence, who devised a scheme to eliminate the movement using South African counter-insurgency experts
- The South Africans hit at RUF camps under cover of a peace process using a locally recruited proxy militia; they underestimated the survival skills the RUF, and the movement regrouped
- Perceiving only the local proxy force as its enemy, and threatened with elimination, the RUF improvised terror tactics designed to deter rural support for the proxy force; the farmer's knife became a weapon of randomised mutilation

The techniques of war have to be unlearned (a lesson from Iraq)

- Techniques of survival in war and under oppression (by both belligerents and war-affected civilian populations) are (often) products of experiential learning
- Because they have been acquired without supervision they are often overlooked in post-war planning
- The White House assumed that if Saddam was overthrown a free population of relatively highly educated and affluent Iraqis would quickly organise themselves for peace
- This failed to take account of the huge amount of improvised learning that had gone on to cope with the privations and internal violence of the Saddam era
- Lack of a post-war plan fuelled insurgency

Crafting peace?

- Such programmes need to embrace entire populations, and not just ex-combatants
- Thus, they have to be huge and rapidly effective (i.e. hugely efficient) if insurgency is not to resume
- In short, supervised “corrective” learning in typical post-conflict situations is logistically impossible
- Can unsupervised learning come to the rescue?
Can the improvisatory skills of wartime survival be converted to “peaceful use”?

Some lessons from Sierra Leone

- The war in Sierra Leone was ended (more easily than predicted) not through politics but through promises of skills training
- But the approach was formal (i.e. through supervised training)
- It was badly planned (in terms of linking skill shortages to areas of economic need); it was insufficiently comprehensive (taking account only of combatants with guns, discriminating against women etc); it was poorly executed (the skills providers were often incompetent and sometimes corrupt)
- The most effective intergration took place when ex-combatants took charge of their own skills training, often by developing a new skill within vacant economic niches
- The most obvious example is motor cycle taxi riding, unknown before the war, but now ubiquitous in every provincial urban centre, and dominated by ex-combatants (Peters 2006)

Have the lessons been learnt (for Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire)?

- The UN team for demobilization and reintegration in Sierra Leone took its “show” to Liberia (not much seemed to have changed)
- UN agencies are now seized of the youth employment issue, but see it primarily in terms of strengthening formal sectors of the economy to offer more jobs
- It may be better to work directly with war-affected youth, aiming to convert wartime experiential learning capacities to peaceful ends
- Some RUF cadres have tried to strengthen their (bush-acquired) capacity for agricultural cooperation, but were held back by lack of appropriate support (Peters 2006)
- Sendero Luminoso cadres in Peru, shortly to be released from jail, are reported to be keen to acquire skills for rural reconstruction to repair what they once destroyed

Agrarian technology: the key to consolidating peace?

- In war affected West African countries the biggest arena for improvised skill is still the agrarian sector
- New crops and flourishing new rural markets are among evidence that Sierra Leone is now truly on the path to peace)
- Taking the weapon out of agrarian society is pointless (it is an unmodified agricultural implement)
- Agrarian skills remain largely “technologies of the body”, acquired experientially
- Tasks are often distributed in complex ways (involving a gender, age-based and regional division of labour only poorly understood by planners and policy makers)
- Improvisatory change requires key institutional reforms (regarding markets, contracts, land and labour)

Conclusion

- It is a conclusion from studies of post-Cold War conflicts (including the imbroglio in Iraq) that peace is a technique, not a natural condition of free people
- The (unsupervised) learning that fostered war needs to be replaced with learning for peace
- What is needed in this regard is not “peace education” but skills for useful employment
- If (for logistical reasons) skills for employment cannot be taught agencies should seek to support the (improvised) acquisition of skills
- Post-war planners are as yet ignorant of what would constitute a good support strategy in such circumstances
- In the West African case the agrarian sector still offers opportunities for unsupervised acquisition of peaceful skills, but institutional reforms (to permit mobility of land and labour) are necessary

References

- Chaiklin, S & Lave J eds 1993 *Understanding practice: perspectives on activity and context*, Cambridge University Press
- Hutchins, E 1995 *Cognition in the wild*, MIT Press
- Mauss, M 1972 [1903] *A general theory of magic*, Routledge
- Peters, K 2006 *Footpaths to reintegration*, Thesis, Technology & Agrarian Development Group, Wageningen University
- Richards, P. 1996 *Fighting for the rain forest: war, youth and resources in Sierra Leone*, James Currey

Drug crime in Rio, racist offences against immigrants, shootings at schools, harassment in Belfast's neighbourhoods, killing brothers and sisters in Ramallah, kids traumatized by war in Bosnia or in the Congo – the involvement of children and adolescents in political and criminal acts of violence in mega-cities, as well as in (post-)conflict zones of recent wars, is an increasingly disturbing phenomenon.

What do we know about the reasons and root causes of youth violence stemming from such a variety of political and cultural backgrounds and contexts? What do (post) war constellations have in common with the urbanized reality of western democracies? Do social exclusion, poverty, the absence of education, and the availability of small arms create contexts which enhance violence and may be considered as „grey zones“ between war and peace? How would we differentiate between politically motivated, socially, ethnically or religiously based, and other ritualized forms of violence? Which patterns of violence are specifically youth related?

The conference will look at recent results and findings of international research on youth violence. In order to better understand the driving forces behind, and to identify political strategies to deal with this critical development, we will try to compare and contrast (post) war and non-war constellations, and the causes or patterns of youth violence they present. What are promising approaches on communal and state levels, amongst civil society actors and those in the field of international co-operation, to tackle the challenge of youth violence?

You are cordially invited to participate in the discussions of this conference.

Dr. Corinna Hauswedell, Academy Loccum

Dr. Sabine Kurtenbach, Institute for Development and Peace (INEF)

Andrea Grimm, Academy Loccum

Dr. Fritz Erich Anhelm, Academy Director

Conference Fees/Registration:

Room and meals: € 180,--.

For students (age 30 or under), members of the armed services and alternative service as well as unemployed with proper identification: € 90,--. Conference fees are to be paid in cash at the time of registration.

We request that you register by name, address, institution/ organization at:

Evangelische Akademie Loccum
Karin Hahn
D-31545 Rehburg-Loccum,
Fax: +49-5766-81-128
E-mail: Karin.Hahn@evlka.de

Registrations will be confirmed as long as places are available. Should you have to cancel your registration, please inform us as soon as possible.

Accommodation and meals:

Participants will be accommodated in single rooms or double rooms, if preferred. All meals are served at the Academy. By prior arrangement, rooms and meals may be available before and after the conference.

Directions:

Loccum is located 50 kilometers west of Hanover in Lower Saxony. The nearest airport is in Langenhagen airport near Hanover. The nearest train stations are Wunstorf, Minden and Nienburg. Detailed instructions will be sent to all registered participants.

Conference Organizers:

Dr. Corinna Hauswedell, Director of Studies (Loccum)

Tel. +49-5766-81-109

Karin Hahn, Secretary

Tel. +49-5766-81-113

Fax. +49-5766-81-128

Media Contact:

Reinhard Behnisch (Loccum) Tel. +49-5766-81 105

HOUSE SCHEDULE:

8.30 MORNING PRAYER, 8.45 BREAKFAST

12.30 LUNCH, 15.30 COFFEE/TEA,

18.30 DINER.

Opportunity to visit Loccum Monastery, Thursday 13:30 Uhr

The Academy on the Internet: <http://www.loccum.de>

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■ Wednesday, November 14, 2007

- 15:30 Coffee/ Tea with cake
16:00 Welcome and introduction
Dr. Corinna Hauswedell, Loccum
- 16:15 **Youth violence in the globalized world**
- Introductions to the conference theme
- 18:30 **Context matters: violence in (post)war and non-war societies**
Dr. Sabine Kurtenbach, INEF, Duisburg
- Demographic data and findings concerning the social situation of youth in countries undergoing (post-)conflict and crisis-like situations of radical change**
Dr. Rüdiger Blumör, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Eschborn
Steffen Kröhnert, Berlin Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung
Facilitator: *Dr. Corinna Hauswedell*
- 19:30 **Current state and perspectives of international research on youth violence**
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21:00 *Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Institute for Interdisciplinary Conflict and Violence Research, Bielefeld University*

■ Thursday, November 15, 2007

- 09:30 **Causes and contexts of youth violence – stocktaking** (work in two parallel sections)

SECTION I: Non-war constellations: urbanization, social change and exclusion

A world of gangs

Prof. Dr. John Hagedorn, University of Illinois, Chicago

Youth at risk programming – A crucial element to build citizenship

Clarissa Huguet, Children in Organized Armed Violence (COAV), Rio de Janeiro

Nigeria: Youth violence and the challenges in the age of globalisation

Dr. Nick Idoko, Centre for Peace in Africa, Lagos, Nigeria

Urban riots in France: History, patterns and the significance of institutional violence

Dr. Carsten Keller, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin

Facilitator: *Dr. Rose Ngomba-Roth, Göttingen*
Rapporteur: *Dr. Peter Lock, Hamburg*

SECTION II: Post-war and continuous conflict constellations: ethnicity and identity, terrorism, religion

Israel-Palestine

Stephan Clauss, Akademie für Konflikttransformation, Bonn

Northern Ireland

Dr. Neil Jarman, Institute for Conflict Research, Belfast

West Africa

Prof. Dr. Paul Richards, Wageningen University, Netherlands

Afghanistan

Martin Hayes, Child Protection Specialist of the Christian Children's Fund (CCF), Richmond/Virginia

Facilitator: *Dr. Corinna Hauswedell*
Rapporteur: *Prof. em. Dr. Peter Waldmann, Augsburg University*

- 16:00 **Strategies for dealing with youth violence and its causes**

18:30 (work continued in two parallel sections)

SECTION I: Non-war constellations: urbanization, social change and exclusion

Juveniles as target group and partner in development co-operation

Günter Sohr, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Berlin

Comprehensive public health strategies

Dr. Alberto Concha-Eastman, Regional Advisor, Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Washington D.C.

Intercultural youth exchange: opportunities for young people to prevent and de-learn violence and experience alternatives (beams of hope)

Christa-Berta Kimmich, European play work association (e.p.a.), Hamburg

Neglect and trauma amongst young people in London – how to prevent and work with it at street level

Daniel Baltzer, Kids Company, London

Facilitator: *Erich Marks, Geschäftsführer, Deutscher Präventionstag, Hannover*
Rapporteur: *Andrea Grimm*

SECTION II: Post-war and continuous conflict constellations: ethnicity and identity, terrorism, religion

Linking development and peacebuilding: experiences from Bosnia

Dr. Martina Fischer, Berghof Centre for Conflict Research, Berlin

Strategies for working with youth in the immediate post-accord period

Siobhan McEvoy-Levy, Butler University, Indianapolis

Demobilization and reintegration of children and adolescents – experience from the Congo

Achim Koch, German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Eschborn

Strategies to confront youth violence – experiences from Nicaragua and Central America

José Luis Rocha, Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), Managua

Facilitator: *Prof. em. Dr. Franz Nuscheler, INEF, Duisburg*
Rapporteur: *Dr. Sabine Kurtenbach*

- 19:30 **Youth violence in cultural contexts: film and Hip Hop music**

21:00 *Katrin Lock, London*

■ Friday November 16, 2007

- 09:30 **Youth violence as a challenge facing international co-operation**

Final winding-up session, introduced by reports of the section rapporteurs

Ambassador *Friedrich Däuble*, Appointee for Conflict Prevention, Federal Foreign Office, Berlin
Dr. Winrich Kühne, Center for International Peace Missions (ZIF), Berlin

Nadine Lyamouri-Bajja, European Youth Centre, Council of Europe, Strasbourg

Facilitator: *Dr. Corinna Hauswedell*

- 12:30 Conference ends with lunch
12:50 Departure of shuttle bus to Wunstorf train station (arrival around 13:30 hours)

Conference languages: German and English; simultaneous translation available