

Call for papers for a Special Thematic Section of the Journal of Social and Political Psychology (JSPP)

Multiple Perspectives in Conflict Settings: From Diversity to Pluralism

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In societies affected by protracted conflicts, collective experiences of violence are typically complex and multi-layered: Experiences of conflict-induced suffering tend to co-exist with experiences of resilience, and even with experiences that question the logic of the conflict, the definitions of the parties to the conflict and the roles they play. Yet, such diversity in conflict experiences can be hidden or silenced in public and official narratives. The story of war is typically told by leaders, generals, diplomats or experts. Public spaces may be much less open to voices from the ground, especially when they narrate experiences that contradict the official narratives or imply collective identities that defy the logic of conflict divisions. Such are, for example, the voices of disillusioned soldiers and civilians, who question the morality of collective actions witnessed at the frontlines; the voices of grieving parents, husbands and wives, who skeptically wonder in whose interest the war was actually fought; or, obviously, the voices of ‘the enemy’ – sometimes prewar neighbors, friends or colleagues – whose losses are instead celebrated as victories. Moreover, in a society divided by conflict, the voices of entire groups of people can be erased from the construction of the public ‘truth’ about the conflict. Indeed, public truth frequently is the victor’s truth, suppressing alternative voices and entrenching inequalities between groups. Similarly, the transnational circulation of conflict-related information may be highly selective, depending on the political alliances and global reverberations of the conflict. However, even silenced or marginalised memories and perspectives do not easily disappear completely. They might be confined to informal, private forms of preservation and sharing, but can survive that way over the lifetime of individual witnesses, and sometimes even beyond.

This special thematic section is organised around the key problem of diversity in conflict experiences, about the restriction and resurgence of plural perspectives on conflicts in conflict-torn societies or in a broader international context. It is well established that the way in which a conflict is represented and remembered – locally and globally – has important implications for the peace-building process. We invite submissions that reflect on the role of diversity and complexity in conflict experiences and perspectives for the process of conflict transformation. How can we have access to multiple perspectives of conflicts in societies affected by collective violence? What can we learn from these otherwise silenced stories? What is the role of pluralistic recognition and acknowledgment of multiple perspectives of conflicts for peace building and conflict management?

We welcome submissions that document diversity in experiences and perspectives of conflict and/or analyse the role of silenced memories, forgotten events, and complex identities, in societies marked by communal violence, or within a broader international context. We are particularly interested in manuscripts that, from a social or political-psychological perspective, examine the psychological, social and political consequences of knowing and sharing multiple perspectives of conflict; or analyse the underlying socio-psychological processes, and structural, political or institutional mechanisms, that foster or restrict sharing of these multiple perspectives.

Manuscripts can be theoretical, review articles, original research articles, replications, or commentaries. For more information on JSPP's profile and scope, please see <http://jspp.psychopen.eu/about/editorialPolicies#focusAndScope>.

Timeline

Please submit long abstracts (1000 words) by February 1, 2017 to sandra.penic@unil.ch. Authors will be notified within four weeks of their submission whether they are invited to submit a full article for the special section. The final deadline for submission of full articles will be September 1, 2017, but authors are encouraged to submit their manuscripts earlier. The manuscripts will be reviewed on a rolling basis. The special section will be published in 2018.