

Cities and Conflict

Syllabus, MA Seminar, Spring 2022, Thursdays 16.15-18h, 5ECTS
University of Neuchâtel

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Overall Description of the Seminar

Cities nowadays are the frontlines of (geo)political conflict. From urbicide – targeted destruction of urban public space as a strategy of war – to international terrorism and gender-based violence, urban spaces are sites where (geo)political violence is often actualized, negotiated, experienced, felt and challenged. With multiple violences that scar contemporary urban life, this seminar explores how cities shape conflict as well as how different forms of conflict shape cities. During the seminar, we bring examples of cities across the global north, south and east to address different notions of conflict and urban violence. The seminar engenders a wide definition of urban conflict, ranging from war, terrorism and gang violence to social and economic marginalizations, exclusions and gender-based violence. Moreover, the seminar addresses notions of peace and practices of anti-violence that are mobilized in cities to challenge and contest urban conflict.

Class Format

The seminar will utilize various teaching methods in order to provide insight into current debates in critical studies of urban conflict and urban geopolitics. The discussions will be based on provided academic literature, as well as on the basis of empirical data such as films and videos, empirical examples from lecturer's (own) research and from students' projects. The format encourages peer teaching and interactive learning environment with the lecturer acting as a moderator and seminar leader. The students are encouraged to ask critical questions, to transfer what they have learned into their own life context and to enrich it with their own experiences.

Language

Main language of lectures is English, while seminar discussions can be held in French and English.