

CRG Conflict continuities

Many conflicts in Africa have been studied and described as location and time bound. Yet conflict is rarely confined and contained, and instead reaches across communities, borders, and generations. Conflict and peace are processes, waxing and waning, and grounded in everyday, local as well larger, geopolitical dynamics. In this collaborative research group (CRG), we explore these conflict continuities and attempts to disrupt or halt them, paying attention to internationalized dimensions and long-term dynamics foregoing and following conflict in many African societies. In this way, we contribute to and bring further critical debates on how to conceptualize and study conflict and crisis. Moreover, we hope to lay bare the deeper currents and particularities of Africa's contemporary conflicts, shedding new light, among others, on ideas of New Wars, networked conflicts, and the blurring boundaries between crime and conflict.

We foreground contemporary situations of largescale, societal and political conflict, to then shift focus to what happens outside and beyond the conflict core. We develop research along three axes of continuities, acknowledging that these axes sometimes overlap, coincide, and depend on each other. Namely, continuities in time, in geographical and virtual space, and in the networks of actors involved in conflict and peacebuilding. We explore the forces that drive conflict continuities, but also question how over time, space, and actors, continuities may entail disruption and transformation. Throughout our activities, we foreground questions on the conceptualization of and methodological approaches to 'grasping' the ever fleeting conflict *continuities*.

The underlying aim of this CRG is to put 'conflict' more explicitly on the map of Africa research at Leiden University, and to ground these in local and global currents and dynamics. The ambition is to do so in two, 2-year terms. In the first two years, activities will focus on bringing knowledge and people together to build and strengthen our conceptual thinking and methodological approaches to studying conflict and its continuities. In the second term we seek to expand our activities by forging connections and building bridges outside academia and beyond Africa through exchange with and publications for a variety of audiences. Collaborating researchers will contribute to exploring conflict continuities through their own research projects, while through this CRG, we share, compare, and juxtapose insights from different disciplinary and methodological perspectives and contexts to come to new insights. Members of this CRG include (PhD) students in African Studies, staff of the African Studies Centre Leiden, members of the Africa community of LeidenASA, as well as other invited members working on conflict (continuities) beyond Leiden University.

Members: Jan Abbink (ASCL), Lidewyde Berckmoes (*convenor*) (ASCL), Mirjam de Bruin (ASCL/GS), Luca Bruls (ASCL), (Leila Demarest (PW), Rijk van Dijk (ASCL), Rahmane Idrissa (ASCL), Carolien Jacobs (VVI), Corinna Jentsch (PW), Alliance Kubota (ASCL/GS), Juul Kwaks (ASCL/RU Nijmegen).