

## Call for Papers for Workshop on: Narratives of violence as a political tool

*University of the Bundeswehr Munich, Germany*  
*17.-18<sup>th</sup> September 2024*

From the earliest history books to (social) media posts today, narratives of violence constitute particularly powerful tools for political actors and are thus frequently societally and politically contested. Narratives of violence pervade our discursive environment and manifest materially, often in normalising the narratives of violence and making them less contested, establishing hegemonic narratives and silencing others or visibly demonstrating these struggles over acknowledgment of various narratives. While narratives of violence permeate political discourse, education and commemorative events and spaces, narratives of violence also accompany our daily lives: from Stolpersteine, street names, and other practices of memorialisation to social media feeds, newspaper accounts, Hollywood movies, and inappropriate jokes. Precisely because they are so pervasive in politics and everyday life, their constitution and effect frequently go unnoticed. Thus, this workshop seeks to investigate: What is the power of narratives of violence, who uses them, and how do they change over time?

Over the years, academics from political science, sociology, history, literature studies, anthropology, memory studies and other disciplines have addressed this issue, demonstrating the complexity of navigating the politics and shifts in narratives of violence over time. Cross- and interdisciplinary approaches speak to each other and forward new understandings of the political and everyday uses of narratives of violence over time. For example, political scientists and historians emphasise how political actors' framing of past violent events is important for the legitimisation of further violence; memory studies scholars focus on different modes of remembering and narrating violence and its significance for nationhood, identity, and politics. Researchers on radicalisation and extremism show how new technologies like social media fuel the interaction between narratives of past violence being drawn on as well as narratives of current violence being created in real time as violence unfolds. Critical approaches like feminist or post- and decolonial theories highlight how narratives of violence reinforce gendered, racialised, heteronormative, and class-based images of violence, in particular in connection to the construction of perpetration, victimhood, bystandership, and heroism.

With the narrative turn, many of these disciplines have begun integrating and acknowledging the importance of narrative. Research into discursive violence and the role of narratives in legitimating and remembering violence have emerged, however, little research explicitly addresses the connection between discursive violence, violence, and narratives. These are important concepts whose definitions, distinctions, and connections we will foreground in this workshop.

With this workshop we aim to discuss several central themes by enabling an enriching cross- and interdisciplinary discussion of the narratives of violence. Questions that will be addressed in this workshop include (but are not limited to):

- How are narratives of violence used as political tools?
- Why are narratives of violence effective as political tools?
- How does the medium of narration shape the political use of narratives of violence?
- Who is included and excluded from spreading narratives of violence, and why?
- How do narratives of violence shift over time, and why?
- How are narratives of violence affected by gendered, racialised, heteronormative, class-based (and other) structures of power?
- What is the relationship between discursive violence, narratives, and violence?

- To what extent could the term “narrative violence” be useful?
- In what ways does academic research shape narratives of violence and their political uses?

In this interdisciplinary and interactive workshop, we will debate these questions and more. We seek contributions from academics at all stages of their careers and encourage contributions from various disciplines, including those outside the social sciences. The workshop will be structured around several panels composed of paper presentations, a roundtable, a keynote speech held by Andrea Pető, and several workshops.

This workshop is organised by Kirsty Campbell, Alina Scheitza, Maximilian Wegener and Timothy Williams and will be free-of-charge. We are hoping to fund travel and accommodation for some early-career scholars, but this is still subject to funding.

If you are interested in presenting a paper, please submit a 300-word abstract and a short bio; if you are interested in leading a workshop, please submit a 500-word abstract outlining the workshop concept, room or equipment requirements, and a short bio. All abstracts should be sent to Kirsty Campbell ([kirsty.campbell@unibw.de](mailto:kirsty.campbell@unibw.de)) by 04.04.2024 and we will send notifications of acceptance out shortly after.