

# ZeFKo

## Zeitschrift für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung

ZeFKo Studies in Peace and Conflict

### **Call for Papers:**

## **Transnational Corporations and Conflict**

While not centre stage, transnational corporations (TNCs) have appeared in a variety of ways in peace and conflict studies, often influenced by the debates in neighbouring disciplines. Mainstream economics has portrayed transnational linkages through investment, production, and trade as conducive to international peace. In this context, large scale investments by TNCs have been heralded as positive for economic development, which, in turn, was considered a precondition for democratic change and peace. Heterodox approaches to international political economy, on the contrary, have emphasised the destabilising factors of global inequalities produced by the capitalist world system and have pointed out the complicity of TNCs with authoritarian regimes.

Recent research in peace and conflict studies shows a renewed interest in how the inequalities produced by the global capitalist world order have turned into an important breeding ground for multiple, violent conflicts: recurring protests against large infrastructure projects, against exploitative working conditions, and conflicts over access to land and resources are just a few examples of the interlinkage between structural inequalities, hierarchies in the global economy, and corporate-oriented logics of action. Manifest intra- and inter-state violent conflicts also repeatedly demonstrate the key importance of transnational economic structures, business actors and interdependencies through the influences of TNCs and their supply chains. In this sense, many conflicts have been explained with reference to historically evolved, transnational processes of accumulation and production, as well as by reference to the politically and legally entrenched position of TNCs.

In this context, transnational corporations have come to be perceived as actors and institutions in their own right in the transnational sphere - not only because of their manifold influences on national policy decisions, but also because of their formative importance for political, economic and legal institutions and processes at national, transnational and international levels. They are involved in the creation of transnational law and in many cases have taken on the provision of basic services for the population - in some contexts, companies were in fact already providing basic services before a nation state existed. Corporations cannot be distinctly positioned in the public and private sphere forged by the liberal tradition. It is this

ambiguous position that poses challenges, for example, to the legal regulation of corporate violence as the contemporary debate over human rights obligations for corporate actors shows.

Peace and conflict research has begun to focus on the role of individual transnational corporations in conflicts as well as on the socio-economic conjuncture of societal unrest. However, a more comprehensive picture of conflict that systematically incorporates the political role of TNCs as well as the surrounding economic and legal dynamics has yet to be drawn.

A planned special issue of the ZeFKo Studies in Peace and Conflict will focus on this topic. It aims to bring together contributions that analyse the practices of TNCs as important influencing and contextual factors of conflict and violence. In doing so, it aims to open the field of peace and conflict studies to expertise from neighbouring disciplines such as global political economy, legal sociology, social movement studies, and economic geography. In particular, the special issue aims to better understand which role the activities of transnational corporations play in creating, shaping, preventing or containing (violent) conflicts, including conflicts over the legal and political-economic creation, allocation, distribution, appropriation, preservation and destruction of economic values and ecological livelihoods. The special issue aims also to contribute to a more systematic anchoring of analyses of violence and struggles over the prevailing conditions of production, labour and trade, the legally codified forms of transnational business enterprises and union organizing, the colonial-historical forms of division of labour, property and natural relations, and their regulation through national and transnational practices and institutions.

We invite original empirical and theoretical contributions that address the following or related topics:

- The impact of corporate activities, forms of civil society protest, and the manifestation or transformation of conflict, e.g., impacts of large-scale investment, exploitative labour in supply chains, or ecological consequences;
- Legal regulation of and by TNCs, including the constitutive relationship between TNCs as legal constructs and related struggles over rights, accountability, and international norms.
- Forms of violence, their causes and consequences in the context of the activities of TNCs and their legal-institutional embedding, containment or reinforcement;
- Conflict and violence in the context of union or labour mobilization or the violent suppression of the expression of economic conflict through legal institutions and/or physical violence;
- The constitutionality, internal dynamics, and external relations of TNCs, considering related forms of violence or conflict;
- Militarism, war and corporations;
- Transnational corporations and/or the political economy as a subject of peace and conflict studies in an historical perspective;

In addition to original research articles, we also welcome literature reviews (Literaturberichte) on debates central to the special issue and contributions for the "Forum" section. For more information on these formats, please refer to ZefKo webpage.

### **Planned steps and important deadlines:**

1. **Abstracts**  
Please send a brief abstract of your contribution (not longer than 1.000 words, in English or German) to all three guest editors by **15 January 2023** (h.franzki@fu-berlin.de; carolina.avestena.ude@gmail.com; scheper.christian@gmail.com). Decisions about selected abstracts for the different sections will be made by 20 January 2023.
  
2. **Authors' workshops**  
In order to generate a dialogue among all contributions, there will be an online meeting on 9 February 2023. Full drafts will further be presented and discussed at a workshop, to take place at INTERACT Center for Interdisciplinary Peace and Conflict Research at Free University Berlin on **4 & 5 May 2023** (there is some funding for travel costs and accomodation; online participation is also possible).
  
3. **Submission of manuscripts**  
A complete draft (max. 10.000 Words incl. references) is expected by **17 April 2023**. Submissions for articles, forum articles and literature review will be double blind peer reviewed.
  
4. **Publication**  
Articles accepted for publication will be directly published on a rolling basis - online-first - and the special issue will be published in early 2024 (issue 1/2024). Papers by (co-)authors with an affiliation at a German academic university are published Open Access.

In case of questions, please contact the guest editors via Email (h.franzki@fu-berlin.de; carolina.avestena.ude@gmail.com; scheper.christian@gmail.com).

We are looking forward to receiving your contributions,

Carolina Alves-Vestena, Hannah Franzki, Christian Scheper (Guest Editors)

Hartwig Hummel, Hanna Pfeifer, Solveig Richter, Timothy Williams (Co-Editors-in-Chief)