

**Conflict management and resolution in the wider Mediterranean:
comparing practices between Western and non-Western actors**

Exploratory workshop - Call for papers

23 February 2024

University of Florence

Since the end of the Second World War, conflict management and resolution has evolved, shrunk, expanded, and morphed to reflect the nature of the existing threats to peace; the features of the international system, with its prevailing material and ideational order; and other factors pertaining to the management of peace operations, including partnership, rivalries, availability of resources, and bureaucratic aspects. If the 1990s were the decade that saw an expansion of conflict management and resolution, over the last two decades, conflict management and resolution has witnessed a process of erosion, with some observers calling openly for its crisis (Chandler 2017; Kustermans, Sauer, and Segaert 2021).

The academic literature has discussed this apparent crisis from different perspectives. Studies on stability and stabilisation have noted that in many contexts of intervention there has been a significant rescaling of the ambitions and goals driving peace operations (Muggah 2014; De Coning, Aoi, and Karlsrud 2017). Scholars working on norm contestation research and peace and conflict studies have found a common and prolific ground around the study of discourses and practices contesting the “liberal peace” (Jütersonke et al. 2021). Other studies have advanced “authoritarian conflict management” as an alternative to the “liberal peace” (Lewis et al. 2022). The view of reducing conflict management and resolution to its Western core has been debunked by a number of studies either questioning the endurance of the peacebuilding consensus in light of growing competitive multipolarity (Cunliffe 2019; de Coning 2019) or by showing how new, emerging actors, often grouped together as “non-Western” may see and carry out conflict management activities differently (Badache et al. 2022; Richmond and Tellidis 2014; Call and de Coning 2017). According to some studies, China is, for instance, promoting its own model of conflict management, inspired by a compromise between the need of fostering stability and the rejection of the liberal understanding of human protection (Foot, 2020; Fung, 2019); Russia has begun to promote an alternative paradigm of peacemaking, favoring order and short-term goals over justice and long-term goals (Lewis, 2022); other countries in the wider Mediterranean region, from Turkey to the Gulf countries, have become multifaceted humanitarian actors, suggesting a renewed interest in conflict management and resolution (Elkahlout and Milton 2023).

Rather than leading to an intellectual and epistemological impasse, the apparent crisis of peacebuilding invites for enquiring into its normative, institutional and policy adaptation, forms and areas of convergence and/or tensions between approaches and models of conflict management and resolution, as well as investigating how local populations value such developments. We invite papers that address the above themes and similar ones from different theoretical perspectives, in relation to different areas of conflict management and resolution (e.g. peacekeeping; peacebuilding mediation), taking into consideration different actors and contexts, and developing novel methodological tools of analysis. Submissions by early career-researchers and research projects at different stages of their development are welcome. The convenors will assess and discuss potential publication outcomes during the workshop.

The workshop will be held at the University of Florence on 23rd February 2024.

Interested participants should send an abstract (250 words) and a short bio (150 words) at: icostantini@unior.it and matteo.dian2@unibo.it by 20 December 2023.

Accepted papers will be notified by 10 January 2024.

List of references

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Scientific committee:

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The workshop is organized within the project “*Conflict management and resolution in the wider Mediterranean: comparing practices between Western and non-Western actors*” (MUR/PRIN 2022).