

RETHINKING PEACE AND  
CONFLICT STUDIES

Series Editor: Oliver P. Richmond

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**ALTERNATIVE  
APPROACHES  
IN CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION**

Edited by  
**Martin Leiner**  
**Christine Schliesser**



# Rethinking Peace and Conflict Studies

Series editor  
Oliver P. Richmond  
University of Manchester  
Manchester, UK

“This volume comes at the right time. Conflict resolution and reconciliation are some of the most urgent challenges we face in a time in which the world seems to fall back into patterns of hate and violence that we had hoped to have overcome after the end of the cold war. The editors have assembled an impressive number and variety of authors which represent different contexts and can help us to understand ways to overcome violence. May this book inspire many to find new trust that a different world is possible!”

—Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, *Chair of the Council of the Protestant Church in Germany*

“Expertly edited by Christine Schliesser and Martin Leiner, this comprehensive and well-structured volume collects a number of very useful contributions to the ‘general theme’ of peace-making and conflict resolution. The overall impact of these uniformly excellent chapters is to change our perception on what is the right thing to do before, in, and after conflicts. Highly recommended to anyone with an interest in this topic, including students, scholars, and practitioners.”

—Jeffrey Haynes, *London Metropolitan University, UK*

“This timely publication is a gift to societies all over the world. Building upon insights from different contexts, a diversity of disciplines, and various spheres of society, this book develops a constructive approach to the terrain of conflict resolution studies, that does not only seek to understand conflict and violence, but that seeks ways of building peace, reconciliation and justice in a world of violence and conflict. It is demonstrated how reconciling justice, and justice-seeking reconciliation in all walks of life advance the quest for an ethos and culture of peace. The constructive and innovative approach is also demonstrated in the exploration of the role of various forms of art in the advancement of peace.”

—Nico Koopman, *Vice-rector for Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel, Stellenbosch University, South Africa*

This agenda-setting series of research monographs, now more than a decade old, provides an interdisciplinary forum aimed at advancing innovative new agendas for approaches to, and understandings of, peace and conflict studies and International Relations. Many of the critical volumes the series has so far hosted have contributed to new avenues of analysis directly or indirectly related to the search for positive, emancipatory, and hybrid forms of peace. New perspectives on peacemaking in practice and in theory, their implications for the international peace architecture, and different conflict-affected regions around the world, remain crucial. This series' contributions offers both theoretical and empirical insights into many of the world's most intractable conflicts and any subsequent attempts to build a new and more sustainable peace, responsive to the needs and norms of those who are its subjects.

More information about this series at  
<http://www.springer.com/series/14500>

“Is there a way to overcome deadlock in peace negotiations, or keep security from being derailed by suspicion, basic services disrupted, development truncated by competing interests, collective memory captured by trauma or guilt, and justice construed only as a vehicle for revenge? In *Alternative Approaches in Conflict Resolution* the authors portray the need for a deep reconciliation process as the essential glue that can repair a torn social fabric or facilitate ripeness rather than wait for it as a diplomatic prerequisite. Their analysis and illuminating case studies provide a window into the re-emergence of people-to-people peace-building roles that non-traditional actors can play, raising awareness of foundational values, providing trusted channels for truth-telling and healing, facilitating the process of bonding, and building a social contract to meet the needs of all.”

—David Steele, *Consultant in Conflict Transformation and Adjunct Faculty, Brandeis University, USA*

“Alternative approaches to resolving violent conflicts are urgently needed in the opening decades of a century which has already exposed the limitations of top down state and legal interventions. This superb volume reflects the paradigm shift within the study and practice of conflict resolution that recognizes the importance of neglected local cultural and religious factors. It is to be welcomed by all scholars and practitioners who are seeking a fresh understanding of the role of negotiation, religion and gender, reconciliation, and the arts in peace building on the ground.”

—William Storrar, *Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, USA*

“This collection opens-ups and interrogates two of most important areas of current debate on peace and reconciliation. It suggests how, and why, the role of gender and the role of religion are an unavoidable part of any serious conversation about current conflict and conflict transformation.”

—David Tombs, *Centre for Theology and Public Issues, University of Otago, New Zealand*

Martin Leiner · Christine Schliesser  
Editors

# Alternative Approaches in Conflict Resolution

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*Gus am bris an la agus an teich na sgailean.*

*Für Nadia, Yasmine und Eric*  
Martin Leiner

*To Benny, love of my life,  
and our children Naemi Joy, Chira Jael,  
and Noel Benjamin, source of joy, hope, and inspiration*  
Christine Schliesser

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The book you are holding in your hands has its own history to tell and is the result of the joint endeavor of a number of people. The idea for it was born not least out of a deep frustration while watching the drama of every day's evening news unfold. Despite its seemingly endless creativity and curiosity in other walks of life, humankind still seems dumbfounded when confronted with conflict. On a large scale, war, military, or other kind of violent interventions still seem to be the option of choice for most. Violent conflict—violent response. This mechanism has become as natural to us as breathing in and breathing out.

Yet we know that there are alternative and innovative approaches to conflict resolution. We know that they are out there, they exist and, even better, they work. They are successful in ending conflict and in achieving sustainable peace. They even cost usually a lot less than conventional, more violent forms of intervention. These alternative forms of conflict resolution are at home in all different contexts, countries, peoples, disciplines. And we can learn from all of them.

So our idea started to take shape. We would bring at least some of these protagonists together. We would listen, discuss, learn from each other. We would have different voices from different parts of the world—academics and practitioners, political scientists, philosophers, psychologists, theologians, sociologists, and artists. We would hear of their struggles and of their victories, joined in the quest for a more peaceful world. We met in Zurich, in November 2015. While we convened, we

were reminded of the urgency of our endeavors by both the attacks in Paris that cost 130 people their lives and by France's call for war as her way of response to violent conflict.

Through this volume that arose out of our gathering, we would like to invite you to be part of our ongoing discussion as we seek to better understand not only conflicts but different and alternative ways of solving them. We would like to thank each one of our wonderful contributors who has enriched and challenged our thinking and our acting. We would also like to thank again our generous sponsors who have made all this possible, the Center for Ethics of Zurich University (Prof. Dr. Markus Huppenbauer and the University Research Priority Program for Ethics), the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the Catholic Church of the Canton Zurich, the Alumni Association of Zurich University (ZUNIV), the Association for the Academic Mid-Level Staff of Zurich University (VAUZ), and swisspeace. In its content, the book also profited from the project "Hearts of Flesh-not Stone" funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG). And we thank Dr. Lace Williams-Tinajero for her amazing and unfaltering help in the editorial phase of this book. She helped to resolve conflicts before they arose.

Jena, Germany  
Zürich, Switzerland  
Spring 2017

Martin Leiner  
Christine Schliesser

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## ABBREVIATIONS

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DFG	<i>Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft</i> (German Research Foundation)
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
EHR	Evangelicals for Human Rights
EU	European Union
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—People’s Army
Frelimo	Mozambique Liberation Front
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHI	Global Hunger Index
ICC	International Criminal Court
IR	International Relations
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IS	Islamic State
JCRS	Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
PDCI-RDA	Party of Côte d’Ivoire African Democratic Rally
PIN	Processes in International Negotiations
Renamo	Mozambican National Resistance
RF	Restitution Foundation
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SACC	South African Council of Churches
SNSF	Swiss National Science Foundation

TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
WiB	Women in Black
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

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# Introduction

*Martin Leiner and Christine Schliesser*

**Abstract** Persistent and newly emerging conflicts around the world make the search for successful and sustainable conflict-resolution methods imperative. With traditional military interventions leading to the transformation of entire regions into zones of ongoing instability and violence (e.g., Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan), the study of alternative and less violent approaches to conflict resolution is gaining momentum. This volume, edited by Martin Leiner and Christine Schliesser, originates from the observation witnessed currently regarding the development and implementation of significant and successfully tried and tested, and cost-effective, alternative approaches to conflict resolution. Alternative approaches have the potential to change perceptions on what is the right thing to do before, in, and after conflicts. The individual contributions focus on initiatives from four distinct areas: negotiation, gender and religion, reconciliation and forgiveness, and the arts.

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Alternative approaches · War · Violence · Peace · Negotiation · Religion  
Gender · Reconciliation · Forgiveness · The arts

Persistent and newly emerging conflicts around the world have made the search for successful and sustainable conflict resolution imperative. With traditional military intervention repeatedly leading to the transformation of entire regions into zones of instability and violence (e.g., Iraq, Libya, and Afghanistan), the study of alternative and less violent approaches to conflict resolution has gained momentum.

To this very day, we know much more about the nature of violent conflicts and wars than about ways to end the violence and to bring former enemies together. Dating back to the times of Herodotus and Thucydides, there has been a myriad of works written by historians and cultural or social scientists that attempt to explain why violent conflicts have broken out, what the precise reasons were for each party, how the conflicts evolved, how it was possible that ordinary people were motivated to kill other people, and which side was victorious. Military experts, secret services, and national security-related services and enterprises accumulate a lot of knowledge to be up-to-date on how to create security, how to weaken and eliminate potential and real enemies, how to prepare a war, and how to win it. The media and our entire culture seem to be fascinated with violence.<sup>1</sup>

In a time of global interdependence and weapons of mass destruction capable of eradicating human life on earth within mere hours, a different set of questions *and* answers is needed. We need insights into how to prevent violent conflicts, into how to find ways for peace and reconciliation already in the midst of conflict, and into how to deal with former enemies—with both victims and perpetrators after the first cease fire has taken effect. The work in this field started only in the twentieth century with a small number of peace research programs.<sup>2</sup> Since the 1970s, an increasing number of institutions have started to work on topics such as ‘peace studies,’ ‘conflict resolution/transformation,’ ‘transitional justice,’ and ‘reconciliation.’ Now we count over one hundred of these institutions in the United States (US) alone, with urgently needed expertise as well as an increasing number of highly significant emerging studies. Their theoretical grounding and their practical impact have benefited from the study of different reconciliation processes as the

ones in Northern Ireland, South Africa and—though more contested—in the Balkans, in different countries in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Rwanda.<sup>3</sup> For yet another case of successful reconciliation, we might point to the example of post-war Germany and its relationship with France, Israel, and Poland (Gardner Feldman 2013).

The academic research in this field is still both new and diverse concerning the disciplines involved, the paradigms and methods employed, and the results reached. There is no agreement yet even on the exact name for the research area in question with four different labels being used simultaneously: peace studies, conflict resolution/transformation, transitional justice, and reconciliation. Furthermore, there are approaches that focus exclusively on specific disciplines such as theology, psychology, law, economics, political science, or on the experiences of practitioners. Both a comprehensive overview and a synthesis of these approaches from a transdisciplinary perspective are still lacking.<sup>4</sup> Practitioners today thus work with a heterogeneous set of measures from different disciplines to foster peace and reconciliation, which they adapt to the current situation. The sheer dynamics of this new field account for some of the difficulties for innovations and paradigm changes to gain a foothold.

This volume is based on the observation that we are currently witnessing the development and implementation of significant, and successfully tried and tested alternative approaches in conflict resolution. They have the potential to change our perception on what is the right thing to do before, in, and after conflicts.

In November 2015, some of the protagonists of these innovative approaches gathered at an international and interdisciplinary conference on ‘Alternative Approaches in Conflict Resolution’ in Zurich, Switzerland. The present volume is the fruit of this conference, directed by the principle not to simply reproduce the presentations but to provide the reader with a concise and useful summary of some of the most innovative and effective ideas of the past years in conflict resolution theory and practice. The contributions focus on initiatives from four different areas: negotiation, gender and religion, reconciliation and forgiveness, and the arts.

What is it that makes these approaches ‘alternative’? The approaches we have chosen are not only alternative in the sense that they propose nonviolent or less-violent solutions for conflicts. They are alternative also in the sense that they reflect new developments in actual research on reconciliation. In comparison with former approaches, a transition in