



# **Aarcon Report: A Publication Series on Conflict for and by Practitioners, Academics and Students**

MIKEL VENHOVENS – EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF AARCON REPORT

As part of the Aarhus Centre for Conflict Management, the Aarcon Report aims to be an open-access publication series, and thereby a forum for people with different professional backgrounds, focuses, seniority, and opinions, but all with one focus in common: the understanding of conflict in its broadest sense.

## **World(s) of Conflict(s)**

Conflict has always been a compelling, sensitive, and thought-provoking subject for academics, politicians, corporations, and organizations. And rightfully so. Although conflict has been around since the existence of humankind, today we still find ourselves in the middle of numerous conflicts, ranging from inter-state, communal, to personal. There seems to be no end to the commencement of conflicts or the emergence of new types of crises and conflicts. From conflicts between persons, groups, nations, to global environmental issues caused by the current climate crisis that we are facing today, we as individual human beings play an immense role in all of them.

Society is an accumulation of individuals, all acting both independently and collectively, who are all affected by conflict one way or the other at a certain time in their lives. Conflicts can profoundly affect people's lives, whether it is a global climate crisis, violent ethnic conflict, or a conflict between neighbours. They affect both victims and perpetrators, transform life trajectories, and change communities. While the study of and the urge to understand conflict might be as old as the oldest conflict itself, the knowledge, and ways to approach it are still evolving.

## **A Symbiotic Relationship**

Recognizing the diversity of conflicts worldwide, researchers and professionals are increasingly conducting in-depth, localized studies to understand the unique dynamics and drivers of conflicts. This emphasis on the local context allows for more tailored interventions and conflict mediation strategies that are sensitive to the specific needs and challenges of affected communities and/or individuals (Bozic, 2021; Lopes de Oliveira & Lewenstein, 2023). While the renewed focus on the local context has often been attributed to violent conflicts, 'the local' has been always been present in certain smaller forms and scales of conflict, such as conflict resolution and mediation in issues between individuals and (local) governments or intra-organisational work conflicts.

In the past, the collaboration between academia and the professional world in addressing conflicts has proven to be a crucial and symbiotic partnership (Lokot & Wake, 2023). Academia brings forth research, critical analysis, and a wealth of expertise on the root causes and dynamics of the diverse types of conflicts. NGOs, companies, small organisation, and governmental institutions operating in everyday conflicts possess invaluable practical experience, on-the-ground insights, and a direct connection to affected communities and persons. This partnership allows for the translation of academic knowledge into actionable strategies for peacebuilding, humanitarian aid, policing, environmental activism, and conflict management/mediation, while in turn bringing often valuable information to academia, which might often be hard to come by.

By prioritizing the involvement of local communities, individuals and organisations, and by focusing on their experiences, needs, and perspectives (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013), researchers and practitioners increasingly seek to engage with stakeholders on the ground, to design more effective and sustainable peacebuilding, conflict transformation and reconciliation initiatives.

## **Aarcon Report: A forum for understanding, sharing, and collaboration**

Ultimately, such collaboration fosters a more comprehensive, informed, and effective response to conflicts, whether it is for promoting lasting peace and stability in regions marred by crises, establishing a safe working environment, or battling climate issues. To facilitate this, with Aarcon Report we aim to

be a space for interdisciplinary dialogue between academics, students, and practitioners in the field of conflict. As part of the Aarhus Centre for Conflict Management (Aarcon), we strive to be a platform for people with different professional backgrounds, diverse stories, and approaches to different forms of conflict. We are interested in all forms of conflicts and encourage future contributors to push the boundaries of thinking what conflict entails and highlight often overlooked examples of conflict. Therefore, we would like to see the name of the journal as programmatic, a continuous report on the state of affairs regarding the current debates on conflict in the most diverse and broadest way possible. A report from a diverse group of academics, professionals, students, and anyone who is affected by and interested in the broad range of what conflict studies has to offer.

We would very much like to invite you all in making this publication series a relevant and exciting forum, through which we can share ideas and bring the theoretical and practical closer together in our effort to analyse and understand the diversity of contemporary conflict in a comprehensive and excelling way.

We are very much looking forward to your contributions!

### Bibliography

Bozic, A. 2021. Social innovation in a post-conflict setting: examining external factors affecting social service NGOs. *Development Studies Research*, 8(1), 170-180.

Lokot, M., & Wake, C. 2023. NGO–academia research co-production in humanitarian settings: opportunities and challenges. *Disasters*, 47(2), 464-481.

Lopes de Oliveira, D., & Lewenstein, B. V. 2023. Supporting activism in Latin America: the role of science communication, science journalism, and NGOs in socio-environmental conflicts. *Journalism Studies*, 1-17.

Mac Ginty, R., & Richmond, O. P. 2013. The local turn in peace building: a critical agenda for peace. *Third World Quarterly*, 34(5), 763-783.



### About the author

Mikel Venhovens is a postdoctoral researcher at the Anthropology Department and Human Security program at Aarhus University, and the Moving Matters Research Group at the University of Amsterdam. In addition, he is currently the editor-in-chief of Aarcon Report.

**E-mail:** [mjh.venhovens@cas.au.dk](mailto:mjh.venhovens@cas.au.dk)

[Connect on LinkedIn here.](#)