

# Call for Papers

## ECPR General Conference, Standing Group on Political Violence Université de Montréal, 26-29 August 2015 Political Violence: Identity and Ideology

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The ECPR [Standing Group on Political Violence](#) is organizing a section entitled **Political Violence: Identity and Ideology** for the [European Consortium for Political Research General Conference](#) to be held at the Université de Montréal, 26-29 August 2015. Papers are now invited for submission via [myECPR](#), the deadline is 16 February 2015.

Our principal aim is to bring together a multi-disciplinary group of scholars concerned with questions of political violence and its relationship to identity and ideology from both contemporary and historical perspectives. The section, comprised of four panels, will provide a forum for scholars to engage with a range of questions, including:

- How do ideological claims and identity commitments inform how violence is practised?
- Why do ideas that support violence become salient at particular moments in time and space, and how does this inform our understanding of cycles of contention?
- When do radical ideas facilitate mobilization, and how do they diffuse across contexts?
- How is the interaction between ideology and identity influenced by ideological leaders and to what effects?
- What impact do movement allies and adversaries play in shaping the ideological commitments and identity constructs implicated in political violence?
- In what ways do the identities and ideologies of violent opponents impact state responses?
- And how do ideological commitments constrain the scope of political violence?

We welcome papers that promise new insights from across the disciplines concerned with questions of political violence. Submissions can address conceptual and theoretical issues pertaining to ideology, identity, and violent politics; methodological approaches to understanding the complex interactions between these phenomena, including qualitative and quantitative perspectives; historical studies, and empirical and comparative analyses exploring the impact of ideological and identity commitments on how and why political violence emerges and declines. Papers may look at different forms of political violence, and the range of actors and contexts in which they are used, including social and protest movements, insurgencies, civil wars, terrorist campaigns, repressive regimes, and the behavior of armies, police forces and militias.

By providing a multi-disciplinary forum to explore these issues, we seek to further debates over the role of ideology and identity in violent politics and to facilitate the dissemination of research presented at the conference through publication of selected papers from the section.

Please contact the section conveners with any queries:

Section Chair: Dr. Sarah Marsden: [sm992@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:sm992@st-andrews.ac.uk)  
Section Co-Chair: Dr. William Thomson: [wwt@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:wwt@st-andrews.ac.uk)

**Panel 1: When Civil Resistance Fails: Ideology, Identity and Repressive Regimes**  
Chair: Dr. William Thomson, School of International Relations, University of St Andrews

Recent history has witnessed a wave of nonviolent civil resistance campaigns, from Ukraine and Hong Kong to Palestine and the 'Arab Spring'. Some of these protest movements have achieved political gains, however many have been brutally repressed, leading to tens of thousands of deaths with many more displaced. In other instances civil resistance movements have experienced less overt oppression through repressive policies, illegal imprisonment and structural violence. Many of these cases have seen divisions between identity groups widen and ideological positions become more entrenched. Valuable progress has been made in explaining the circumstances under which civil resistance 'works', however, in many cases war has filled the void where civil resistance has failed, spilling over into neighbouring states and pulling in the international community and violent oppositional groups. Given the catastrophic human cost of failed civil resistance initiatives, it is important to evaluate and understand how and why nonviolent civil resistance fails. This panel brings together scholars interested in understanding the complexity of state-activist interactions, examining the ways identity and ideology influence civil resistance actions and state responses to these initiatives. Overall, the papers shall explore the main reasons when and why civil resistance fails to change the status quo, which will in turn open up discussion towards alternative approaches to social and political change.

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**Panel 2: Ideology without Borders? Violent Discourses in the Age of the Internet**  
Chair: Dr. Aurélie Campana, Department of Political Science, Université Laval

Many authors agree that discourses promoted by clandestine violent organizations result from the interactions of macro-narratives with local claims, values, traditions, symbols, and memories. At a time when the Internet erases boundaries and helps create virtual links between unrelated groups, how might we reevaluate the influence of broader narratives on the constitution of violent clandestine organizations' discourses? This panel addresses four interrelated processes that shape such discourses in the age of the Internet: 1) the mechanisms of diffusion and circulation of broader left-wing, right-wing, and jihadist ideologies; 2) the adaptation of these macro-discourses to different contexts, organizational types and differing objectives, and their role in justifying the use of violence; 3) the competition between different identity claims that emerge from these processes within the same organizational or ideological family; and 4) the changes in discourses, both at the local and global levels, that result from these diffusion-adaptation-competition processes.

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**Panel 3: Apocalyptic Worldviews, Terrorism and Political Violence**  
Chair: Dr. Frances Flannery, Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Terrorism and Peace, James Madison University

Apocalyptic worldviews share a common identity boundary, between the saved and the damned, most simply, between good and evil. The nature of those identities is specific to particular ideological traditions, a range of which have been invoked in the service of apocalyptic ideas, including the monotheistic religions, new religious movements, environmentalism and revolutionary political movements. In pursuing the end of days, such movements are frequently driven to create a catastrophic rupture in the status quo to usher in a radically new social order, or to destroy the world as we know it. Given the dramatic violence that can accompany efforts to bring about the end of days, this panel responds to calls for more concerted attention to be paid to apocalyptic worldviews and their consequences. In doing so, this panel positions apocalypticism firmly in its political, social and temporal context. Specific questions the panel seeks to address include: In what ways

are apocalyptic movements both catalysts of, and a response to social and political change? How do apocalyptic worldviews relate to identity conflict informed by ethnocentrism and nationalism? What informs why violence emerges at particular moments in time and how does this inform cycles of contention? How are intra-movement differences over ideology, tactics and targets navigated and to what effect? How do movement activists understand and relate to the afterlife, the time beyond the apocalypse? And how might those agencies tasked with responding to such movements work to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic violence?

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**Panel 4:           The Role of Ideology in Violent Politics: Mobilisation, Strategy and Targeting**

Chair:               Dr. Sarah Marsden, Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence,  
University of St Andrews

Implicated across a range of features central to militant movements, ideology is ubiquitous in the literature on violent politics, considered relevant to everything from mobilisation to targeting. However, it is often weakly theorised and its application to questions of terrorism and political violence has often been overly broad. Equally, the way different ideological positions interact with identity claims to inform how militant actors engage with competitors, supporters and opponents demands further attention. To examine the question of ideology's role in conflict in more detail, this panel speaks to four themes. First, how should we conceptualise ideology in relation to political violence? Second, how are different ideological and identity claims framed and operationalised by movement leaders to mobilise recruitment and support, when is this successful and why does it fail? Third, what is the nature and effect of ideological debates within and between movements over appropriate goals and tactics and how do these relate to identity claims about supporters and opponents? Fourth, beyond straightforward ideas about the need for targets of violence to be broadly consonant with the ideological claims of the group, how do ideational and identity constructs inform the object of violence?