

## **VIOLENCE IN URBAN SPACES SINCE THE SECOND HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: COMPARATIVE, TRANSNATIONAL AND ENTANGLED PERSPECTIVES**

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**Period:** Contemporary

Violence has become one of the major threats to urban societies. Although it is true that cities have a long history of breeding violence, the international upheavals of the late 1960s have intensified the threats associated with urban violence. The wave of urban protests which evolved since the 1980s and also the manifold urban unrests in the cities of Africa and in the Americas of the early 21st century added emphasis to these threats. This collective violence mostly originated from two sources: from urban social movements (M. Castells, *City and the Grassroots*, 1983) and from urban youth groups/gangs. The reasons for this intensification of the perception and/or of the practise of urban violence are not well researched. The related scholarly debates (in Western Europe) mainly focus on three processes: the final breakthrough of mass consumer society (Z. Bauman, *Consuming Life*, 2007), the changing culture of control (D. Garland, *Culture of Control*, 2001) and the transition from industrial to urban society (H. Lefèbvre, *La revolution urbaine*, 1972 ). Against this background, the main session aims at bringing together studies which not mainly focus on single protest events but try to put them into broader, especially comparative, transnational or entangled perspectives. Contributions can be made not only by historians but also by scholars active in Sociology, Ethnography, Criminology, Architecture, and Social Geography.

Following the latest innovative studies in the field of violence research, we would highly welcome contributions which see violence as a pattern of communication, which could include physical as well as symbolic violence. Contributors should also be aware that urban space is not only shaped by buildings, roads, and other tactile objects but also by actions, perceptions and imaginations of various actors such as representatives of public authorities (among them the police), media, experts, inhabitants (divided by gender, ethnicity and social strata). Urban space was (and is) therefore never a given fact but always a contested notion, open for actions, imaginations, and changes.

In order to give the main session a better coherence we are especially interested in papers which in comparative / transnational perspective focus on at least one of the following five key dimensions:

**Urban:** What were its influences on the use, the imagination and the restructuring of urban space and what were the typical urban elements of these acts of collective violence?

**Aims:** What were the aims of these acts of urban violence: Did they aim more at identity formation (be it based on ethnic or gender aspects) or more at fostering social or political change?

**Media:** Which role was played by the media in the communicative processes surrounding acts of collective violence?

**State:** Which tactics were employed by state institutions (especially the police) in the handling these acts of collective violence?

**Transfers:** Which transnational flows of ideas were discernible, not only relating to the patterns of violence and its media coverage but also in fighting this collective urban violence?