

Empathy Dynamics in Conflict Transformation

Locations	Room 420, Muirhead Tower
Date(s)	Monday 4th November 2013 (17:00-18:30)
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Download	Add to Calendar (/events/lectures/empathy-dynamics-in-conflict-transformation.aspx?ical=true)

The ICCS Seminar Series continues with a talk from Professor Lynne Cameron, Professor of Applied Linguistics at the Open University and ESRC Global Uncertainties Research Fellow, and Simon Weatherbed, Programme Director for Responding to Conflict. The talk will report a case study of empathy in conflict transformation and peace building initiatives in northern Kenya, implemented as part of the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium and Diocese of Maralal Integrated Peace and Livelihood project (funded by CAFOD). The three pastoralist communities in the area have a long history of cattle raiding, which escalated in recent years because of the availability of guns, initially for protection but increasingly used for revenge and attack, resulting in 40-50 deaths per year over the period 2005-10. Conflict transformation initiatives have reduced this to only sporadic incidents in the last two years. We visited the area in March 2012 to collect interviews with project leaders and key players as part of the ESRC-funded research project, 'Living with Uncertainty', which is investigating the dynamics of empathy and dialogue in response to violence. Interviewees described their lives before, during and after conflict events. The data is analysed in terms of the relations between individuals (the dynamics of empathy) and knock-on effects to relations between groups (across communities or intra-tribal age-groups). Findings show how micro-level interactions and dialogues contribute to building longer-term trust and social empathy, and how imaginative conflict transformation creates and uses affordances for such interactions to take place successfully. For more information on the Institute for Conflict Cooperation and Security, visit their [website \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/conflict-cooperation-security/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/conflict-cooperation-security/index.aspx).

