

The Interdisciplinary Seminar on Conflict and Violence

promotes interdisciplinary exchanges among faculty and graduate students interested in the topics of conflict, violence and peace from a wide range of departments across campus

Maarten van Bezouw

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Social psychological pathways to political inaction



Maarten van Bezouw is a PhD candidate at the Sociology Department of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands. He received his bachelor's degree in Philosophy of Science, and bachelor's and master's degree in Social Psychology from the University of Groningen. He subsequently co-authored two research reports about street protest and riots, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Safety and Justice. Maarten is part of the international comparative research project "Polpart" (www.polpart.org), which aims at explaining institutionalized versus non-institutionalized political participation in nine different countries. Within this project, the focus of his research is

on the social psychological underpinnings of political inaction from a social identity perspective, using both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

ABSTRACT: Participation in any form of political action, except for voting in national elections, is only done by a small minority of citizens worldwide. Yet, looking at popular news media as well as academic research on political participation, the emphasis lies by and large on those who are politically active. We know much more about what drives people to join a street protest than we know about what keeps people at home when they face similar grievances. Is there something unique about the social psychology of political inaction, or is it simply the absence of motivating factors to become active? In this talk I will explore the often-overlooked social identity management strategy of "social creativity"; a cognitive strategy that helps people cope with threats to their identity without changing the group's status through collective action. I will illustrate this with a qualitative study among Latino Americans. Next to that, I will relate social creativity to system justification beliefs and cognitive dissonance that are similarly relevant mechanisms for political inaction, and show how people use these to discuss inaction in focus group discussions in Brazil, Hungary and The Netherlands. Taken together, this work provides new ways of understanding why people might refrain from political action even when they face an adverse situation.

Thursday, October 26, 2017 3:00 - 4:00 P.M.

Room 423 Tobin Hall

Open to everyone Refreshments served

For more information: www.umass.edu/peacepsychology 413-545-5957



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
Peace and Violence
PROGRAM

UMASS AMHERST DEPARTMENT OF
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