

Urban violence: causes, consequences and characteristics

Conveners:

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More than half of the world's citizens today live in cities, and countries in the global South are home to the most rapid urbanization processes. In this context, urban violence is recognized as a severe threat and security challenge to the social, economic and political development of cities and the establishment of 'inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable' cities features as one of the Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the UN in 2015 (SDG 11). Yet, our conceptual and empirical understanding of urban violence remain limited and has been held back partly because different strands of research have focused on different dimensions of urban violence. For instance, from a sociological perspective, previous research has tapped into urban crime and gang violence, while the political science oriented literature has zoomed in on more organized forms of violence, such as violent protest, civil war-related violence, and terrorist attacks. Moreover, while some more general typologies of urban violence exist, these have not sought to distinguish violence that occurs in urban centers, from violence that is essentially caused by processes related to urbanization and urban life. Thus, we know little of how urban violence is connected to, and/or distinct from, other forms of political violence that happens in rural areas or at a national scale.

In this panel, we aim to offer both theoretical and empirical insights about urban violence, its causes, and efforts to promote secure cities. From a peace and conflict perspective, the panel will assess the conceptual foundations of urban violence, and map its empirical manifestations. From a development perspective, we also strive to shed light on the roles of international, national, and local actors in preventing and mitigating urban violence. Two papers are already defined and additional ones will be added following the open call.

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