



Evidence in Conflict Problems Researching Divided Societies and Cities

**Conflict in Cities - Workshop III
29 - 31 March 2007
CRASSH, University of Cambridge**

Workshop description

This Workshop is part of CRASSH's multi-disciplinary 'Evidence' programme (see: www.crassh.cam.ac.uk); and part of the ESRC - New Security Challenges project 'Conflict in Cities' (see: www.conflictincities.org).

It focuses on problems in collecting, evaluating, interpreting and using evidence in societies which are divided on national or ethnic lines, however defined. All the 'normal' research problems can arise in heightened form whether we take individual cities or wider social formations; as well, there are problems, which are particular to situations of division or conflict. Conflicting evidence is commonplace, some of it produced, used or abused by the protagonists. Conflict exacerbates problems about what counts as 'evidence', the relative merits of different types, the (un)reliability of different sources, and what is (un)acceptable 'beyond reasonable doubt'. Researchers and other interpreters of such situations, whether dealing directly with division and conflict, or with other topics which are shaped by them, face a variety of practical, theoretical and ethical issues, including problems of (mis) interpretation, secrecy official or unofficial, and disinformation, evasion or misrepresentation whether or not intentional. These call for extra effort, empathy, and reflexivity with respect to 'balance' or 'objectivity', and to the responsibilities of the researcher as citizen.

By bringing together researchers with direct experience of these and related problems, we hope to develop a better understanding of the challenges involved, and of possible solutions to them. By comparing across different divided societies and conflicts of varying severity, across different disciplines, methodologies and levels of analysis, and taking account of the problems of evidence in so-called 'normal' societies, we will hopefully reach some useful and perhaps unexpected conclusions.

Organisers:

Prof. James Anderson, Visiting Research Fellow, CRASSH, and Co-Investigator of 'Conflict in Cities' project

Dr. Wendy Pullan, Department of Architecture, University of Cambridge, and Principle Investigator of 'Conflict in Cities' project

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