

Vision Statement

BICC's vision is a more peaceful world.

Mission Statement

BICC's mission is to conduct policy relevant research in response to the problems of organised violence and to explore ways to address them. To do so, BICC engages in active exchanges with scholars, politicians, practitioners and civil society organisations.



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Introduction

Since the foundation of BICC in 1994, formations of organised violence have changed. So-called new wars, characterised by asymmetric and protracted warfare, have emerged as the most visible feature of violent conflicts. The conjunct debate about “fragile” states has portrayed a gloomy picture of prevalent “anarchy” and “chaos” in several regions of the world. State sovereignty and world order, as many analysts argue, is currently threatened by warlords, pirates, bandits and terrorists. In the last two decades, a long list of military interventions by external actors took place under the condition of these “new wars”. Such military operations accelerated structural re-adjustments of the intervening armies as well as the emergence of new actors such as private-military companies. Due to the introduction of concepts such as “counter-insurgency”, the “comprehensive approach” and “hybrid warfare” a clear-cut boundary between peace and war, between the civil and the military, which was a pre-assumption of classical research on conversion, can often enough no longer be drawn.

In parallel, we are currently observing dramatic changes in warfare, which can be described as a widening of the technological gap: While, particularly in the United States, a revolution in military affairs is driving the development of ever more sophisticated high-tech weapons (robotics), non-statutory armed groups effectively employ simple yet nevertheless highly lethal means (e.g. improvised explosive devices) or gain access to advanced weaponry by states supporting them.

Along with these amorphous dynamics of violent conflicts, many parts of the world did not experience massive de-militarisation, envisioned in the heydays of conversion in the early 1990s. What is more, conventional forms of warfare continue to exist. They indicate that the times of military confrontations between nation states may not be over. Since the 9/11 attacks, the United States has increased its defence spending drastically. Many other states have also continued to expand their conventional military arsenal over the past years. In East Asia and the Middle East, an arms race among competing nation states for supremacy is taking place. Moreover, regions such as the Sahel, the Great Lakes region or

Central America have been flooded by small arms and light weapons (SALW); even the proliferation of nuclear weapons has become more likely.

While these manifold dynamics and trends partly confirm the continued importance of classical conversion research, they also challenge it. As no other institute in the world is so strongly associated with the term “conversion” as BICC, this Concept Paper is the basis for deliberations on how conversion can be defined in the present day to provide meaningful answers for achieving a more peaceful world.

BICC is a non-profit, non-partisan think tank, mainly owned by the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. BICC combines applied research with advisory services and capacity development. In the course of the re-structuring of BICC in 2013, its profile and conceptual approach were critically reviewed. In a number of intensive discussions and workshops with staff members, and in consultations with long-standing companions of the Center, BICC developed a new concept of applied research that should frame the institute’s activities for the next five years. The aim of this Concept Paper is to provide a concise understanding of the future themes of BICC.

BICC follows an approach that integrates applied and policy relevant research with concrete knowledge exchange with policymakers, practitioners and the public. Hereby BICC intends to occupy a unique place in the academic arena of Peace and Conflict Research worldwide. To reach this goal, two approaches are decisive. First, BICC will primarily focus on empirical research, particularly based on field research in (post-)conflict areas. Second, with its desire for knowledge exchange, we intend to intensify the mutual relationships between applied research and advice in manifold ways. This does not only include concise policy recommendations, but also research-based capacity development and technical advice on the ground, as well as public relations work. Our activities are supported by components of GIS and data management. We intend to link advice and capacity development to research-based knowledge and channel its practical experiences back into the academic community.

Organised violence

BICC's research activities concentrate on the reflective and policy relevant analysis of organised violence. Organised violence refers not only to armed conflicts between two or more groups, but also includes military and security structures.¹ Thus, research at BICC places great emphasis on the military, military industry and public defence budgets. Moreover, we will contribute to practices that aim to reduce violence and enhance peacebuilding as well as the transformation of violent conflicts. Our thematic focus on organised violence is also reflected in its understanding of conversion. Whereas we remain concerned about the increase in defence spending and military arsenals in many parts of the world, today's patterns of conflict show that conversion cannot simply be conceptualised as a linear process from war to peace. Conversion, therefore, should not only focus on the redistribution of military resources for civilian means, as in its classical understanding. In our understanding, it also includes all the activities and processes that respond to the more general problems that organised violence poses to society.

BICC's understanding of conversion abstains from prescribing any particular content for possible conversion activities. In line with this, both the nature of the problems of organised violence as well as the concrete process of conversion itself remains open. We can thus accommodate a great variety of understandings of what conversion is (or ought to be) all about. We are convinced that this open approach is better suited to address the many challenges that organised violence poses to societies in the 21st century.

Research at BICC is based on three considerations:

- \ First, BICC emphasises the fundamentally contingent nature of organised violence. Organised violence is not forever fixed and static. It continually changes and varies depending on time and place.

¹ \ In our understanding violence refers to the intentional exercise of physical force to inflict injury or damage to a certain object. Violence against humans includes, for example, killing, rape or torture. "Organised violence" would include the planned and co-ordinated application of violence by social and political groups (as opposed to uncoordinated and spontaneous violence by individuals). It should be noted that this definition does not distinguish between legal violence ("legitimate force") and illegal violence or, for that matter, between state and non-state violence.

- \ Second, BICC relates dynamics of organised violence to the wider society in which it is embedded in different ways. From this perspective, organised violence is always a situated phenomenon, which should not be artificially isolated and contained when investigated.
- \ Third, and most importantly, BICC perceives organised violence as a problem—regardless of its manifestation. Yet, to approach organised violence as a problematic phenomenon must not necessarily express itself in a clarion call for overcoming it once and for all. One may well, for example, accept humanitarian justifications for military interventions. By extension, one may emphasise the importance of the state and its military and security apparatus for establishing and maintaining social and/or political order. Nevertheless, any such normative argument would always have to be grounded in a rigorous process of critical reflection of the underlying assumptions by which it is informed.

This understanding of the simultaneously contingent, situated and problematic nature of organised violence helps BICC to identify current or anticipated processes of conversion.

The cohesion of our research agenda is further strengthened by its particular approach to conducting research. Two principles, reflexivity and policy relevance, will fundamentally guide research at BICC (for more detail on how, see "BICC's approach").

BICC's research themes

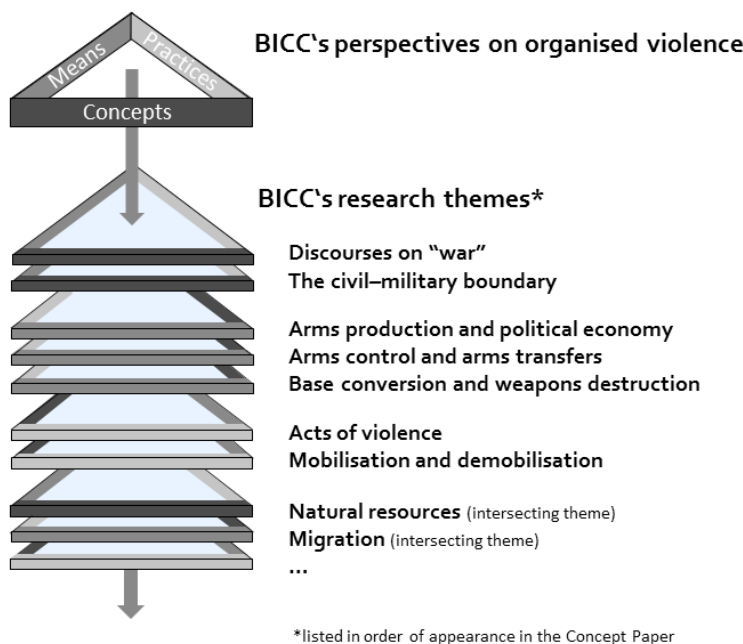
BICC identifies the following three perspectives on organised violence:

- 1\ Concepts,
- 2\ Means,
- 3\ Practices.

The perspective of *concepts* addresses any attempt to either legitimate or de-legitimate expressions of organised violence, whether this relates, for example, to the build-up or reduction of military forces or to the actual use of physical force. A conceptual approach arises from a consideration of discourses. *Means* refers to instruments and the material infrastructure of organised violence, such as defence industries and weapons systems (from small arms to aircraft carriers), but also military bases. The starting point of research is the physical artefact of organised violence. *Practices* describe organised violence in terms of processes, normative rules, social relations and visible behaviour. Practices can relate to strategies of mobilisation and demobilisation as much as to actual acts of violence themselves.

These three perspectives are interwoven, and no single one can be investigated without the other. For the sake of analysis, the separation into three perspectives is beneficial as, depending on the point of departure, different theories, methods and questions come to the fore. The recent development of drone technology (“means”), for example, goes along with a legitimisation of certain “concepts” of war (e.g. “state of exception”), and includes concrete “practices” (long-distant warfare; targeted killing; new actors). Despite the entanglement of the three perspectives, to distinguish them from each other is pivotal for conceptualising our research. In each of them, a particular research focus is needed that has significant influence on the phrasing of the research question, the selection of the theoretical approach, the design of research methods and the generation of knowledge.

Graph 1
BICC's Research themes



In line with our focus on the complex social processes that accompany manifestations of organised violence, we have identified two additional themes, “natural resources” and “migration”. Both themes are considered with the explicit aim of uncovering multiple inter-linkages with organised violence. These themes also help to gain a deeper understanding of how violence is organised in society.

Perspective I: Concepts of organised violence

Organised violence is subject to constant interpretation and reinterpretation. Shifting discourses legitimise some manifestations (e.g. the state and its military and security forces) and de-legitimise others (e.g. warlords or pirates). The securitisation of certain issues and the development of risk scenarios (e.g. “climate wars”, “terrorism”) are political statements to justify organised violence. By using discourse analysis, BICC will decipher the world views, codes, symbols and terminologies through which various forms of organised violence are normatively framed in everyday parlance; for example in policy papers, but also in academic publications. We believe that the study of the following two themes can contribute to a better understanding of present concepts of organised violence:

- \ *Discourses on “war”*: We observe a wide gap between the narrow legal definition of “war” and the use of military violence by many states. Exemplary for this gap was the discussion about whether the situation in Afghanistan during the military intervention (2001–2014) was to be described as war or not. Meanwhile, it has become fashionable in international policy circles to avoid the term war altogether. Instead, one can observe the rise of a wide range of terms that aim to link forms of organised violence to generally accepted norms of morality.
- \ *Civil-military boundary*: The clear-cut boundary between the military and the civil, which classical research on conversion seldom reflected on, is controversially discussed today. Rather

than denoting two separate fields of activity, the civil and the military often merge in various ways. Taking into account this blurring, the term “nexus” has recently featured more prominently in academic debate than the term “boundary”. A critical reflection on this change of terminology is still needed. We feel that this debate not only has a practical dimension that has an impact on means (e.g. dual-use goods) and practices (e.g. CIMIC), but also is of great interest to our understanding of the world. If the civil conflates with the military and if war can no longer be separated from peace, then we will have to question the residual meanings of these terms.

Perspective II: Means of organised violence

The organisation of violence manifests itself in the materialised world of weapons, military vehicles, munitions, equipment, and infrastructure (e.g. bases). The material perspective is interrelated with specific forms of knowledge production, a certain worldview and behaviour of actors. In this respect, the means of organised violence are always connected to certain concepts and practices. Furthermore, research on arms or military infrastructure/ bases contributes to a deeper understanding of how organised violence consists in material form. Starting from the angle of the physical means of organised violence, four research themes are of particular interest to BICC:

- \ *Arms production and political economy*: We have a strong interest in understanding the logic and strategies of arms production. In this respect, military budgets, dual-use goods, the arms industry and its marketing and price politics as well as its trends of creating international consortia, etc. are highly relevant. Concurrently, we see that the technological revolution in the arms industry (drones, robotics, 3D-printing, smart weapons, etc.) has a deep impact on how the face of war will change in the future. Due to a growing number of arms producing

countries, competition on the international arms markets will increase. In this context, the transfer of defence technologies and the means of weapons production are of particular importance. Furthermore, we are interested in how weapons fit into the socio-cultural context (“gun culture”; “Kalashnikov culture”) and how this has an impact on weapons availability and demand.

- \ *Arms control and arms transfers:* We are particularly interested in understanding the patterns of the international arms trade and the risks it poses to arms control and political stability at different levels (local, national, regional such as the EU and the AU, international). For instance, armament dynamics in the Middle East and Asia, fuelled not least by weapons from North America and Europe, are arguably increasing the likelihood of violent conflicts in these regions. Besides the control of major conventional weapons, we will put special emphasis on SALW and possibilities of control such as PSSM². Despite the Arms Trade Treaty, the availability and flow of SALW in many post-conflict countries remains a severe barrier to de-escalating violent conflicts and peacebuilding.
- \ *Base conversion and weapons destruction:* We consider military bases to be spatial structures of organised violence. In our work, we are thus especially interested in the consequences of base conversion, including the possible conflicts that might accompany such conversion processes. We are continuing our longstanding work on this topic and we offer a unique academic expertise in base and industrial conversion (re-use of sites, effects on the job market as well as regional and community urban planning) to the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and its communities. Arms and ammunition rarely have the potential for being converted to civilian use, so destruction is the preferred option. Here, too, we are interested in the effects

of different methods of weapons disposal and ask how dangerous situations resulting from this—both for the security of the population and the environment—can be avoided.

Perspective III: Practices of organised violence

Finally, BICC will investigate social practices related to organised violence on different aggregate levels (e.g. groups, states, systems, etc.). Two overall fields of social practices are of particular importance to the work of BICC:

- \ *Mobilisation and demobilisation:* The “military” field may encompass social practices that consider certain forms of organised violence as a problem and implement measures to re-configure and/or curtail its either conceptual or material manifestation (as is commonly an aspect of so-called security sector reform—SSR—projects); vice versa, social practices could seek to expand and strengthen the legitimising discourses and means of organised violence. A good example for that are arms races among rival states, but also the massive military build-up of the United States’ Armed Forces in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. By way of contrast, practices of demobilisation can be encountered in various peace- and state-building activities undertaken by international organisations, NGOs and development agencies in post-conflict environments. This includes disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes. Interesting research can be done on the interplay between locally accepted rules and internationally imposed norms, such as “good governance” or “liberal peace”.
- \ *Acts of violence:* If we understand organised violence as a field of social practice, it discloses itself perhaps most immediately and concretely on the actual “killing field”—in the relation between the perpetrator and the victim of physical violence, in the very act of inflicting

² \ Physical security and stockpile management

bodily injury, psychological violence, or death. Such practices vary over time and space, in line with changes in the concepts and means of organised violence. Examples include drone attacks as well as, possibly, rape as a weapon of war. The gender dimension of violence also deserves particular attention. We intend to critically examine the ways in which such fields of direct violence shape—and are shaped by—the concrete behaviour of the actors (perpetrators and victims) involved.

As these research perspectives and sub-themes show, BICC has a strong interest in understanding how and in what way organised violence is interlinked with a given social order. This interest extends to two intersecting research themes at BICC: Natural resources and migration. BICC identified both topics because of (a) their high political relevance and (b) the Center's particular expertise in these topics.

Intersecting theme I: Natural resources

Natural resources are often discussed with regard to questions of scarcity, inequality, competition, and conflicts. Whereas BICC acknowledges that the study of violent conflict cannot be reduced to questions of resources alone, it believes that the interrelations between organised violence and the political economy surrounding the exploitation and use of certain resource types deserves further academic scrutiny. The distinction between concepts, means and practices of organised violence can serve as a useful guide for developing further research questions in this context. For a start, many concepts to legitimise organised violence refer to the importance of gaining access to and control over natural resources. Moreover, in order to fund the acquisition of weapons and pay their soldiers, armed groups and state militaries commonly rely on the exploitation and sale of certain resources. In this sense, access to resources is not only an objective but also a condition of organised violence. It decides upon the kind of means violent actors can afford. Concrete practices include armed groups or

parts of a national army physically controlling and taxing mining areas or governments that use off-budget revenues from natural resources to fund their military apparatus.

Intersecting theme II: Migration

BICC understands migration as a permanent feature of social life. Yet, it has been—and continues to be—subjected to external influence and regulation, both by state and non-state actors. This includes attempts to promote freedom of movement as much as it entails measures to channel or restrict it. Examples range from the encampment of refugees and human trafficking to the shielding of the European Union's external borders, and forced repatriation. From this perspective, we critically examine connections between the movements of people and organised violence. On the level of concepts, in particular, we scrutinise discourses that consider migrants as a threat and suggest corresponding strategies for dealing with them. In line with our overall research approach, we also take into account the relevant means and practices of organised violence, such as fences, camps, surveillance technologies, border patrols, identity checks and deportations, also showing a keen interest in the strategies migrants use to cope with the physical violence they are exposed to.

BICC's approach

BICC is an institute that conducts applied research. This understanding is rooted in the conviction that researchers do not sit in the “ivory tower” and communicate exclusively with a distinct academic community but rather that BICC's research has to produce recommendations, results and approaches that should inform policymakers, practitioners and the public alike. Here we are keenly aware of the fact that research not only stimulates knowledge generation for the “outside world”, but that the non-academic world also stimulates research. In this regard, BICC's approach corresponds to the core aspects of transdisciplinary research.

BICC's approach is twofold: On the one hand, we define clear-cut criteria that lead all research activities. On the other, we believe in a strong exchange of knowledge with non-academics, which includes different levels of activities (policy and technical advice, capacity development, etc.). BICC's aim is to establish a “knowledge circle” at the interface between applied research and practices. All of our activities—our applied research as well as our activities to operationalise the knowledge circle—are carried out in close co-operation with local and international partners. As a general principle, we aim to feed back our findings to the people concerned and consequently adapt our dissemination strategy to local contexts (e.g. stakeholder workshops, publications in local languages, radio programmes, etc.).

Applied research

BICC's aim is to carry out applied research, which ideally should be perceived as providing innovative impulses towards ongoing debates. Our applied research follows the DFG-guidelines “Gute Wissenschaftliche Praxis”. In general, BICC's research follows four basic principles:

\ *BICC's research is problem-oriented.*

Our approach to the complexity of how to understand organised violence is to acknowledge that relevant research results can only be obtained by looking at a concrete problem from various perspectives. In its entirety, the multiple facets of organised violence can be grasped best

through a problem-oriented approach, which is not constrained by the logic of disciplinary boundaries. We acknowledge that problem-oriented research cannot be built on one theory or discipline alone, but rather has to acknowledge the complexity of its subject. This is why we believe that organised violence can be better understood if the same problem is looked at from various perspectives.

We therefore see organised violence as a “boundary object” of transdisciplinary research.

\ *BICC's research is policy relevant.* BICC intends to make a difference and seeks to provoke social change with respect to organised violence. We aim at preparing the outcomes of our applied research in such a manner that they reach relevant stakeholders and decision-makers.

\ *BICC's research is reflective.* First and foremost, “being reflective” means that our research discloses its normative basic assumptions and critically reflects on these. On a general and abstract level, a critical reflection could be to question the basic dichotomies that enable us to envision any process of conversion in the first place, for example between “war” and “peace” or between such a thing as a “military” and a “civilian” sphere. Critical reflection means to seriously think about the normative validity one attaches to the goals towards which a process of conversion is directed.

\ *BICC's research is empirical.* BICC carries out empirical research, which stretches from remote sensing and GIS to discourse analyses and intensive field research. We usually conduct our research in the field (which may be located anywhere, not necessarily in distant places) and puts an emphasis on participatory methods and problem-oriented research designs. Particularly with respect to empirical research in (post-)conflict areas, we have developed mechanisms for carrying out field research under volatile political and humanitarian circumstances (see “Ethical policy”).

BICC's research is to be strengthened by greater academic exchange and increased visibility in academic circles. The free online availability of our publications will continue to be highly valuable for a broad knowledge exchange beyond academic circles. To reach the goal of gaining larger visibility in the academic world, however, our future research will be guided by the following approaches:

- \ BICC aims to achieve congruence between projects and academic qualifications of its research staff. This goal should be reached by acquiring long-term projects (2-5 years), in which the qualification of the researchers (PhD dissertation, habilitation, etc.) should ideally be defined as a project result and become directly included in the research project. In this respect, we hope to increase the number of PhD dissertations written at BICC.

Including the career-brackets of the staff members in the daily work of BICC, BICC-researchers should also have the opportunity to gain experiences in teaching by giving courses and seminars at the University of Bonn and elsewhere.

- \ BICC's publication strategy includes several pathways. A publication in a BICC Series (*Working Papers*, etc.) should be regarded as an in-between step towards other publications. While peer-reviewed journals is the envisaged platform for BICC-researchers, each project will necessarily have its own publication strategy, which may also include policy papers, monographs or edited volumes.

BICC aims to increase its participation in international conferences and workshops and to thus strengthen its academic reputation. One means of presenting our research and of consolidating the Center's profile in the academic world is an annual academic conference, organised by BICC.

Creating a knowledge circle

Applied sciences often understand knowledge production as a one-way exercise in which research is fed into the non-academic world. Such an approach

hardly takes into consideration that research can benefit strongly from experiences in "real life" and that a knowledge transfer should ideally be reciprocal. Often, formats and ways of how to position a certain "message" in the non-academic world are not reflected enough. This is a key reason for why the gap between research and practices continues to be very large.

BICC understands itself as an institute between the "real" and the "academic" world that takes its mandate for knowledge transfer in both directions very seriously. We believe in mutual learning processes. On the one hand, BICC aims to feed its research results into policy and technical advice, as well as capacity development; on the other hand, BICC's practical experiences should open up avenues for further academic research. This, ideally, results in a knowledge circle, which bridges the gap between research and practice. In this respect, we are aware that the production of relevant knowledge through applied research is one thing, and that to implement it in practice is another. If applied research is to have an impact, we believe, it will need to be credible, relevant and legitimate and will have to be translated into clear, consumable language. In the future, BICC intends to continue or even strengthen the following formats to bridge the gap between the academic and the non-academic world. In other words, all of these formats are research-based and should provide research with new insights:

- \ *Policy advice*: By conducting applied research, BICC finds itself in a privileged position to inform policy debates with empirical knowledge in a unique way. BICC is reaching the policy level through tailor-made publications, presentations and informal talks. Depending on the concrete topic, we will provide policy advice to key policy circles in Germany (MPS, ministries, political foundations), and the European Union, as well as to policymakers in countries in which we are conducting research and/or providing technical advice, and to international/regional organisations (e.g. UN, AU or ECOWAS).

Moreover, BICC is part of influential policy advice initiatives (e.g. annual *Peace Report*) and represented in key advisory committees on peace and conflict (e.g. Committee on Crisis Prevention at the German Foreign Office). While there is no general rule on how to influence policy, we engage in formats such as back door talks, small/ informal workshops and strategic circulation of non-papers .

- \ *Technical advice and capacity development:* BICC specialises in a number of technical fields, such as DDR, SSR and SALW. In these thematic fields, we carry out trainings and provide short- to long-term technical advice in co-operation with local partners. These different types of activities aim to improve the capacities of partner organisations and have to be seen as a crucial part of the knowledge circle. Via technical advice we also enter the political arena and are able to provide policy recommendations. Moreover, our findings and lessons learned will be channelled back into research.
- \ *Informing the public:* BICC's knowledge circle includes systematic, target group-oriented public relations work, which addresses the public, civil society and the media. This includes publications, events, exhibitions as well as national and international press work. We not only participate in debates on organised violence, but also aim to stimulate and initiate them.
- \ *Data management:* BICC maintains a data management system that serves as an in-house supporting unit and as an important knowledge management component, keeping data collected by BICC accessible and usable for its staff in a co-ordinated and standardised manner. Based on Web-GIS, we also translate research findings into interactive, internet-based databases and mapping applications that are accessible to the public.

To strengthen its capacities in knowledge exchange, BICC will develop a system for professional skills training and career development for its staff.

Internationalisation and networking

BICC wants to improve its visibility by addressing various different audiences. We have identified three levels at which BICC intends to strengthen and expand its networks:

- \ *Local/ state level:* BICC aims to become a significant node in the web of research activities in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW): It is a member of the Johannes Rau Research Association in NRW and aims to contribute to the research approach of the state (*Fortschritt NRW*). Moreover, its specific expertise in base conversion is of tremendous significance for many communities in NRW. Furthermore, BICC will enforce its co-operation with top universities and think tanks. Given that the academic landscape of Bonn has a web of international research institutions working in the fields of development and ecological change, BICC will endeavour to establish strategic partnerships with these institutions (e.g. DIE, ZEF, UNU-EHS, SEF, DW-Academy, etc.), in particular for its research on natural resources.
- \ *National level:* BICC is a member of several national advisory committees on peace and conflict. Moreover, BICC has a regular knowledge exchange with the other major peace and conflict research institutes in Germany (e.g. IFSH, HSFK, INEF, etc.). This co-operation is not only reflected by the annual publication of the joint edited volume of the *Peace Report*, but also by being host to interns from IFSH and INEF on an annual basis.
- \ *International level:* BICC will seek to enhance its international visibility by participating in international conferences and publishing in international journals. BICC also intends to establish strategic partnerships in research (e.g. with SIPRI, PRIO) as well as in our knowledge exchange components (e.g. MAG, EU, UN). In its recruitment strategy, BICC aims to internationalise its staff. In addition, each year, BICC will offer one to two fellowships for

international researchers to strengthen in-house research conducted on specific themes and will organise an annual international academic conference to augment its profile in the academic world. The International Board of BICC will also consist of distinguished international experts..

As a general strategy, BICC believes that joint projects are not only a way to combine the strengths of various institutions, but also a means to intensify collaboration between partner institutions. This is why BICC favours joint projects with partner institutions in its third-party funding strategy.

Ethical policy

Ethics is an integral part of BICC's approach—from the conceptualisation of research to all forms of knowledge exchange. Overarching ethical principles such as avoidance of exploitation, fair distribution of benefits and burden, beneficence, respect for persons and for human dignity, scientific validity, social values, the rights and interests of participants are always taken into account. In its work, BICC positions itself ethically as follows:

- \ *Partners and interviewees:* BICC is aware of its moral responsibilities towards its partners, participants and interviewees. We take safeguarding of anonymity and confidentiality of received information seriously. Moreover, we always inform interviewees and participants about the project results and about how the project findings are used.
- \ *Transparency:* Financed primarily by public funds, BICC finds it important to make its research results generally accessible and transparent by its output (publications, conferences, databases, etc.). Information that is likely to be detrimental to research participants will not be published. This is especially important when the material communicated is sensitive. In cases in which we carry out contracted research, we will at least make the conditions of the project (funding agency, purpose, timeline, etc.) public. All data collected by our projects are stored and can be made available in accordance with ethical requirements and in keeping with copyright rules.
- \ *Independence:* Whereas BICC receives funding from a variety of organisations, including state and federal ministries, its research is always independent. BICC is a non-partisan institution.
- \ *Conflict environment:* Since many of BICC's activities by their nature are often carried out in countries with deeply divided societies or with non-democratic governments, ethical considerations are a particular obligation and challenge for us. Time and again, we face power

structures, forms of organised violence and rules that can be regarded as unjust or unacceptable. BICC will take decisions on whether to continue or start activities in such conflict environments, provided the core principles outlined above are met.

BICC-staff continue to develop a strong awareness of the full range of possible risks and impacts of their activities.

How to reach these goals?

BICC has several advantages in the field of Peace and Conflict Research. First, BICC is one of the few research institutes that focus on empirical research. Second, BICC aims to systematically combine applied research with knowledge exchange not only with academics, but also with policymakers, practitioners and civil society. Third, institutionally and in terms of staff, BICC has a wide network of relationships with global think tanks, relevant universities, as well as international and national organisations, funding agencies and donors. All of these aspects shape future projects at BICC.

Our research strategy combines pure research projects with projects that aim at knowledge exchange. For our research, project funds will be acquired from national and international research funding agencies. Projects in the field of knowledge exchange are funded by national ministries as well as national and international organisations.

In sum, there are three main criteria that should guide BICC's projects in the future:

- \ *Excellence*: Our projects should be innovative and original and yield new knowledge and innovative answers to important questions on organised violence. Research projects have to fulfil our criteria of applied research (problem-oriented, policy relevant, reflective, and empirical) and be in line with our ethical standards. Advisory projects should, above all, be research-based and include components that channel experiences and freshly gained knowledge back into research.
- \ *Thematic coherence*: The projects should fit into our existing thematic agenda and contribute to a better understanding of organised violence.
- \ *Efficiency*: Project costs are expected to be reasonable relative to its expected findings.

BICC considers itself a leader in the study of organised violence because we a) conduct applied and empirical research; and b) implement knowledge exchange.

For the years 2014 to 2018, BICC aims to reach the following ten goals:

- 1| *Profile*: BICC increases its international reputation and will be recognised for its applied and empirical research as well as its knowledge exchange on organised violence.
- 2| *Output*: BICC improves its record in the academic world resulting from a significant increase in peer-reviewed journal articles, monographs, edited volumes, etc.
- 3| *Outreach*: BICC enhances its visibility and impact within international public debates and policy-making (e.g. by policy briefs, consultations).
- 4| *Third-party funding*: BICC increases the share of third-party funds for long-term research activities, mostly in co-operation with partners. Moreover, BICC expands its range of donors.
- 5| *Strateg partnerships*: BICC intensifies strategic partnerships to create synergies, improve the sharing of knowledge and broaden the geographic reach of BICC.
- 6| *Measurement of impact*: BICC increases its efforts to develop and use tools to measure the impact of its capacity development and advisory projects. These tools are to be based on recognised scientific methods and incorporate both quantitative and qualitative elements.
- 7| *Coherence*: BICC operationalises its knowledge circle by a structured integration of applied research, policy advice, technical advice and information of the public.
- 8| *In-house capacity development*: BICC improves the professional skills of its staff. In particular, BICC increasingly matches academic career brackets with research projects at BICC.
- 9| *Internationalisation*: BICC strengthens the international atmosphere of the institute by an international recruitment policy as well as an international fellowship programme.
- 10| *Structures*: BICC evaluates, adjusts and streamlines all internal structures and processes in order to optimally match the needs set out in this Concept Paper.

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