

## 2019 Lee Ann Fujii Award for Innovation in the Interpretive Study of Political Violence

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### Citation

The Interpretive Methodologies and Methods Conference Group @ APSA is delighted to present the 2019 Lee Ann Fujii Award for published works that most innovatively study political violence from an interpretive perspective, to:

**Jana Krause** (University of Amsterdam), for her book

***Resilient Communities: Non-Violence and Civilian Agency in Communal War***  
**(Cambridge University Press, 2018).**

In this meticulously researched and theoretically sophisticated work, Professor Jana Krause explores key factors that contribute to the escalation of communal violence to the threshold of civil war and contrasts them with forces that succeed in preventing such escalation. Through detailed field research on religiously based communal violence in Indonesia and Nigeria, Professor Krause unpacks complex layers of ethnic, religious, partisan, economic, and political grievances among groups coexisting in rural and urban areas that have been besieged by riots, massacres, and organized conflict that persist over decades. In an exemplary interpretive design for comparative research, Krause analyzes “natural experiments” in both nations—examining adjacent communities that are subject to parallel social, economic, and political cleavages but are distinguished by the fact that one community succumbed to sustained communal violence, while the other did not.

Probing the factors that contribute to such markedly different outcomes is particularly difficult in conflict zones—“environments where for every violent incident often at least two distinct narratives exist.” During 17 months of field work over a five-year period, Professor Krause employed multiple qualitative methods (interviews, focus groups, “accidental ethnography”) to probe the memories of community members whose lives had been systematically transformed through trauma. Conducting 125 interviews with 98 individuals (academics, journalists, government officials, religious leaders, NGO staff, former militia members, neighborhood organizers, survivors, and family members of combatants), she probed fragile memories and explored how these were woven into communal narratives that provided accounts of mass violence or its aversion. Through her detailed conversations, she sought to understand both how local communities made sense of violence and how they negotiated ongoing ethnic and religious animosities before, during, and after the cessation of violence. By comparing contradictory accounts and sifting evidence provided by multiple participants, she analyzed patterns of violence to distinguish whether such violence took place in the form of pogroms or two-sided battles; whether violence was perpetrated primarily by armed civilian supporters of political groups or organized communal militias; whether clashes took place in urban and/or in rural areas, and how these clashes interlinked; and whether and how the state was complicit in the organization of violence.

By listening carefully to her interlocutors and sifting through the fragmentary evidence they provided, Professor Krause identified powerful grounds for rejecting a host of received views about communal conflict, civilian agency, and zones of peace. Rather than blaming communal violence on colonialism, outside agitators, or political elites who mobilize ethnic and religious hatreds for their own purposes, Professor Krause carefully traces the political mobilization of “everyday violence networks” (thugs, vigilantes, gangs) and their alignment with political and religious actors at local, regional, national, and transnational levels. Through her interview evidence, she shows how social identities are polarized through rumors as well as direct and indirect experiences of violence and how that traumatization renders civilians more vulnerable to conflict narratives and more likely to support armed groups for self-protection and revenge.

Professor Krause also traces how young men, who suffer severe economic marginalization, are transformed from mobile gangs to militias deployed to protect their communities and to exact revenge for harms inflicted, resulting in massive militarization of local orders in the context of weak security forces and a retreat of the state. By contrast, non-escalation results from “three interlinking and path-dependent social processes”: depolarization of inter-group relations and rejection of narratives of religious conflict; community leaders and residents who construct and circulate an alternative, inclusive social identity (e.g., “the people of Wayame” or “the people of Dadin Kowa,” “Indonesians” or “Nigerians”) that trumps ethnic and religious identification; and intensive collective action to *persuade* potential fighters not to attack. She notes that this persuasion relies on much more than rhetoric. Local leaders may resort to violent means, such as repression, physical punishment, and expulsion of violence instigators to insulate the community from escalation of violence. Refuting the notion that communities that avoid communal violence are havens of tolerance or zones of peace, Professor Krause demonstrates how civilian agency is forged in the midst of fear, anxiety, and animosity as diverse groups come together to adapt to changing circumstances marked by internal and external threats, yet, devise concrete mechanisms to resist the politics of hate.

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