CfP: International Workshop

Security Beyond Exclusion? Reimagining Desirable Security Futures

Nina Perkowski, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Violence and Security Research
University of Hamburg | 11-12 September 2025

Security has become a battleground for the future of democracy. In many parts of the world, far-right actors thrive on ontological insecurity, mobilizing security to justify exclusion, authoritarian governance, and the rollback of democratic rights. For decades, critical security scholars have critiqued and challenged the framing of migration, protest, and poverty as security threats. Yet, as is increasingly clear in the face of rising authoritarianism, these critiques have had limited political traction. Exclusionary understandings of security have become deeply embedded in public discourse across the political spectrum, in law, and in policy.

As such, an open and pressing question lies at the heart of this workshop: Can security be reclaimed – or has the term become too deeply entangled with exclusion, control, and authoritarian drift to provide sufficient ground for transformation? What could desirable security futures look like in practice, and how might they be cultivated across diverse contexts? Rather than viewing security as inherently repressive or depoliticizing, we approach it as a field of struggle – a contested terrain where alternative visions of protection, care, and solidarity might be articulated, tested, and transformed.

In this workshop, we want to identify, analyse, and amplify emerging practices, infrastructures, and imaginaries of protection that contest dominant paradigms and prefigure desirable security futures. Feminist municipal governance, anti-racist neighbourhood organizing, queer and abolitionist safety practices, and digital-democratic infrastructures are living experiments in reimagining what it means to be secure.

We welcome contributions from a variety of disciplines, including Security Studies, International Relations, Political Science, Sociology, Anthropology, Geography, Urban Studies, Social Movement Studies, Legal Studies, Gender Studies, and related fields.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

- **Abstract Length:** 200-300 words
- **Submission Email:** nina.perkowski@uni-hamburg.de
- **Deadline:** June 15, 2025
- **Fees:** No attendance fees, limited funds available for travel and accommodation

TOPICS OF INTEREST

We are particularly interested in:

Prefigurative Security Practices: Empirically grounded analyses of how desirable security futures are being prefigured in the present, especially at municipal, neighbourhood, or community levels. What concrete examples exist and how do they operate?

Institutional Contradictions and Openings: Explorations of how contradictions within security governance create spaces for experimentation. Where do cracks in dominant security logics allow for transformative practices to emerge?

Security Beyond the State: Examinations of how communities, social movements, and non-state actors develop alternative practices of protection, care, and solidarity. How can security be reframed as a shared, relational, and contested practice?

Resistance and Transformation: Analyses of how communities, municipalities, or neighbourhoods respond to or resist far-right appropriations of security discourse. What strategies effectively counter exclusionary security narratives?

Power, Inequality, and Justice: Critical perspectives that engage with feminist, decolonial, queer, abolitionist, or racial justice approaches to security. How do intersecting forms of oppression shape alternative security practices and imaginations?

The Futures of Critical Security Scholarship: Reflections on the role, limitations, and possibilities of critical security research in the face of democratic backsliding and far-right mobilization. What responsibilities do scholars hold in such times? What futures are imaginable—not only for security, but for critical security scholarship itself?

Methodological Innovations: Approaches for studying emergent democratic security practices that might be quiet, ephemeral, or operating in the margins of institutions. How can methods be adapted to capture practices that resist legibility or formalization?

WORKSHOP FORMAT

This will be a workshop designed to support open and generative conversation. The workshop is not oriented toward polished papers or singular conclusions, but toward identifying shared problematics and exploring emergent methodological questions. Participants are invited to share works-in-progress and receive constructive feedback in a supportive environment. Depending on collective interest, this may lay groundwork for future collaborative outputs, such as a thematic network or a special issue.