

# Call for Papers

EISA's 10th European Workshops in International Studies (EWIS), Amsterdam, 12 -14 July 2022

## Ontological (In)security in Europe: Anxious Community or Growing through Crisis?

Workshop conveners: Dr. Aline Bartenstein (Institute for Peace Research and Security Studies at the University of Hamburg) and Dr. Franziskus von Lucke (University of Tübingen)

The return of large-scale war in Europe, internal dissent, the climate crisis, the rise of populism and deadly viruses – the list of threats and challenges that Europe has been facing in recent years is long. The associated doomsday scenarios can create a diffuse sense of anxiety and existential dread, also defined as “a sense or mood of unease, nervousness, or discomfort, associated with uncertainty and oriented towards the future” (Kinnvall and Mitzen 2020: 242), which particularly affects an actor’s self-conception and “ontological security” (Rumelili 2015). Thus, in addition to fearing for their physical survival, societies and states also deeply care about what the literature conceptualizes as stable constructions of their Self and Being, as being able to cope with change and inscribing a sense of affirmative continuity between their past and present identities (Subotic 2016; Eberle 2019).

When it comes to Europe, scholars have increasingly painted a picture of a continent and its societies being in a constant crisis concerning their further integration, internal solidarity, but also the ability to face future challenges. Some have thus characterized the EU and its member states as an ‘anxious’ or ‘(in)security community’ (Kinnvall et al. 2018; Mitzen 2018). At the same time, the literature has highlighted ways how actors may productively deal with anxiety, and how especially the EU has become an expert in growing through crises.

This workshop analyses the multiple pathways through which actors deal with uncertain times and anxiety, and hence try to strengthen their ontological security. Beyond refining our theoretical understanding of ontological (in)security, we also aim at deeper empirical analyses and a better understanding of the normative implications of different coping strategies (e.g., “Othering” or the focus on non-antagonistic differences). This is all the more relevant given the increasing challenges to established democratic procedures and the rule based global order posed by authoritarian competitors but also by the internal erosion of democracy through populist and right-wing movements in “the West”.

We are interested in conceptual and empirical papers approaching these issues from different perspectives and with a view to different cases linked to the European Union, Europe, and individual member states, but also to the main contestants of Europe in an increasingly multipolar world.

We invite papers addressing questions and themes along the following lines:

- (How) Do prospects of anxiety and ontological (in)security shape and change actors’ world views and self-images?
- What role do questions of anxiety and ontological (in)security play in the destabilization and reaffirmation of identity of the EU, its member states, or certain parts of society? What are the normative implications of different ways to stabilize one’s own ontological security and identity?
- With which practices do actors react to and manage anxiety and ontological (in)security?
- Are anxiety and ontological insecurity problems to be cured/contained or a potential way of adjusting to uncertainty and ambivalence and thus have the potential of strengthening actors’ identities?
- How are articulations of ontological (in)security and solidarity linked? Do specific articulations of (in)security and anxiety lead to specific forms of solidarity?
- How can routinized interactions, both conflictual and amicable, contribute to dealing with anxiety? How do disruptions of routinized interactions influence ontological (in)security?