

Technologies of armed violence and the transformation of global order

Call for Papers: 10th European Workshops in International Studies, Amsterdam, 12-14 July 2023

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This workshop attempts to carve out a distinct intellectual space for inquiry into the production, circulation, use and control of technologies of armed violence and their significance for global order. While critical security studies has reconceptualized security and engaged in methodological reflection and innovation, and while discussion of racialisation, legacies of the colonial encounter, and the gendered character of global order is increasingly prominent across critical IR more broadly, surprisingly little of this has translated into the study of what is commonly called the arms trade. There have been pockets of innovation: debate about nuclear weapons has taken up some of the critical interventions of postcolonialism, feminism and science and technology studies; the literature on small arms exploded in the years following the end of the Cold War as the newly rediscovered so-called ‘real weapons of mass destruction.’ Yet there has been no overarching reconceptualization of the field of study around the arms trade and the literature remains marked by methodological nationalism, stuck within the parameters of (variants of) realism, liberalism and constructivism, and remarkably silent on broader questions of local, regional and global order-making. Adjacent literatures on topics such as logistics, borders and humanitarianism, meanwhile, have demonstrated a concerted effort to think beyond methodological nationalism and make connections between (transformations of) political order, war, violence and capitalism, while also empirically mapping the circulation of technologies, people, ideas, money and practices. This workshop seeks to de-exceptionalize the study of weapons and invite a wider interrogation of various forms, modalities and instruments of violence alongside broader configurations of power.

Theoretically, the workshop invites papers addressing issues including but not limited to:

- Post-, de- and/or anti-colonial and feminist perspectives on the production, circulation, use and control of technologies of armed violence and their role in global order
- Circuits, boomerangs, flows, assemblages, complexes and other metaphors for theorising the circulation of technologies of armed violence and the people, practices, money and ideas that accompany them
- Critiques of methodological nationalism and their practical application to the study of the circulation of the means of violence
- The intersection of critical international political economy and critical security studies in the study of technologies of armed violence, in particular the emerging role of private finance in the development of new militarized technologies

Empirically, the workshop invites papers addressing topics including but not limited to:

- The political economy of the production and circulation of the means of violence e.g. the uneven internationalisation of arms/military/security capital and its relations with states
- Developments in the production, circulation and use of technologies of armed violence, especially in/from non-western regions
- So-called “emerging military producers” such as Brazil, South Korea, Turkey, UAE
- Repression, surveillance and control technologies as well as “military” and “dual use”, “conventional” and “non-conventional” weapons
- The racialized and gendered politics of the use of weapons within and between states
- Regulatory, abolitionist and other approaches to the control of technologies of armed violence