

Call for papers: Unequal Security? Insecurity, Democratic Responsiveness, and Penal-Welfare Policy

Workshop: September 8th-9th, 2022, University of Southern Denmark, Odense (DK)

The [VELUX Core Research Group “The Politics of Insecurity”](#) at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU) is now inviting abstracts (max. 250 words) for papers about the theme of ‘Unequal Security’:

The Western concept of the modern state is based on the promise of equal security. Already Hobbes’ Leviathan implies a basic ‘equality of all under the one’ to safeguard *physical security* against violence and other kinds of crimes. Domestic security then becomes the archetypal public good that all citizens enjoy to the same extent. In the twentieth century, *material security* came to the fore and social security received an ever-increasing share of the state’s budget. In the shadow of two world wars the welfare state evolved into a comprehensive system of social security, founded in the idea of equal social citizenship rights. *Subjective security* increasingly became a core aim of state intervention, too. While critical scholars have long pointed out that the alleged universalism of the liberal security and welfare state was imperfect at best and often outright exclusionary it is still fair to say that the promise – and probably even the reality – of ‘equal security’ reached its high point around the end of the postwar boom. Since then, and especially since the 1990s, however, new trends have undermined equal security in the rich democracies of the OECD.

This workshop seeks to explore the concept of unequal security from different theoretical and methodological perspectives. We invite contributions that focus on the politics of unequal (in)security – be it social, economic, physical or cultural – and welcome papers that analyze different aspects of the phenomenon, addressing issues such as spatial inequality of security (e.g. neighborhoods or rural vs. metropolitan areas) and group-related insecurities (e.g. in terms of race, citizenship or class). Ideally, contributions would address inequality and insecurity jointly and carve out how different types of security-related policies (e.g. social or penal) produce or respond to unequal security. Varieties of unequal security likely reflect country-specific political dynamics, depending on partisanship and patterns of party competition, shifts in the political economy or specific ideational shifts. We see, for example, welfare chauvinism and other insider-biased policies in many European countries as well as novel combinations of pro-welfare policies with tough-on-crime positions. Given these trends, new explanatory approaches are called for. One way to start would be to analyze and compare which aspects of insecurity – economic insecurity, fear of crime or others – are emphasized in the political discourse of a country and when. In addition to past long-term developments, we see current shocks and future scenarios that may impact the politics of insecurity: the 2008 Financial Crisis, the Covid-19 pandemic, or the climate crisis. How have they changed the politics of insecurity?

This workshop will discuss 1) subjective insecurities, 2) their reverberations in democratic politics and 3) domestic policymaking in OECD countries over the last few decades. We invite social scientists (e.g. political scientists, criminologists, anthropologists, sociologists) addressing the following or related questions, using a variety of theoretical approaches and methodologies:

- To what extent has security become more unequal? Do trends differ between countries or between penal and welfare policies? Do we see countertendencies emerging?
- How do trends in these policy fields match up with current insecurities experienced by citizens? Do policies track voter sentiments or is there a disconnect?

- How can we explain unequal security? What role do factors such as discourses of dependency and deservingness, economic inequality, ethnic or racial heterogeneity, populism and political party competition play?

The workshop is planned as an in-person event, taking place over two days at Adelige Jomfrukloster in Odense, Denmark. The **deadline for abstracts is May 2nd, 2022** (and papers should be circulated by September 2nd). We will also be discussing the possibility of a common publication based on the workshop contributions, bringing together comparative research on the welfare state and criminal justice. Contributions from junior scholars are very welcome. Funding for travel and accommodation is available (within reasonable limits). Abstracts should be sent to Queralt Tornafoch qtornafoch@sam.sdu.dk. If you have any questions, please write to Peter Starke, starke@sam.sdu.dk.