

APeCS Conference 2025, University of Edinburgh, 2-3 June 2025
Future-Making in Times of Conflict, Violence and Insecurity

*****CALL FOR PAPERS*****

Panel 1: Vigilant Futures

Ana Ivasiuc, University College Dublin
Erol Saglam, UCL and Istanbul Medeniyet University
Vita Peacock, King's College London

Vigilante formations draw on different articulations of temporality to justify their security practices and ethico-political orientations. Visions of a lost and idealised past, a decaying present, or endangered futures feed their perception of the necessity to 'take things in their own hands' both socio-politically and physically. Glorious pasts where social orders corresponded more snugly to such groups' visions, or simply a past time imagined, perceived, or experienced as a safer and morally stable world affect the perception of present insecurities. Similarly, competing visions of the future—to be avoided or to be actively constructed against perceived threats—prompt vigilante groups towards action and are used to legitimise civilian-led surveillance as well as extrajudicial violence.

As responses to practices of vigilantism and the discourses that legitimise them, other actors may also enact practices that play on or produce various visions of the future to challenge the morality-security outlooks of vigilantes. Future-making practices are contested, negotiated, often ambivalent, and always political.

Our panel aims at critically interrogating the temporalities of vigilante discourses, seeking to connect various timelines—be they real, mythical, or grounded in a subjunctive mode of wishful thinking—invoked across vigilante practices. We welcome papers addressing one or more of the following questions:

- How do vigilante groups negotiate and produce desirable versions of a future to be defended/constructed?
- How do different temporalities enmesh in discourses and practices of vigilantism and their political reverberations?
- How are violent or conflictual future-making practices contested by different actors?
- What do vigilante futurities tell us about the temporalities of safety, security, and statecraft?
- How do different temporalities affect practices and politics of resistance to vigilantism?

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to Ana Ivasiuc (ana.ivasiuc@ucd.ie) Erol Saglam (e.saglam@ucl.ac.uk) and Vita Peacock (vita.peacock@kcl.ac.uk). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 2: A Question of Complicity: Ethical and Emotional Challenges in Ethnographic Research Amid Violent Conflict

Amalia Saar, University of Haifa

Nir Gazit, Ruppin Academic Centre

Erella Grassiani, University of Amsterdam

Conducting ethnography in situations of violent conflict and war inevitably exposes researchers to extreme situations. Ethnographers might be working closely with members of warring factions, vigilante groups, and paramilitary organizations and can experience struggles with conflicting obligations: the imperative to empathize with their research participants and the commitment to stand with the oppressed and denounce racism and hate—both fundamental principles of anthropological research. Such fieldwork conditions present distinct emotional and moral challenges.

By the same token, agents of violence and civilian witnesses of violent deeds may also experience a dissonance between complicity and loyalty versus morality and justice in ways that may influence their participation in the research and the moral stance of the researcher. This is especially salient in contexts in which military forces and/or militias are intensively engaged with rival militants and civilian populations and the boundaries between the field of war and field of study often blur.

This panel invites ethnographers to share experiences and dilemmas encountered during their fieldwork, whether emotional, ethical, or both. Discussion topics may include experiences of fear and personal danger, researchers' spontaneous reactions to these situations, and how these responses influenced their research trajectories. We are especially interested in feelings of guilt, shame, or contempt that both researchers and informants may face, and we welcome reflections on dilemmas of complicity, from immediate tactical decisions—whether to inform authorities or warn potential victims of pending violence—to broader questions of moral and political positioning.

By addressing these challenging aspects of fieldwork, we aim to examine how socializing with and potentially developing understanding, friendliness, or even partial identification with violent groups affects researchers morally and politically. When are we ourselves complicit and is it avoidable at all?

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to Amalia Saar (saaram@soc.haifa.ac.il), Nir Gazit (nirgazit2@gmail.com) Erella Grassiani (E.Grassiani@uva.nl). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 3: The Future of Peacebuilding

Martina Santschi, swisspeace/University of Basel

Pascale Schild, University of Bern

Kim Schumann, University of Cologne

Michel Thill, swisspeace/University of Basel

War and authoritarianism hold increasing sway over local and global politics. As military approaches have gained ground in debates about conflict resolution and peace, the future of peacebuilding as a non-violent and inclusive means of achieving social justice is being called into question. In this panel, we seek to explore the limits, contradictions and possibilities of peacebuilding under the current conditions of political violence, occupation and state repression of civil society groups. We aim to examine the approaches to peace and conflict resolution that have dominated local, national and global peacebuilding interventions in recent years, and the ways in which they shape local and global peace and conflict processes around the world.

We invite papers that explore the blurred boundaries between civil society, the state, the military, armed resistance groups and rebel governments, the resulting tensions and contestations, and how these categories and concepts shape understandings and practices of peace in both top-down interventions and grassroots initiatives. We encourage participants—researchers, practitioners and activists—to address the need to localise and decolonise peacebuilding, to critically examine the limitations of dominant approaches and/or to explore alternative forms of knowledge and agency in contexts of violent conflict.

Questions to be discussed in the panel include:

How do tensions and contradictions between civil and military approaches to peacebuilding manifest themselves in global, national and local public discourses and practices? What is new, what is old, and what can we learn for the future?

How is peacebuilding a violent project or has become so? How can it be disentangled from colonial legacies and respond to the needs and future aspirations of those living with conflict, violence and insecurity? How can peacebuilding be reimagined to counter authoritarian and violent approaches to peace? How can inclusive peace be achieved as a means to social justice?

For questions and to submit paper proposals (150 words), please contact Pascale Schild (pascale.schild@unibe.ch). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 4: Youth as the Future: Imagining, Practicing and Constructing Futures in Insecure Times

Elena Miltiadis, Roskilde University

Mette Fog Olwig, Roskilde University

‘Youth’ frequently emerges as a temporal category, defined by an individual’s age and expressed as a social time of liminality (Cole & Durham, 2008; Dalsgard, 2014). Youth also tend to be associated to the future (Cole & Durham, 2008), both because ‘youth’ is seen as embodying the future (whether of a nation, or the world at large), as well as because youth engage with futural temporal orientations in their daily lives, increasingly facing conflict, violence, risk, uncertainty, and insecurity (c.f., Bryant & Knight, 2019; Cole & Durham, 2008).

We welcome contributions that explore the intersections between youth and future-making in uncertain times both in the way youth experience, imagine, and practice the future, as well as in the ways ‘youth’ – as a social category – is framed through its future-oriented temporality. Acknowledging the cultural, geographical, and temporal variations in how ‘youth’ is defined, perceived, and experienced, we do not offer a fixed definition of the term. Moreover, while youth participate in global communities, the practices and possibilities of ‘youth’ vary across local and cultural contexts (Walker, 2020).

A focus on youth provides unique perspectives on practices of future-making in contexts of conflict, violence, and insecurity and of social change. These encompass but are not limited to: the relationship between ‘youth’, youths, and politics in the ways youth engage in future-oriented political action as well as in the making of ‘youth’ as a powerful political symbol; future-making in digital spaces; the affective dimension of future-making, especially in contexts of conflict and uncertainty; how youth imagine and practice the future when faced with conflicts, violences, and insecurities; and how youths’ futures and their perception of them is shaped by structural forces, such as colonial legacies, geopolitical inequalities, authoritarian politics, intergenerational power relations and neoliberal economies.

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to to Elena Miltiadis (miltiadis@ruc.dk) and Mette Fog Olwig (mettefo@ruc.dk). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 5: Mixed Families in Conflict Zones

Alice Gaya, Ruppin Academic Center

This panel explores how mixed families in conflict zones serve as unique sites for understanding future-making practices in contested spaces. In this context, “mixed families” refer to households where partners come from different ethnic, religious, or national backgrounds that are often in conflict with each other in the region. These families may include, for example, Jewish-Arab couples in Israel/Palestine, Protestant-Catholic unions in Northern Ireland, or inter-ethnic marriages in the Balkans. These families represent unique cases where individuals from opposing sides of societal conflicts find ways to build a shared life together, despite the challenges posed by their conflictual social environment.

While mixed families often face heightened challenges during periods of conflict, they also represent powerful examples of how individuals actively create alternative social realities that transcend conventional political, ethnic, and religious boundaries. Through their daily practices and choices, these families engage in what Graeber terms “prefigurative politics”, embodying the possibility of coexistence in their everyday lives.

The panel invites papers examining:

- How mixed families negotiate identity, belonging, and future aspirations in conflict zones
- The ways mixed families create and maintain spaces of peace within broader contexts of conflict
- Intergenerational perspectives on identity and belonging in mixed families
- The role of mixed families in bridge-building between communities in conflict
- Daily practices of resistance to exclusionary politics
- Future-making strategies employed by mixed families to ensure their children's wellbeing

We welcome contributions that examine how mixed families challenge dominant narratives of conflict and create alternative visions of the future “from below”.

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to Alice Gaya (alice4art@gmail.com). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 6: Reproductive and Transformative Justice as Future-Making: Exploring Possibilities for Reparation and Healing Beyond Harm-Centred Narratives

Tatiana Sánchez-Parra, University of Edinburgh

Lucy Lowe, University of Edinburgh

Chiara Chiavaroli University of Edinburgh

This panel proposes a conversation between reproductive justice and transformative justice as strategies for future-making in contexts of war and social injustice. We join the growing interdisciplinary feminist call for the recognition of reproductive violence as a form of gendered harm, which differs from sexual violence and remains unseen within the human rights agenda. While reproductive justice broadens understandings of individual reproductive rights to include the right to have or not have children, to experience pregnancies and give birth in contexts free from oppression, exploitation, and violence, and to raise families in dignified environments, transformative justice allows us to move beyond harm-centred narratives of violence and reproductive harm. The intersection between these two frameworks enables us to imagine and enact futures of reproductive freedom, inviting a shift from past-oriented redress to creative and radical approaches to reparations and healing that understand care, desire, and solidarity as political sites for future-making. We invite the submission of papers that explore everyday practices of kinship-making, reproductive labour, transnational solidarity, friendship, and place-making as possibilities for sustaining and reproducing life in contexts of war and social injustice. We also welcome papers that advance methodological and conceptual reflections on reproductive and transformative justice from different feminist perspectives across disciplines and contribute to informing policymaking.

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to Tatiana Sánchez-Parra (tatiana.sanchez-parra@ed.ac.uk), Lucy Lowe (llowe@ed.ac.uk) and Chiara Chiavaroli (chiara.chiavaroli@ed.ac.uk). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 7: Future-Making Under Occupation: Exploring Temporalities of Political Violence and Resistance in Everyday Life

Bushra Punjabi, Independent Researcher
Pascale Schild, University of Bern

How do people imagine time and the future under occupation? How are conditions of occupation entangled with temporalities, shaping how time is experienced and used to remake everyday life? Understanding future-making as social and political practices, this panel aims to explore everyday life in and under occupation from the diverse perspectives of occupied people and their occupiers, as well as those who are complicit and implicated in the conditions of occupation in various ways. Occupiers, including state and military institutions and their transnational allies, use temporal narratives and practices to erase memories and normalize occupations. Occupation imposes an “eternal present” marked by instability and uncertainty, undermining the ability of occupied populations to imagine safe and just futures. Moreover, bureaucratic delays and emergency laws that allow for illegal detentions, curfews, house raids, enforced disappearances, communication blackouts, checkpoints and widespread surveillance impose a rigid temporal regime that disrupts and fractures everyday life.

In response, occupied communities maintain counter-narratives of time, reclaiming past, present and future through practices that resist and navigate the instabilities and uncertainties of occupation. These practices, marked by vigilance, anticipation and radical hope, allow occupied people to cope with the constant threat of violence.

This panel invites papers that explore the temporalities of occupation and resistance in different contexts around the world. We seek to understand how occupied communities endure and imagine alternative futures despite ongoing attempts to reshape their realities. While occupiers seek to colonise lives through time, occupied people create alternative temporal practices rooted in hope, resistance and the struggle for a future free from occupation and violence. We encourage submissions that explore how occupation reshapes socio-political and symbolic practices and meanings of time, and how everyday resistance fosters resilience and the possibility for making futures beyond occupation.

For questions and to submit your paper proposal (150 words), please contact the panel convenors: Pascale Schild (pascale.schild@unibe.ch) and Bushra Punjabi (bushrapunjabi.a@gmail.com). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 8: Dystopian Vision of Authoritarian Rulers Across South Asia and Growing Contestation by the People With Their Utopian Visions of Society

Arati Kade, University of Amsterdam

Nidhish K. Sundar, University of Amsterdam

This panel intends to explore the inner dynamics of power contestation behind the rise of exploitative and dystopian future-making practices and contestations in South Asia. This dystopian future-making is deeply rooted in exploitation, systematically reducing certain sections of people to second-class citizens and eventually worthless human beings. This form of future-building operates both globally and nationally. The Global South is framed as inherently inferior through cultural and civilizational narratives. This exploitative future-building renders these nations dependent on the Global North. They are relegated to roles as sources of cheap labour, raw materials, worthless human beings who need saving and care, or markets for low-cost consumption, reinforcing global hierarchies. Global elites often join hands with local elites to socially and materially subjugate local masses, consolidating power and wealth through systemic exclusion and exploitation. Nationally, these dynamics mirror similar patterns of social exclusion and cultural othering, entrenching social and material inequality and oppression within marginalized communities, while shaping futures that prioritize elite interests over the well-being of the majority.

However, these dystopian visions of society are powerfully contested by the people, who bring forth radical, utopian visions of social transformation based on the principles of liberty, justice, and equality. Marginalized communities have long resisted these exploitative systems through cultural, literary, political, and social movements. While these movements are not free from contradictions, they provide powerful alternatives to the exclusionary and exploitative narratives imposed by authoritarian regimes.

With the rise of neoliberalism, the dynamics of both dystopian visions and the resistance to them have grown increasingly complex. Resistance efforts are often appropriated or co-opted by elites, creating new challenges for those envisioning alternative futures. This panel invites papers that explore the role of neoliberal political economy and socio-cultural hegemonies in facilitating the rise of authoritarian regimes with their dystopian politics of the future. At the same time, it encourages papers that examine how people subjected to these dystopian politics express their resistance through counter-utopian future-making, as well as papers that explore the potential, contradictions and challenges of these counter-utopian politics of the future in South Asia.

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to Arati Kade (a.s.kade@uva.nl) and Nidhish K. Sundar (n.k.sundar@uva.nl). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 9: Theorizing Futures With Mbembe

Miguel Díaz-Barriga, University of Richmond

Margaret Dorsey, University of Richmond

Analeise Richard, UAM-Cuajimalpa

This panel seeks to interrogate two poles of Achille Mbembe's scholarship: that which invites us to think about utopic futures and that which theorizes necropower. More specifically, as the conference invites, this panel will use Mbembe as a threshold to explore "future making from below" as well as dissect the social forces steering the world to "the brink of destruction."

Mbembe's notion of necropower can illuminate how social actors understand and engage social turmoil, both collectively and individually. Our panel explores how understandings of necropower, as the state's right to exclude and kill, are articulated and challenged in both everyday life and collective organizing. We are particularly interested in papers that analyze social movements through the lens of necropower, utopias and border-free homeplaces as well as how these concepts generate possibilities for inclusive epistemologies and belonging.

This panel invites scholars to consider belonging in relation to Mbembe's notions of necropower and a border-free world. How can we—through applying Mbembe's notions of home, freedom, and utopia—engage the broader public and articulate the variety of collective responses to the world's multiple crises? In other words, what are the possibilities and limitations of Mbembe's work for understanding and imagining alternative futures? Themes of interest include:

- border securitization and walls
- ecology and the built environment
- mobility and rights of mobility
- visualizing utopias, manifestos and their potentialities
- the role of public intellectuals in articulating critiques and building alternatives
- collaborations between NGOs, civil society initiatives and academics
- Is a Marxian framework compatible with Mbembe's ideas?

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to Miguel Díaz-Barriga (mdiazbar@richmond.edu), Margaret Dorsey (mdorsey@richmond.edu) and Analeise Richard (arichard@cua.uam.mx). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 10: Digital Technologies for Inclusivity and Peace: Exploring Possibilities for Preventing Online Hate Speech

Aysecan Terzioglu, Sabanci University

Irem Topcu, Sabanci University

Didar Akar, Bogazici University

Social media has become an indispensable part of many people's everyday life and social interactions. With its high-speed information flow, social media enables alternative conceptions of time and space, and plays an intricate role in people's definitions of their own identity, subjectivity, and sense of belonging. However, through boosting circulations of hate speech and discriminatory discourse, social media has a troubling side as well. Underlining various socio-economic and ideological differences and increasing the polarizations between the "us and them" as dynamic contrasting mechanisms, it exacerbates the existing political and social problems, tensions, and inequalities. The recent global issues, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, refugee crises, and economic fluctuations, made the use of aggravating and hostile discourses more common, normalizing them among frequent users through mis/disinformation and hateful language. These discourses include symbolic violence with the potential of causing actual, physical violence through the online-offline continuum, thus demanding attention for non-discriminatory and democratic future-making practices.

This panel explores effective ways of targeting these discourses, through digital methods such as categorizing hate speech with the help of algorithms and artificial intelligence, in order to work towards having a more equalitarian, democratic, and inclusive digital sphere in the long run. How can digital technologies in general and social media, in particular, be used more towards solving political and social conflicts instead of aggravating them? What are the ways social media users, from individuals to NGOs, pursue inculcating peaceful dialogues and owning their (digital) space? This panel includes particular examples from the uses and studies of social media with the aim of peacebuilding, through eliminating offensive, discriminatory, and hateful speech.

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to Aysecan Terzioglu (aysecan.terzioglu@sabanciuniv.edu), Irem Topcu (irem.topcu@sabanciuniv.edu) and Didar Akar (akar@boun.edu.tr). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.

Panel 11: Call For Individual Papers: Future-Making in Times of Conflict, Violence and Insecurity

Livnat Konopny-Decleve, University of Edinburgh
Pascale Schild, University of Bern

Future-making is an embodied social, cultural and political practice (Appadurai 2013). Anchored in the present, futures are the ground for struggles and debates. In contemporary contexts of violent conflict, powerful actors use narratives of security, peace and development to justify politics of the future that often not only shatter the future hopes of others but are also realized at the expense of the freedom, security and fundamental rights of less powerful actors (Hage 2016; Willow 2020). While insecurity and violence limit the possibilities of a peaceful and just future for all, they also inspire refusal and resistance, enabling marginalized and oppressed people and groups to imagine and invent new forms of belonging and living together beyond the political order of the nation-state and its violent boundaries. It is this paradoxical entanglement of “fearful anticipation” (Das 2007, 98) and hopeful striving for something new and largely unknown that makes conditions of conflict and violence an important ethnographic source to explore how alternative politics of the future emerge in the present and from positions and places of marginality and relative powerlessness.

In social movements, political activism and everyday life, people and groups engage in “prefigurative politics” (Graeber 2009) in a variety of ways. By linking present practices to imagined and desired futures, these politics provide laboratories for future-making that turn oppressive conditions into transformative processes. This ongoing work of planting and growing alternatives takes place in the margins and cracks of the colonial, capitalist and heteropatriarchal social and political order of our times.

To explore these diverse and contested forms and possibilities of future-making in times of conflict, violence and insecurity, we invite proposals for individual papers exploring themes such as (but not restricted to):

- Future-making “from below”, including grassroots, NGO and other civil society initiatives that engage in re-making, re-imagining and re-enacting futures from marginalized and oppressed positions and places
- Exclusionary and violent future-making practices and their contestation
- Prefigurative politics and other ways of practicing and embodying desired futures in political activism and everyday life
- Creating and nurturing radical hopes in times of conflict and violence
- Everyday practices of peace and building bridges across social and political divides and lines of conflict and (radical) disagreement
- Power relations and the ways gender, race, class, ethnicity etc. shape practices, politics and possibilities of future-making
- Possibilities for and practices of a future/prefigurative anthropology of peace, conflict and security
- Temporalities and spaces of future-making

Please send your paper proposal ideas (150 words) and inquiries to Livnat Konopny-Decleve (livnat.decleve@ed.ac.uk) and Pascale Schild (pascale.schild@unibe.ch). The deadline for submissions is **10 March 2025**.