



KEYNOTE LECTURE

# What Counts as Protection in an Age of Insecurity?

Date: 11.06.2024 18:00 Building A3 3, Aula

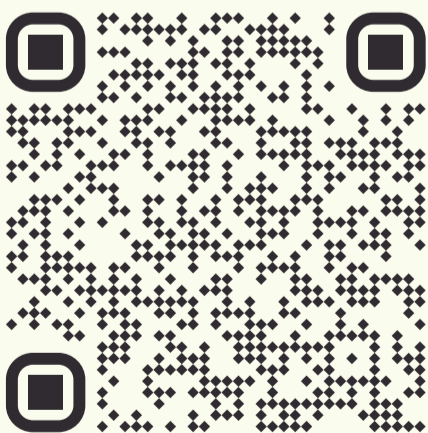


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While historically emotions were seen as destructive forces in politics, modern social scientists know that affect is central to an informed and engaged citizenry. In *Anxious Politics* we argued that anxiety causes people to seek protection. Through a series of surveys and experiments, we showed that anxious people sought protection through the news they read and remembered, the people they trusted, and the policies they supported. As with all research, some of our findings have more staying power than others. I suspect that our research on anxiety over immigration and climate change would produce similar results today. On the other hand, our research on anxiety and public health requires dramatic revision. Relatedly, in some policy areas, there's near consensus over what counts as protection, while in others, there's tremendous variance. More troublingly, one person's protection can be the sources of another person's anxiety. Ambiguity over protection presents challenges for social science research. Typical experimental designs require that we posit from the outside what brings people security, but security can be deeply personal and heavily contextual. Emotions researchers have shown how various emotions play out differently depending on partisanship, race, and gender, for instance. In this talk I explore complexity around the concept of protection in contemporary politics and propose two strategies for better theorizing: 1) careful attention to group dynamics, and 2) open-ended interview and survey approaches that allow participants to offer their ideas about protection.

To attend the Keynote Lecture, register until **May 19** through the site of the conference *Emotional Dynamics of (In)security and Politics* at:



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