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Taking the example of disaster management in Austria, the paper argues that disaster management as a realm of the State's self-proclaimed role as the guardian of security and public order is permeated by a fundamental ambiguity: Paradoxically, it relies on both a guarantee for security and the enactment of a threat at the same time.

This ambiguity grounds in common understandings about disasters, which permeate the institutional arrangements of disaster management. A disaster is considered a fundamental disruption of everyday life, undermining the routines and structures that have been taken for granted before. As a consequence, "normality" (the social order *ex ante*) is often proclaimed as a safe haven, which has to be preserved, and – once destroyed – restored. Against this background, security is taken as protection *from* disasters. This protection *from* disasters becomes the purpose, around which a social space of specialized practice, a governmental-induced field of disaster management, is formed.

As a consequence, the abovementioned, fundamental ambiguity becomes a part of the field foundations as well: Its purpose is the solution of a problem, which cannot be solved – meaning that it is *practically* limited – and even *shall* not be solved without undermining its own *raison d'être* – meaning that it is *symbolically* limited. Disaster management needs both to safeguard society facing a potential disaster *and* to fuel the belief in the *potential occurrence of the next disaster*. Otherwise, it will eradicate the reason of its very own existence and the ground for the State's self-enactment as the guardian of security and the savior in need through the realm of disaster management. Taking the example of the Austrian disaster management, the paper illustrates, *how* the practices of security production in the field of disaster management meet these ambiguous requirements, meaning that there is a dual logic that permeates the practice of disaster management. Disaster management is suggested to create both, security (preventing or preparing for the next disaster) and insecurity (preempting the next disaster) at the same time. In other words: in order to promote its utopia of a safe society, it needs the dystopian imagination of a disastrous future as a contrast agent.

**Anticipatory governance – Dealing with uncertain futures**