

Anxiety and Narratives in International Relations

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Anxiety is a fundamental part of human subjectivity. In the last decades, it has become clear that the traditional anxiety-containing mechanisms are increasingly being subjected to pressure from world politics. Globalization, decolonization, (recurring) crises, and violent conflict have uprooted individuals, states, and communities across the world, culminating in emotional turmoil, existential uncertainty, and ruptures in narratives. These narratives, the stories that humans tell themselves to make sense of the chaos of late modernity, lead to contestations and the re-establishment of hegemonic narratives when disrupted. This eclectic and intellectually diverse panel investigates various ways in which anxiety is elicited by contemporary (inter)national politics, how it becomes politically relevant, and with what consequences. The individual papers comprise Lacanian, Gestalt psychological, and mnemonic approaches to anxiety, use discursive, interview, and auto, in-person, and digital ethnographic data to explore postcolonial states' ontological security-seeking practices, narratives of hybrid warfare, the contestation of hegemonic narratives, and the remembrance of groups after Covid-19 and violent conflict.

Track Classification: Emotions in Politics and International Relations Working Group