

The Emotional Politics of Subjectivity in International Relations

Thursday, 19 June 2025 10:45 (1h 30m)

Questions about the formation of the political subject are central to the discipline of International Studies. Since subjectivity shapes political action, critically accessing the Self is necessary to understand international politics. Connecting research on emotions in IR and Ontological Security Studies (OSS), this panel explores how emotional factors – including, remorse, satisfaction, destruction, anxiety, guilt and shame – shape individual and collective subject-formation processes. The papers show that while OSS provide the analytical tools to access the Self, accessing the affective dimensions of these processes is critical to conceptualise subjectivity in international politics. Drawing from a range of disciplines – including philosophy, political psychology, sociology, and critical security studies – and focusing on both Western and non-Western case studies, the papers offer comprehensive analyses of this interplay. By critically interrogating how we can access the Self, the papers show the productive interplay between emotional factors and the formation of subjectivity, thus offering valuable insights for both emotions research and OSS.

Track Classification: Emotions in Politics and International Relations Working Group