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Ontological Security and the Populist Radical Right

Wednesday 3 June 2026 10:45 (1h 30m)

This panel explores the insights offered by ontological security when it comes to studying the populist radical right (PRR). Through four empirical papers with different geographical and thematic focuses, we apply concepts from ontological security studies (OSS) to better understand and conceptualise how ontological security can be applied to explain the rise of the PRR as a modern phenomenon, the contestation of biographical narratives by PRR actors from within, and how PRR parties mobilise national symbols of belonging and popular anxieties.

The papers on this panel engage with a range of case studies including Turkey, the UK and Germany, allowing space for comparative reflection and discussion of ontological security at both the global and the local level. Some contributions focus on modernity and the societal level, as well as perceived threats to national identity, while others explore responses to the PRR at the elite level. In this way, the panel applies an OSS lens not only to different cases, but to different levels of analysis, providing a dynamic picture of the diverse and promising applications of OSS to the study of the populist radical right.

Track Classification: Emotions in Politics and International Relations Working Group