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Dilemmas and lost spaces in ontological security seeking

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Over the last two decades ontological security studies has burgeoned into a broad and vibrant subfield in International Relations. Central to scholarship in OSS are ontological security seeking practices –the routines, narratives, and relationships we form in order to provide a secure sense of self in order to “go on” and bracket the ever-present potential for chaos that underpins daily life. Due to its foundational nature, the act of ontological security seeking is considered, if not necessarily as an untrammelled good, then as something we engage in naturally and constantly and simply cannot turn off. Recent literature on the ethics of ontological security has sought to problematise ontological security seeking behaviours and, in this panel, we develop this line of enquiry, asking; what happens when our security seeking practices actually fundamentally undermine our ontological security? What is the role of truth in self-narratives? How can ontological security seeking help us understand techno-fascism’s preoccupation with immortality? What role does rest and sleep have in the emergence of the self? And how can psychic processes of sublimation encourage transformation of the self without risking salient relationships descending into friend-enemy distinctions? Ultimately, this panel seeks to generate critical insights into ontological security seeking behaviour that encourages transformation and change.

Track Classification: Emotions in Politics and International Relations Working Group