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## Lived Experience Academics' and Researchers' Network (LEARN): Embracing Subjectivities

*Thursday 4 June 2026 10:45 (1h 30m)*

International Studies has traditionally been shaped by Realist perspectives that prioritise objectivity in research, policy, and decision-making. However, the phenomena examined within the discipline can be complex, intimate, and deeply entangled with scholars' own lives and contexts. To remain relevant and responsive to global realities, International Studies must recognise and embrace the emotional and subjective dimensions that drive individuals who have lived through events such as displacement, discrimination, migration, postcolonialism and political crises to become researchers of their own experiences.

This panel introduces LEARN - the Lived Experience Researchers' and Academics' Network. Increasingly, academics choose to study topics connected to their personal histories. These choices may stem from recognised gaps in institutional knowledge, a search for personal understanding, a commitment to challenging injustice, or a dedication to amplifying underrepresented voices. Researchers with lived experience enrich their disciplines by broadening access to marginalised communities and contributing unique insights that conventional methodologies may overlook.

Lived experience can inform research in multiple ways - through direct engagement with personally experienced events, or through the application of theoretical frameworks shaped by them. The LEARN panel brings together scholars whose work demonstrates how integrating lived experience, including its emotional, relational, and subjective dimensions, can illuminate hidden perspectives and reveal new forms of knowledge.

**Track Classification:** Emotions in Politics and International Relations Working Group