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Type: **Panel**

Ontological (in)security and the politics of state personhood

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

One of two panels on new approaches to state personhood, this panel explores the generative tension between Ontological Security Studies (OSS) and more traditional security concerns with sovereignty, territoriality, and statehood. While often thought of as opposite ends of the sub-discipline, these approaches to security intersect more profoundly than routinely acknowledged: territory is irrevocably bound to the symbolic and affective work of constructing, maintaining, and repairing notions of self. Contributions on this panel explore how space, territoriality, sovereignty, and corporality form the material and existential basis of being, developing new arguments for why the state can, and perhaps should, be seen as a person. In the process, they also make new empirical contributions to, inter alia, the study of hostage diplomacy, community-building, alliance politics, and climate change.

Track Classification: Contemporary Research on International Political Theory Working Group