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The Contested Politics of 'The Human' in Conflict and Security Studies

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Technological development is blurring the boundaries, relations and character of human subjectivity more than ever before. Furthermore, as artificial intelligence, drones, cyber warfare and digitalisation increasingly inform the conduct of warfare, the commissioning of and resistance to violence has become an increasingly technocratic process. More broadly, the very character of conflict and (in)security is morphing and becoming an everyday concern for vast sectors of the population who are marginalised by the same processes of capitalist development that are driving technological innovation. Rather than engaging in a technocratic study of these norms, as disciplinary IR has tended to, this panel scrutinises technological development, its political consequences, and its impact on (post)human subjectivity from a range of innovative critical IR theoretical perspectives. Drawing on approaches including queer, decolonial, Indigenous and new materialist thought, this panel situates contemporary (in)securities within the historical context of colonialism, changing human-land relationships, and non-anthropocentric conceptualisations of identity, relationality and subjectivity. Reflecting the changing character and consequences of conflict, panellists discuss diverse topics including technologies of conflict, the War on Gaza, irregularised migration, the global economy and climate change. Cumulatively, the panel proposes an expanded conception of conflict and its impacts than that currently proposed by the discipline of international relations.

Track Classification: Critical Military Studies Working Group