

Grief and Memory in the Pandemic and Post-Pandemic world

Wednesday, 21 June 2023 09:00 (1h 30m)

Grief is everywhere, from the millions who died globally during the pandemic to losses and human rights violations in Ukraine, Ethiopia and other conflict zones to climate disasters, from Pakistan, to Nigeria, California or the Amazon, to the death of the British queen, an iconic figure covering a 70 year landscape of history, to a quickly disappearing way of life signalled by energy shortages and climate change. There is no shortage of things to grieve about, yet, the Queen's funeral aside, there has been very little willingness to acknowledge that everything has changed and must change, which, as Judith Butler notes, is the core of grief. Grief in this case, is not purely in the moment but needs to be situated in relation to an unacknowledged past, as witnessed in the range of memories invoked in the context of the pandemic, relating for instance, to the history of the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, an erstwhile Russian empire or World War II. What is the relationship between grief and the acknowledgement, not only of loss in the present but also of unacknowledged past suffering and injustice? What is the relationship between grief and memory, looking back, and the future, looking forward?

Connection: This panel will theorize the relationship between how populations have dealt with grief against the backdrop of the pandemic and the emerging post-pandemic world, and why this is important for realising aspects of the Common Agenda set out by the UN Secretary-General, including protecting the planet, accounting for the interests of future generations, managing the global commons and global public goods, leaving no one behind and a renewed social contract focused on human rights. It further highlights memories of colonialism that are only beginning to be discussed in the context of climate change, and how important the unacknowledged past is for repairing the planet for future generations.

Membership

Track Classification: Emotions in Politics and International Relations Working Group