

Innovative Approaches to Promoting Peace and Preventing Conflict: Aesthetics, Imagination, Critique and Engagement

Friday, 23 June 2023 15:00 (1h 30m)

This panel explores new avenues for promoting peace and preventing conflict via innovative approaches to the theory and practice of peace-building. While the United Nations (UN) and other international organisations have dedicated substantial resources to overcoming deep-seated conflict and fostering sustainable peace, many scholars and practitioners have highlighted limitations in prevailing approaches, including the persistence of colonial, gendered and ageist perspectives, as well as top down practices that apply generic frameworks to diverse circumstances. This panel brings together four papers that take these critical interventions seriously, extending them further and exploring a range of potential alternatives. Nilanjana Premaratna builds on a relational peace framework to investigate the bilingual, multi-ethnic theatre group Jana Karaliya's practices of performing sustained everyday coexistence in Sri Lanka. Tim Aistrope and Shannon Brincat connect relational peace with cross-disciplinary research on the imagination that emphasises the deeper significance of creativity, play and storytelling for building trust and working through social divisions. Meanwhile, Constance Duncombe and George Karavas use innovative visual and social media methodologies to demonstrate an underlying convergence between the liberal peace and China's 'developmental peace', often positioned as a distinct alternative. Contextualising these papers, Helen Berents outlines a reflexive approach to peace research that centres a feminist ethics of care, which she develops through critical engagement with her own project on youth activism and peace processes in South Sudan, Afghanistan and Myanmar. Taken together, this panel foregrounds critical and innovative approaches to promoting peace and preventing conflicts, addressing key priorities identified in the UN's Our Common Future report, including on building trust, boosting partnerships, listening to and working with youth, and, ultimately, leaving no one behind.

Track Classification: Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Working Group