

One Destination, Many Roads: Distrust-Reduction, Hope, and Trust Building in Conflict Resolution

Friday, 7 June 2024 09:00 (1h 30m)

In an interconnected world where states cannot avoid intense interaction, trust is crucial for conflict management in International Studies. However, is trust essential for conflict resolution? This panel aims to reexamine whether and how trust works as a critical precondition for peacebuilding. First, the panel will discuss whether perceptions of trustworthiness can be transferred from individuals to state leaders to allow for pre-negotiations to begin and whether some peace agreements can be reached without some degree of mutual trust. It also examines if hope can replace trust as a mechanism through which actors respond with conciliatory gestures to defection from the adversarial state. While much has been written on trust-building, a prior phase of distrust-reduction may be needed to allow actors to transition from complete distrust to shared appreciation of vulnerability, by engaging in an empathic dialogue. Additionally, this panel includes more empirical papers in a specific context examining how to build trust between two individuals not in interpersonal interaction and how the interpersonal trust between two state leaders can be institutionalised and preserved for the future. Finally, scholars on this panel come from a range of career stages and institutions, utilising different methodologies and case studies, including Northern Ireland, US-Russia, Israel-Palestine, and Inter-Korea relations, yet also seek to address issues around distrust and trust in conflict management and resolution.

Track Classification: Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding Working Group