

Has “militarisation” had its day?

Thursday, 6 June 2024 09:00 (1h 30m)

Following recent provocations suggesting that International Studies should “Forget Militarization” as a core concept (Howell 2018), we wish to reconsider ‘militarisation’ and to ask whether the concept has indeed ‘had its day’. Scholarship has long relied on ‘militarisation’ as an analytical concept for making sense of international relations (e.g., Enloe 2000). Furthermore, scholars have suggested that studies of militarism more broadly suffer from ‘methodological whiteness’ in that they often neglect the racialised and colonial underpinnings of militarism and militarisation (Manchanda & Rossdale 2021). In response, scholars interested in militarism and militarisation have pointed to highly diverse manifestations of militarisation that move beyond ideas of the concept as unidirectional or state centred, focusing instead on the ‘everyday modalities’ through which it is both enacted and resisted (Basham 2022).

This panel critically considers the contemporary relevance of militarisation, asking whether the concept should indeed be forgotten, or rather reinvigorated with new thinking and scholarship. We ask what ‘everyday modalities’ are important for understanding how militarisation becomes normalised and reproduced in global and local communities? How might new or creative methodologies enliven our understandings of militarisation? What possibilities might exist for ‘unmaking’ militarised identities (Bulmer & Eichler 2018), and how might critical military studies scholars support this? Which alternative concepts, including and beyond ‘martial politics’ (Howell 2018), might be useful for understanding and critiquing state violence?

Track Classification: Critical Military Studies Working Group