

The Politics of UN Peacekeeping: Doing, Knowing, Speaking and Training for Peace Operations

Thursday, 19 June 2025 13:15 (1h 30m)

This panel builds on research that has sought to bring the study of global politics back into United Nations (UN) peace operations scholarship. Viewing UN peacekeeping as a political project – as opposed to a bundle of universally beneficial policies to evaluate in terms of efficiency – we shift the focus to the normative, epistemic, material and discursive power struggles which make up interventions seeking to ensure peace including by force. While centring on different concepts – be it war, violence, race, gender, or protection – the papers explore how particular ways of doing, knowing, speaking and training for peacekeeping are shaping the political and social order within operations and beyond. These analyses reveal deep-seated tensions lying at the core of peacekeeping. While often framed as a departure from war, it is sustained by the militarized strategies of training, planning and deploying operations as well as often gendered and racialized hierarchies in the distribution of power in the global order. By questioning the common image of UN peace operations as robust and at the same time committed to gender mainstreaming and respect for diversity, this panel advances an understanding of peacekeeping as a practice that, paradoxically, can sustain the inequalities it seeks to address.

Track Classification: Peacekeeping, Peacebuilding and Human Rights Working Group