

Facets of Friendship in International Politics

Friday, 20 June 2025 09:00 (1h 30m)

For the last two decades we have seen attempts to foster the study of friendship in international relations. Yet, it remains one of the most understudied dynamics, with both mainstream and critical approaches rarely integrating the concept into their analysis. Against this backdrop, this panel seeks to showcase some of the advantages of taking friendship as a political phenomenon seriously, beyond the romantic connotations it is often associated with. It brings together scholars approaching the topic from a variety of angles and reading friendship – its nature, dynamic, politics – through different theoretical lenses and in different empirical contexts. The contributions conceptualise notions of trust in international friendship and explore how it plays out in concrete ways; they explore discourses of friendship in the US media, in relations between China and Africa, and in India's foreign policy towards Israel; and they look at how friendship language matches or is in tension with actual practices. In doing so, the panel demonstrates the value of 'friendship' as an analytical lens.

Track Classification: Interpretivism in International Relations Working Group