

Pacifism and Nonviolence: New thinking for new directions?

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Pacifism and nonviolence have been gaining scholarly attention in the last couple of decades, evidenced by growing publications in international relations (Jackson 2018, Christoyannopoulos 2022), political theory (Butler 2020, Frazer and Hutchings 2020), and civil resistance studies (Chenoweth and Stephan 2011, Chenoweth 2023), alongside the establishment of the Journal of Pacifism and Nonviolence. Yet this scholarship does more than add another perspective. It undertakes a dual critical project: interrogating how militarism becomes naturalised as inevitable common sense within policy and academic discourse, whilst simultaneously developing theories, methodologies and practices that disrupt this hegemony and expand our repertoires of nonviolent resistance, defence and security provision.

This panel examines how pacifist and nonviolent scholarship denaturalises militarised assumptions embedded in concepts from sovereignty to protection, whilst elaborating alternative frameworks for understanding and enacting security. Papers will explore how this work interrogates the reproduction of militarism within International Studies as a discipline, and what alternative theories and practices it offers for global challenges, including ending ongoing wars, preventing new conflicts, contesting democratic backsliding, and addressing economic and environmental crises, among other challenges.

Track Classification: Contemporary Research on International Political Theory Working Group