

Cooperative Research: Conceptualising, Reflecting and Debating Socially Engaged Inquiry

Thursday 4 June 2026 13:15 (1h 30m)

This panel introduces and develops the idea of cooperative research by conceptualising its theoretical, practical and methodological aspects. Cooperative research is a form of social inquiry which involves dialogue and solidarity with civil society or community-based organisations, networks and voluntary initiatives. Instead of approaching these actors as research subjects, they become partners in research, which is pursued for the benefit of both sides. The panel explains the assumptions of the cooperative approach, which is rooted in feminist, participatory, activist and action research, and draws on decolonial and critical theory perspectives. It reflects on various cooperative research practices to show that cooperative research can be helpful in proactively dealing with challenges of access in the field, safety, ethical problems and questions about the implications and impact of research. Through an interactive, debating format, the panel probes how cooperative research offers new ways forward in current discussions on methods in political science and IR, anthropology, security, peace and conflict studies, and social sciences generally. With its pragmatic, hands-on outlook and through solid theoretical and methodological grounding, the panel serves as a space for dialogue and inspiration for both established and early-career researchers, graduate students, as well as for professionals in and beyond academia.

Track Classification: Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial Working Group