

Panel Title:

Populism and Conflicts Across Scales: Unpacking Challenges, Responses, and Potentials

Abstract:

The 21st century has witnessed a pervasive global rise of populism, presenting a formidable challenge to human rights, liberal democracy, and international cooperation. Despite growing scholarly attention in International Relations in recent years, the impact of populism on conflict dynamics, resolution, and transformation remains largely understudied within the realm of peace and conflict research. This panel aims to address this gap by convening papers that critically examine the intersections of populism and conflicts across various scales—sub-national, national, international, and global.

Populism, with its multifaceted manifestations in discourse, leadership, and political style, defies easy categorization and presents a complex terrain for analysis. Nonetheless, it exerts tangible influence on conflicts worldwide, from major theatres of war like Gaza and Ukraine to regional inter-state tensions and national peace processes, shaping both direct and indirect outcomes. Papers in this panel will take stock of key dynamics in the relationship between populism and conflict, elucidating important nuances and differences. This includes:

- conceptual inquiries into the dynamic between populism and conflict: what can the perspective of the latter tell us about the former, and vice-versa?
- case studies on how the ascendancy of populism has impacted conflict constellations, interrogating conflicts at different scalar levels, or the intricate interactions between regional, national, international, and global dynamics
- explorations of populist discourses and the staging of political violence
- studies on the potentials of populism to expose, transform, or solve conflict constellations
- analyses of the impact of populism on security orders and institutions for the governance of conflict
- populism in multi-scalar conflict constellations

Ultimately, this panel seeks to foster a deeper understanding of both the importance and complexities inherent in the nexus of populism and conflict, offering theoretical insights and empirical analyses to inform future research agendas in the field of peace and conflict studies.