

Preventing 50 More Years of Neocolonialism in Aid? Interrogating and Disrupting Neocolonial Humanitarian Relationships within Europe and Beyond

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

This panel takes stock of critiques in European-produced International Relations regarding the mechanisms of what might be called “liberal” humanitarian aid and interventions (eg: MacGinty, 2009, Fast, 2014, Pallister-Wilkins, 2021). The last fifty years have seen both a call for fundamental shifts in power, resources, and perspectives away from Western-centric approaches to humanitarianism and the persistence of colonial-relations of aid, currently focusing on concepts of “localisation” and “decolonisation.” Papers in this panel explore the persistence of colonial humanitarian practices by European actors within and beyond Europe by a host of actors. They also detail and analyze the possibilities of initiatives by diasporic communities within and beyond Europe that work to challenge the neocolonial relationships of European NGOs and their counterparts. Papers in this panel engage with various scales of humanitarian intervention—from foreign policy to everyday NGO practice. In evaluating the practices of neocolonial humanitarianism, this panel asks whether contemporary research and practice in the humanitarian sector represents new egalitarian articulations and or the turn to decolonizing aid risks reproducing or even exacerbating the inequities of the past 50 years.

Track Classification: Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial Working Group