

Contribution ID: 1804 Contribution code: WE03

Type: Panel

Childhood as a Technology of Global Governance

Wednesday 3 June 2026 09:00 (1h 30m)

In conventions of everyday life, the social imaginary of childhood frames it as presocial, defined by incapacity and deficit relative to the idealized adult subject. In ways analogous to the operation of race or gender as governance technologies, imagined childhood is a social technology of governance, reproducing and policing the boundary between childhood and adulthood and the unequal social relations of power it sustains. As a technology of global governance, childhood is a powerful rhetorical resource in service of sovereign power as well as along circuits of civil society and IGO/NGO action, purposefully deployed in ways that undercut or enable political projects. The papers on this panel inquire into the ways in which dominant ideas about childhood bear on governance from the local to the global. From extraordinary moments of sociopolitical rupture, progressive political potentialities, or the longue durée of historical processes with global reach, each reveals important insights into how 'imagined childhood' functions as an ubiquitous and powerful social technology of governance. Scaling from the governance of children's lives, through local social orders and legal regimes, to the global, they reveal how imagined childhood operates in sometimes unanticipated ways and contexts as a social technology of global governance.

Track Classification: Critical Alternatives for World Politics