

Tourism, Power, and Postcolonial Politics: Critical perspectives on global mobility and governance

Wednesday 3 June 2026 10:45 (1h 30m)

This panel explores tourism as a key site of geopolitical production, postcolonial negotiation, and everyday resistance. It brings together critical perspectives that challenge dominant narratives of tourism as a benign or apolitical force, instead foregrounding its role in sustaining global hierarchies and shaping political subjectivities. A central theme is the governance of mobility, where tourism is shown to operate as a mechanism of control, privileging certain mobile subjects while marginalising others. This includes the reproduction of an (im)mobility regime that obscures the structural causes of displacement, dispossession, and environmental degradation. The panel also interrogates the commodification of colonial histories, examining how tourism marketing and heritage spaces –such as cruise ship advertisements and luxury hotel boutiques –sanitise and repackage colonial pasts. These practices reinforce racialised narratives and contribute to the ongoing exploitation of the Global South. Finally, the panel considers tourism as a form of everyday resistance. In contexts such as post-revolutionary Iran, travel becomes a subtle political act, enabling citizens to navigate and contest state-imposed restrictions. Together, these papers offer a critical rethinking of tourism's geopolitical implications, calling for a shift toward mobility justice and a deeper engagement with the racial, colonial, and political dimensions of global travel.

Track Classification: Critical Alternatives for World Politics