

Experiencing Un/Belonging in Academia: The Politics of Space and Place as a Traveling Concept

Thursday 4 June 2026 15:00 (1h 30m)

This roundtable engages with the BISA 2026 theme by exploring the politics of space within Higher Education (HE) to consider how these spaces are (re)configured by local power structures and hierarchies (e.g., race, gender, class, caste, religion, etc.) and how they shape experiences of un/belonging in the neoliberal academy. These dynamics influence who enters, thrives in, and remains within International Studies and its institutional spaces. In turn, they affect the discipline's capacity to meet global challenges through inclusive and transformative pedagogical and institutional practices. As Global South scholars located in Global North and Global South HE institutions, we articulate the politics of space as a 'traveling concept' (Bal 2002) and ask: how does the politics of space travel between our HE contexts, and how do local power structures and hierarchies reconfigure their significance? Participants will reflect on how their dis/location(s) within particular academic contexts shape their experiences of un/belonging, how these experiences resonate or differ across individual contexts, and in turn affect participants' strategies to navigate, contest, and (re)define academic spaces. The roundtable is rooted in an ethics of care, community, and solidarity, and relies on decolonial feminist scholarship on race, gender and representation in academia.

Track Classification: Colonial, Postcolonial and Decolonial Working Group