Panel Proposal

Title	Filtering Mobilities Material, Digital, and Narrative Infrastructures of Inequality in Contemporary Tourism
Format	In-person Panel RGS-IBG Annual International Conference 2026 2 – 4 September 2026, London
Deadline	Please, confirm your interest in participating by **15 February 2026**, and send us a presentation title and a short abstract (around 200 words) by the same date.
Convenors	Giuseppe Tomasella Postdoctoral Researcher, DeterTour project, DiSSGeA, University of Padua (Italy) Tania Rossetto Professor of Cultural Geography, MoHu Director, DiSSGeA, University of Padua (Italy)
Session Abstract	Tourism is increasingly shaped by systems that filter, channel and condition mobility. Across urban centres, heritage landscapes and environmentally pressured regions, access to place is reorganised through the combined force of digital technologies, material infrastructures and public narratives. Smartphone-based reservations, algorithmic ticketing and dynamic pricing intersect with physical barriers, turnstiles, controlled corridors, bollards and hostile design. They shape how bodies move, linger, or gather. At the same time, discourses of sustainability, safety, heritage protection and responsible behaviour legitimise these transformations, constructing moral hierarchies of "good" and "bad" visitors. This panel brings together critical geographical perspectives to examine how these hybrid infrastructures produce uneven mobilities along with new geographies of inequality. Using the mobility humanities approach – foregrounding embodied practices, rhythm, affect, performativity and frictions of everyday movement – we explore how access is allocated, restricted, or

	deterred. We are particularly interested in how economic, digital and spatial filters redistribute privilege: privileging those who can pay, plan ahead, navigate digital systems, or conform to behavioural expectations, while disadvantaging those with fewer resources, lower digital literacy, or alternative modes of presence. During this panel, contributions may analyse how these mechanisms reshape experiences of place for both visitors and residents, the affective atmospheres they generate, the ways sociality and spontaneity are constrained and the forms of exclusion – classed, racialised, generational, ableist – produced by the interaction of material, digital and narrative infrastructures. Work examining narratives, representations and imaginaries that justify, contest, or reimagine these regimes are particularly welcome. Ultimately, the panel asks: what forms of inequality emerge when mobility is curated through barriers and narratives, and what more just, inclusive, and democratic geographies of movement might we imagine if we re-politicise contemporary understanding of leisure mobilities?
Rationale and Fit with RGS-IBG 2026 Conference Theme	This session contributes to *Geographies of inequalities: towards just places* by examining: • How material infrastructures (turnstiles, barriers, designs of friction) and digital systems (apps, ticketing, surveillance) jointly produce spatial inequalities; • How narratives and representations – crisis framings, moralising discourses – justify and naturalise unequal access; • How lived, embodied and affective mobilities are reshaped through controlled flow, queuing and scripted behaviour; • How inequalities are measured, enacted and reproduced via counting, monitoring and filtering; • How these processes affect everyday life for residents and contribute to partial privatisation of public spaces;

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	• How alternative governance and infrastructural designs might promote equitable, open, and just modes of movement.
Keywords	Mobility; Inequality; Material Infrastructures; Digital Access; Hostile Design; Narratives; Spatial and Mobility Justice; Tourism Governance; Representation; Embodied Movement
Core References	Adey, P., Budd, L., & Hubbard, P. (2007). Flying Smart: The Regulation of Mobility and the Management of Risk. *Environment and Planning A, 39*(8), 1907–1925. Amoore, L. (2020). *Cloud Ethics: Algorithms and the Attributes of Governance.* Duke University Press. Büscher, B., Fletcher, R., & Wilson, R. (2014). Nature™ Inc.: Environmental Discourses of Investment and Management in Conservation. *Environment and Planning A, 46*(12), 2815–2833. Fletcher, R. (2011). Sustainable Tourism and Neoliberal Governance: Discursive Tensions. *Tourism Geographies, 13*(1), 105–120. Foucault, M. (1991) 'Governmentality', in G. Burchell et al., *The Foucault Effect*, 87–104. Graham, S. (2005). Software-Sorted Geographies of Urban Space. *Progress in Human Geography, 29*(5), 562–580. Mezzadra, S., & Neilson, B. (2013). *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor.* Duke University Press. Milano, C., Novelli, M. and Russo, A.P. (2024). Anti-tourism activism and the inconvenient truths about mass tourism, touristification and overtourism. *Tourism Geographies, 26*(8), 1313–1337. Sheller, M. (2018). *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement and Place.* Routledge.