

## STS-MIGTEC Paper Workshop 2022

ONLINE

15-17 February 2022

### Call for Papers

The STS-MIGTEC network aims to stimulate and communicate work at the intersection of science and technology studies (STS) and critical migration, security, surveillance, and border studies. It seeks to bring together researchers from different disciplines and around the world and to initiate scientific exchange to produce synergies for relevant knowledge production (<http://sts-migtec.org/>).

The STS-MIGTEC Paper Workshop 2022 invites scholars to present and discuss current work in several panels, to plan future network research activities, and to think about interventions beyond academic research. We invite you to submit your paper proposal, which are concerned with (but not limited to) the following questions:

- How do migration and border technologies shape transnational migration and border regimes?
- Which material and epistemic practices manifest or counter migration management/control regimes?
- What are the material/ontological politics involved and what power effects do such entanglements produce?
- What data infrastructures of migration and border control emerge; how are these configured alongside intersecting grids of power such as race, gender, sexuality, ability, nationality, age, generation and in which ways are they/can they be contested?
- What new forms of health and migration surveillance technologies and infrastructures did the Covid-19 global health pandemic trigger which now shape how we 'see' migrations and how versions of 'migrants' are enacted?
- How are migrant subjects shaped and affected by migration and border technologies? How do migrant subjects enact, subvert, appropriate them?
- What role do alternative, interventionist or oppositional technologies and infrastructures enacted by migrant subjects or other actors in solidarity with migrant subjects play?
- How can we critically and publicly engage with migration and border control technologies and infrastructures? What can the methodological and conceptual repertoire of STS add to engage critically with human rights issues, inequalities, public ignorance linked to migration and border control regimes? What role do science and critical scholars have in that process?

You can submit your paper proposal either to specific **thematic panels** (see descriptions below), or to an **open panel**. After reviewing and selecting paper proposals for open thematic panels, the scientific committee will invite discussants with appropriate expertise to match the papers of the open thematic panels so as to provide informed commentaries.

Please include: title, abstract (up to 250 words), and authors of the paper, incl. affiliations and short bios (75 words). Specify if you propose your paper to one of the available thematic panels (see below) or to an open panel. **The deadline for submission is 31 October 2021.** A variety of topics linking STS and critical migration/border/security/surveillance studies is welcomed.

### Schedule

- 31 October – Deadline to submit paper abstracts
- mid-November – Notification about acceptance of papers

- 31 January – Deadline to submit full draft papers (short papers of 4000 words or full papers of 8000 words)
- 15-17 February 2022 – Workshop Online

**Contact:** Please, submit paper proposals via [migtec.website@gmail.com](mailto:migtec.website@gmail.com) (subject: STS-MIGTEC Workshop paper proposal). In case you submit a proposal to one of the thematic panels listed below please also submit to the panel convenors according to the information below.

STS-MIGTEC Paper Workshop team: Olga Usachova, Nina Amelung, Silvan Pollozek, Aristotle Tympas, Georgios Glouftisios, Maria Ullrich, Ana Visan, Vasiliki Makrygianni, Jasper Van Der Kist, Koen Leurs

## Panel #1. Digital urban borderlands – datafication, spatial inequalities, migration and the city

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Cities have traditionally been places where migrants play a crucial part in the local economy and where non-citizen rights are protected. As we see an increasing datafication of both urban life and of migration it is unclear if this special role of cities will be enhanced or diminished. Data about migration and migrants and the ability to analyse that data is driven both by policy narratives and market logics – two trends that are central to urban debates. In urban areas we are seeing an increasing use of big data technologies to streamline and optimise service provision and to keep a tap on urban populations – migrants and non-migrants alike. We are witnessing the emergence of *digital urban borderlands* and we might witness processes of datafied segregation. Where migrants are in the city will become ever more important as new data analytics – often geo-analytics – are being incorporated into how cities are run, how urban economies function and how non-citizen residents are counted, categorised and how their movement is controlled within cities by those new systems. A growing literature suggests that data technologies tend to exasperate existing social inequalities and those inequalities are bound to be spatial and potentially infringe on migrants' rights. At the same time, we have initiatives such as the cities for digital rights that aim to foster human and digital rights at the local and global level.[1] What do these developments mean for the position of migrants in cities and for the spatial organisation of inequalities in cities? What kind of city might the datafied migrant city be and what will the topographies of *digital urban borderlands* look like? Maybe more importantly what do we *want* them to look like? The proposed panel seeks to collate authors engaging with these or related questions to highlight how the urban, bordering processes and the spatial organisation of inequality and difference are starting to matter in new or altered ways in the smart city of tomorrow and today.

While not limited to these topics we would welcome papers that touch on:

- Urban surveillance systems that have a disparate impact on (urban) mobilities
- The implications of data technologies registering location and movements (e.g. Uber and other migrant labour)
- Automated decision-making systems that hinder or facilitate migrants' access to the city and its services
- What conditions expediate the emergence digital urban borderlands
- How cities are countering the framing of migration as risk (and how they might partake in it)
- How migrant cities are being mediated through data and location technologies
- Theoretical deliberations of what the just digital migrant city might be and how to achieve it in practical terms
- Empirical investigations of urban bordering processes and how these relate to non-citizens.

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[1] <https://citiesfordigitalrights.org/about>

## **Panel #2. “Data quality” in border control and migration management: Politics, practices, and implications**

Matthias Leese, ETH Zurich, Switzerland  
Silvan Pollozek, European University Viadrina, Germany  
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With the steady increase of data and databases that are mobilized for border control and migration management around the globe, the “quality” of data has started to draw the attention of regulatory bodies, asylum and law enforcement authorities, and non-state actors alike. Data quality is considered key to interoperable information systems and harmonized datasets and promises reliable information that can be used for risk analysis, situational awareness, (re-)identification, or profiling. But how do arrangements and practices of cleaning, filtering, and validating turn inaccurate, incomplete, and messy datasets into “high-quality” ones? Which notions of data quality are entangled with attempts of regulation? And how do data quality issues reconfigure border control and migration management on different levels?

This panel invites contributions that explore the practices, politics, and implications of data quality within border control and migration management. Contributions might include – but are not limited to – inquiries into

- different notions, visions and problematizations migration and border management actors articulate regarding “data quality”
- the regulation of data quality
- data quality and the shaping of knowledge
- data maintenance
- institutional reordering and the reshuffling of power hierarchies in the name of “data quality”
- implications that faulty data can have on human rights and civil liberties
- how data quality can be problematized by affected individuals and civil society organizations.

**Panel #3. Multi-modal interventions: the promises and challenges of creative and collaborative engagements with matters of migration, borders & technology**

Nina Amelung, Institute of Social Science, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Pedro Neto, Institute of Social Science, University of Lisbon, Portugal

Ildikó Plájás, Political Science Department, Leiden University, Netherlands

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How do multiple forms of engagements with border and migration control regimes imagine and make a difference on the matters they critically engage with? This panel aims to explore diverse approaches and methodologies of critical epistemic engagements and interventions with matters of migrations, borders, and technologies. With multi-modal interventions, we refer to research engaging with creative audio-visual utterances focussed on the themes outlined above, which span across the broader spectrum of media genres and formats (including e.g. installations, documentary, film, podcasts, soundscapes, memes, graphic novels, mapping exercises). Of interest are epistemic interventions that may have the potential to make a difference in practice, including in the living conditions of migrants, as well as conceptual reflections on such collaborative, and researcher- or practitioner-led initiatives. We welcome a diversity of approaches with regards to the purposes and ambitions of interventions, but also with regards to their methodologies and formats.

This may include:

- Approaches trying to create reflexivity on border control technologies and infrastructures in order to influence the design and implementation processes;
- Interventions to transcend (in)visibilities of matters of ethics, justice, and inequalities deriving from technologies and infrastructures of migrations;
- Critical reflections on how to navigate through collaborations with research participants amidst hierarchical power relations, conflicting agendas, and different epistemic practices;
- Reflections on the performativity of migration scholars' epistemic interventions, such as reflections on the questions of multiple roles academics may have as scholars, academic experts, policy advisers, activists, or artists;
- Interventions that aim at amplifying and/or empowering migrants' use of technologies and infrastructures;
- But also engagements which aim to stimulate alternatives to current migration regimes.

We are also explicitly interested in the diversity of research and dissemination designs, and the diversity of methodologies collecting and analyzing data, including (participatory) action research, visual and multimodal ethnography, digital and other creative methodologies.

We encourage submissions from all disciplines (including STS, media/communication, critical data, anthropology, and/ or geography) which are either empirically grounded practice-based interventions (incl. film, participatory methodologies, art installations, performances); case studies of concrete engagements, and interventions; or, theoretical papers exploring scholars' many ways of engaging with matters of migration, borders & technology.

#### **Panel #4. Contesting “the other” in Urban Data and (Non-)Knowledge Practices**

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In the frame of the European border regime, scholars have demonstrated how technology and data serve to systematically stigmatize, exclude, and oppress migrant populations through mechanisms of criminalization, identification, and social sorting (Metcalf & Dencik 2019, Tazzioli 2019). As such practices are not limited to border regions but find itself deeply embedded into society, this panel aims at bringing together research on epistemic and political processes within the urban realm that either focus on the underlying discriminatory design of the socio-technical world that normalizes racial hierarchies (Benjamin, 2016: 148), or (research on) interventionist or oppositional practices and technologies.

Urban research and knowledge production, urban policies, urban data, and technologies are all too often presented as being neutral and objective, as their subject is “the city” and migration is treated as rather incidental. However, in doing so urban scholars and practitioners not only fail to acknowledge the various discriminatory and racist practices, but they also contribute to the reproduction of such mechanisms.

Approaches from feminist, postcolonial, and critical race STS are crucial to critically engage with power asymmetries that are enacted and/or reproduced through science, and technologies in the city. The panel invites research contesting the urban as objective and neutral and pointing to cities as frontiers for activating multiple truths, as well as sites of subversion, counter-narratives, and protest. Possible topics can encompass but are not limited to:

- urban systems of categorisation and their contestations
- the framing of migration in urban knowledge production, as well as subversion of such knowledge and practices of counter-knowledge production
- racialised urban systems of control and surveillance
- missing data with regard to cities
- practices by migrant subjects and organizations in solidarity to migrants that contest, protest and subvert one or more of the above-mentioned issues

Literature cited:

Benjamin, Ruha (2016): *Catching Our Breath: Critical Race STS and the Carceral Imagination*. *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society* 2, pp. 145-156.

Metcalf & Dencik (2019): *The politics of big borders: Data (in)justice and the governance of refugees*. *first Monday*, <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/9934/7749>.

Tazzioli, Martina (2019): *The Making of Migration. The Biopolitics of Mobility at Europe’s Borders*. London: SAGE Publications.