

# Joint STS-MIGTEC and Processing Citizenship Workshop 2023

Hybrid

Department of Philosophy and Communication Studies, University of Bologna & Online

21–22 March 2023

## Call for Papers

The research network [STS-MIGTEC](#) and the ERC funded research group [Processing Citizenship](#) invite scholars at different career stages to a research workshop. We invite contributions at the intersection of science and technology studies (STS), critical migration, security, surveillance and border studies, and related disciplines, which are concerned with (but not limited to) the following themes:

- How do migration and border technologies shape transnational migration and border regimes? Which epistemic practices manifest or counter migration management/control regimes? What are the material 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, (dis)ability, nationality, age, and generation, and in which ways can they be contested?
- How are migrant subjects affected by migration and border technologies? How do migrant subjects enact, subvert, and appropriate them? What role do alternative civic technologies and infrastructures enacted by migrant subjects or other actors in solidarity play?
- What new forms of health and migration surveillance technologies and infrastructures did the Covid-19 global health pandemic bring into being? Which technologies and practices have found their way into border control and migration management and how do they affect lives and mobilities of migrants?
- Which role do digital technologies play in the governance of asylum and humanitarian protection? What role do media platforms and infrastructures play for Ukrainian refugees in accessing protection? To what extent is the support for Ukrainian refugees based on existing socio-spatial networks and digital infrastructures?
- Which kinds of politics and administrative assemblages emerge from security practices and infrastructures of registering, categorising, and sorting? To what extent can we detect long-term institutional transformations? Which epistemic orders are likely to emerge and stay?
- 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, and publics? What role do science and critical scholars have in that process?

You can submit your papers either to specific **thematic panels** (see descriptions below) or to **open panels**:

**Panel #1.** Emerging Models of Digital Identity in Migration Governance, Humanitarian Aid and Development Assistance

**Panel #2.** Mediatizing claim making, publics, and citizenship. On ambivalent technologies for migrants on the move

**Panel #3.** Law, Technology and Border Control

**Panel #4.** Situating long-term implications of registering and identifying practices

**Open Panels.** Assemble papers addressing the themes above



This workshop is part of a project that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European "Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement (No 714463)."

## Submission procedure

Please submit paper proposals to [migtec.website@gmail.com](mailto:migtec.website@gmail.com) (subject: STS-MIGTEC/PC Workshop paper proposal). In case you submit a proposal to one of the thematic panels listed below please additionally cc: the panel convenors.

Please include the 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 or to open panels and if you would like to participate on-site. The deadline for submission is **15 December 2022**.

## Schedule

- 15 December 2022 – Deadline to submit paper abstracts
- 10 January 2023 – Notification about acceptance of papers
- 6 March 2023 – Deadline to submit short papers (of approximately 4000 words)
- 21–22 March 2023 – Workshop (hybrid)

## Fees & travel grants

There is **no workshop fee**. Lunch, coffee breaks and dinner need to be paid individually.

A total of **10 travel/accommodation grants** of max. 500 Euros each will be offered by the ERC research group *Processing Citizenship* to scholars who seek financial support to attend the event. If you wish to apply for a grant, please indicate your interest with your submission. The grants aim to support researchers who lack funding otherwise.

## Organizers

[STS-MIGTEC network](#) is an independent network of scholars at the intersection of science and technology studies (STS) and critical migration, security and border studies. It aims to stimulate and communicate state-of-the-art research. 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.

[Processing Citizenship](#) is a research team based at the University of Bologna (IT) and University of Twente (NL) funded by the European Research Council which explores the co-production of citizens, territory and Europe from an STS perspective. It investigates the sociotechnical practices of registration and identification in Europe, maps data circulations in IT systems for migration and border control, and asks how new data infrastructures affect borders, citizenship, territory and European integration. Its eventual goal is to conduct a “history of the presence” of European formations.

**STS-MIGTEC Workshop team:** Nina Amelung, Elisa De Carvalho, Ivan Josipovic, Silvan Pollozek, Maria Ullrich, Olga Usachova

**Processing Citizenship Team:** Chiara Loschi, Lorenzo Olivieri, Paul Trauttmansdorff, Wouter Van Rossem, Annalisa Pelizza



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## Panel #1. Emerging Models of Digital Identity in Migration Governance, Humanitarian Aid and Development Assistance

Aaron Martin (ECPC, TILT), Margie Cheesman (KCL), Emrys Schoemaker (IHEID, LSE, Cornell Tech) and Keren Weitzberg (QMUL)

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In the areas of migration governance, humanitarian aid and development assistance, digital identity “solutions” tend to be biometrically [enabled](#), cloud-based and “mobile first”, leading to pressing concerns about [unwarranted surveillance](#), [unauthorized access to sensitive data](#), and harmful discrimination and [exclusion](#).

In response to these concerns, and spurred by growing interest in privacy-by-design and new decentralized models for data governance, innovations like [digital wallets](#) promise to empower people with cryptographically secure, persistent and self-managed means of financial inclusion and identity recognition across borders. Moreover, digital identity “[trust frameworks](#)” and other socio-technical architectures for cross-border [data portability](#) and [system interoperability](#) are emerging. These solutions promise to enable “privacy-enhancing” and “people-centric” platforms for use in migration and aid contexts, which are still heavily dominated by centralized models that prioritize the needs of government agencies and aid organizations over those of migrants, refugees and other vulnerable populations. Critical research is yet to tackle what these new digital technologies and innovative governance models mean in practice for people and institutions.

In our [2021 commentary on reconsidering digital identity in aid](#), we call on scholars to rethink methodological and theoretical commitments to better capture the ambivalent forms of control and agency that digital identity systems engender, and so apprehend the implications of decentralized and privacy-focused developments. The commentary also encourages STS-inspired and critical approaches to the study of digital identities in situ. We thus invite submissions from scholars working on digital identity topics in migration governance, humanitarian aid and development assistance, who seek to connect critiques of new and emergent “solutions” with ongoing debates in STS and critical border and security studies.

## Panel #2. Mediatizing claim making, publics, and citizenship. On ambivalent technologies for migrants on the move

Silvan Pollozek (European University Viadrina), Maria Ullrich (University of Bonn), Olga Usachova (University of Padua)

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Work at the intersection of citizenship studies, science and technology studies, and migration studies has shown how the (lack of) everyday access to and use of technologies shape the conditions for migrants on the move to make claims. Claims-making thereby refers to acts of demanding rights by and on behalf of migrants and points to contestations, negotiations, and struggles around (material) citizenship and (political) subjectivity (Isin 2019, Nyers 2015). Research has stressed the ambivalences of technologies for migrants, which may establish and support claims but also expose migrants to suspicion and mistrust (Ponzanesi & Leurs 2022). For instance, smartphones may collect and show evidence in the interests of migrants, but they may also be used for exposure in identification arrangements by state authorities (Gillespie, Osseiran & Cheesman 2018). Or social media platforms may render migrants' claims (in)visible in the digital sphere (Georgiou 2019) while at the same time being accessed for monitoring and surveillance by state and other actors (Latonero & Kift, 2018).

With this panel, we want to explore further the ambivalences of technologies in regard to migrants' claims-making. It asks how technologies support and restrict practices of claim making as acts of citizenship, or how they enable and constrain publics, in which migrants' concerns come to matter. We invite submissions from social movement studies, critical migration studies, science and technology studies, citizenship studies, or other disciplines that address the following topics (among others):

- conceptualising the relations between technologies, publics, and (acts of) citizenship,
- the socio-material and socio-technical shaping of publics and the (in)visibility of migrants' claims through media platforms,
- smartphones as ambivalent devices for migrants on the move,
- reappropriations of security technologies by enacting 'counter-technologies' and 'counter knowledge' for 'counter claims-making' (e.g. GPS data and monitoring tools),
- technologies of identification and the socio-technical (de)legitimization of migrants' claims
- the role of technology in advocacy work, or in artistic and creative protest interventions to stimulate critical publics,
- mediatized political subjectivities in the context of acts of citizenship and migration.

### References

Georgiou M. (2019) City of Refuge or Digital Order? Refugee Recognition and the Digital Governmentality of Migration in the City, *Television & New Media*, 20:6, 600-616, DOI: 10.1177/1527476419857683.

Gillespie M., Osseiran S. and Cheesman M. (2018) Syrian Refugees and the Digital Passage to Europe: Smartphone Infrastructures and Affordances. *Social Media + Society* 4:1: 205630511876444. DOI: [10.1177/2056305118764440](https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118764440).

Isin, E. F. (2019) "Doing Rights with Things: The Art of Becoming Citizens." In *Performing Citizenship. Performance Philosophy*, edited by P. Hildebrandt, K. Evert, S. Peters, M. Schaub, K. Wildner, and G. Ziemer, 45–56. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.



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Latonero, M., & Kift, P. (2018). On Digital Passages and Borders: Refugees and the New Infrastructure for Movement and Control. *Social Media + Society*, 4:1. DOI: [10.1177/2056305118764432](https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305118764432)

Nyers, P. (2015). "Migrant Citizenships and Autonomous Mobilities." 1 (1): 23–39. doi:10.18357/mmd11201513521.

Ponzanesi S. and Leurs K. (2022) Digital Migration Practices and the Everyday. *Communication, Culture and Critique* 15:2, 103–121. DOI: [10.1093/ccc/teac016](https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/teac016).



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### Panel #3. Law, Technology and Border Control

Francisco Pereira Coutinho (NOVA School of Law) and Emellin de Oliveira (NOVA School of Law)

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Since the formation of States, with the elements recognised by classical literature and the Treaty of Montevideo of 1933, the security of the territory has been recognised as one of the main responsibilities of the State. As a consequence, the control of the passage of non-nationals across borders has become one of the major concerns of governments, and one of the unavoidable political phenomena in migration studies.

If, initially, the monopoly of authority to restrict international movements was held by the States through the passport (Torpey, 2000); currently, technological advances have allowed different forms of border control, which have become more dynamic, extending beyond their territorial framework.

In the case of the European Union, the creation of a space without internal border control is intrinsically linked to the development of databases (Brouwer, 2008), moving border control from a physical to a digital environment. And new surveillance technologies and the digitalisation of information have had a direct impact on border and migration policies (Broeders & Dijkstra, 2016), which has culminated in the proliferation of databases, able to process different personal data collected from various categories of foreigners (Vavoula, 2019).

In this sense, the present panel aims to take stock of discussions on the role of Law in the use of technology and information systems by states for border and migration control purposes and to identify the most pressing current challenges. Proposals from all disciplines that relate to the trinomial “Law, Technology and Border Control”, with special attention to the protection of personal data of third-country nationals, are welcome. After the workshop selected contributions may be invited to submit to a special issue initiative within the Observatory of Personal Data Protection Yearbook.



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## Panel #4 Situating long-term implications of registering and identifying practices

Chiara Loschi, Annalisa Pelizza, Paul Trauttmansdorff  
(Department of Philosophy and Communication, University of Bologna)

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This panel invites to reflect on the long-term perspectives and implications of identifying and registering mobile populations. A multidisciplinary literature in STS, security studies, and critical border and migration studies has extensively studied and criticised IT systems, data infrastructures, and new biometric technologies, which track, identify, register, and digitise people on the move. Practices of identification and registration are thus fundamental in shaping the patterns and trajectories of human mobility, the logics of policing and surveillance, or detainment and deportation infrastructures. Scholars have examined how these practices are performative in producing new forms of (non)knowledge and legible identities, enabling new subjectivities and relationships (Andersson 2016), and enacting migration as a governable entity, sorting it into racialized/gendered classifications (Kloppenburg and van der Ploeg 2020). STS has been particularly vocal in emphasising agency, contingency, and dynamic processes. However, by embracing a perspective on the micro-dynamics, scholars tend to understate the longer-term consequences, the obduracy, and the relative stability of registration and identification systems and their infrastructures (Pelizza 2020). This is surprising since long-durée approaches have demonstrated how identification and registration can be traced back to the sixteenth century (Groebner 2007), but also underpin colonial and imperial ambitions with long-lasting and devastating effects for human beings (Mitchell 2002).

Our panel invites conceptual and empirical contributions that help shedding light onto long-term perspectives and implications of registering and identifying people on the move – through the build-up of large-scale databases, monitoring systems, knowledge infrastructures, taxonomies, population registers, or other sociotechnical infrastructures. We seek to engage with genealogies, epistemologies, and power relations, as well as conflicts and struggles around the attempts to create and stabilise systems of identification and registration. Topics can revolve around the following (or similar) themes, such as

- Genealogies of data systems and/or population registers
- The legacies of coloniality in identification and registration systems
- Long-term consequences for power relations, forms of citizenship, and geographies of responsibility
- Registering and identifying in war and humanitarian contexts
- Practices of registration and identification during the pandemic and their effects
- Emerging regimes of knowledge and evidence in the governance of mobilities
- Statistics and the production and circulation of numbers
- The role of laboratories, scientific practices, and R&D agendas for identification and registration practices

This panel warmly encourages participation with the aim to build long-term collaboration, including further participation at conferences to be held at the University of Bologna in June 2023 and joint publication efforts.

### References



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