First STS-MIGTEC Paper Workshop

ONLINE

25-26 January 2021

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 first STS-MIGTECH Paper Workshop 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 are migrant subjects shaped and affected by migration and border technologies? How do migrant subjects enact, subvert, appropriate them?
- How do migration and border technologies shape transnational migration and border regimes?
- How are migration/ border technologies and border control practices co-shaped?
- What is the role of alternative, interventionist or oppositional technologies and infrastructures that are enacted by migrant subjects themselves or other actors in solidarity with migrant subjects ?
- Which material and epistemic politics are involved in this enactment?
- What power effect does such involvement produce?
- What are ways to critically and publicly engage with technologies and infrastructures of migration and border control?

    You can submit your paper proposal either **to 2 out of 3 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 **30 September 2020**. Variety of topics linking STS and critical migration/border/security/surveillance studies is welcomed.

Schedule

- 30 September - Deadline to submit paper abstracts
- 31 October – Notification about acceptance of papers
- 8 January - Deadline to submit full draft papers (short papers of 4000 words or full papers of 8000 words)
- 25-26 January 2021 Workshop Online

Contact: Please, submit paper proposals **via website.stsmigtech@gmail.com. In case you submit proposal to panel #1 or panel #2 please also submit to the panel convenors according to the information below.**

STS MIGTEC conference team: Nina Amelung, Silvan Pollozek, Aristotle Tympas, Olga Usachova

Panel #1: Material enactments beyond migration management infrastructures

Fredy Mora-Gámez and Eric Snodgrass, Linköping University, Sweden
contact: fredy.mora.gamez@liu.se; eric.snodgrass@liu.se

An important portion of the literature on the convergences STS-migration/border studies addresses the technological mediations of migration management policies, the ways in which information infrastructures and forms of visualization shape citizenship, and the implications of sociotechnical border regimes in everyday life, among other areas. In an attempt to pursue an alternative line of inquiry involving the relocation of STS towards unconventional places, this panel explores enactments of materiality challenging, exceeding and contesting migration management infrastructures and border regimes. In the context of migration/border control, what role is played by alternative, interventionist or oppositional infrastructures, technologies, and forms of (socio)materiality? What material and epistemic politics are involved in the enactments of alternative modes of practice and organization? What power or resistance effects, entanglements and redistributions of agency do they (potentially) produce?

We welcome abstracts about:
- Theoretically informed empirical studies/ethnographies about crafting/making practices developed by migrants
- Empirical-/theoretical contributions about infrastructures of migration, care, solidarity and/or reparation
- The reconfiguration of nation-states through mundane/everyday digital and non-digital technologies
- Alternative forms of expertise, technoscience and knowledge developed by communities of migrants
- Reflection/studies about the relation between art/artisanry, material politics and resistance/solidarity/memory/affect in the context of migration/border control
- Decolonial/situated reflections about the intersections between STS, migration/border studies and/or other forms of knowledge
- The politics of STS in addressing migration and border control and the epistemic challenges for interdisciplinary research.
- Other relevant themes/studies (feel free to contact the conveners for discussing your proposal)

We expect to collectively reflect on the implications of approaching the entanglements between STS, migration/border studies, and other fields in different geographic locations. We seek to identify potential lines of collective inquiry.

Panel #2: The Politics of (Non)Knowledge in the (Un)Making of Migration

Stephan Scheel, Institute of Sociology, University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany
contact: stephan.scheel@uni-due.de

Numerous scholars have highlighted how knowledge practices, and not only practices of bordering, feature in the 'making of migration' (Tazzioli, 2020). In brief, knowledge production is key to any project of border and migration management, because migration is an abstraction, to which policy makers and other stakeholders in the field of border and migration management have no direct access. Rather, migration has to be enacted as an intelligible, actionable object of government and this involves various knowledge practices and related inscription devices, categorizations as well as visualizations in maps, charts, graphs, etc. (Scheel et al., 2019). However, different methods, inscription devices, and categories (Grommé and Scheel, 2020) will enact migration in different ways. Moreover, the enactment of migration is often intertwined with the production of different types of nonknowledge (Scheel and Ustek-Spilda, 2019), such as uncertainty, secrecy, opacity, omission (Aradau, 2017), undone science (Hess, 2015) or strategic ignorance (McGoey, 2012).

Hence, this panel asks for papers that contribute to the study of the politics of (non)knowledge in the (un)making of migration. In particular, the panel welcomes papers that address one of the following questions: In which ways and through what kind of practices and inscription devices is migration enacted as an object of government? How does the production of nonknowledge feature in these enactments? How is the production of (non)knowledge about migration related to the enactment of (some) people as migrants in today's borderzones? How do particular enactments of migration inform and shape logics and practices of government mobilised to control and regulate migration? Or, more generally, how do the politics of (non)knowledge in the (un)making of migration affect the 'politics of international migration management' (Geiger and Pécoud, 2010)? What kind of STS-inspired concepts and analytical sensitivities can we mobilise to study and make sense of what we might call the 'ontopolitics' (Mol, 2002) of contemporary border and migration management? And last, but not finally, what kind of conceptual moves and analyses might allow critical scholars to intervene in these ontopolitics of migration management through processes of translation that may contribute to the unmaking of migration as a problem of government?

References

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Geiger M and Pécoud A. (2010) The Politics of International Migration Management. In: Geiger M and Pécoud A (eds) *The Politics of International Migration Management.* Basingstoke/ New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1-20.

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Hess D. (2015) Undone Science and Social Movements: A Review and Typology. In: Gross M and McGoey L (eds) *Routledge International Handbook of Ignorance Studies.* London & New York: Routledge, 141-154.

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Scheel S and Ustek-Spilda F. (2019) On the Politics of Expertise and Ignorance in the Field of Migration Management. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 37: 663–681.

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Panel #3: Border control technologies (papers already for special issue pre-selected, no new paper submission possible, but open discussion)

Nina Amelung, Universidade de Lisboa, Portugal & Vasilis Galis, IT University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Domestic moral panics and conflicts around migration as well as international border control in the name of anti-crime and terrorism policies have substantially given rise to nowadays' regimes of sophisticated border control technologies. Migrants and refugees are increasingly confronted with such complex border control technologies when they try to cross international borders or apply for asylum in Europe or elsewhere. To better 'manage' migration, border control agencies have gradually upgraded their IT infrastructures in recent years. They employ biometric technologies to scan fingerprints and facial images, large-scale databases to identify, register and document foreign travelers, as well as satellite surveillance systems or drones to detect migrants in distress at sea. Meanwhile, migrants have appropriated digital technologies themselves (such as smartphones and social media platforms), either during their journeys or when claiming their rights for asylum or reparation.

The proposed panel interrogates how border control technologies turn 'borders' into sites of contestation over different and sometimes conflicting policy agendas, policies and measures around migration. How do border control technologies turn specific versions of 'borders' into a contested concept and how do migrants use and repurpose technology to respond and circumvent the borders they experience as constraining them?

All papers included in the special issue draw on the conceptual and methodological repertoire of Science and Technology Studies which explore the material politics entangled with border control technologies. Our use of the term "material politics" follows an Actor-Network-Theory inspired and posthumanist conception of politics. Material politics embraces what also has been called 'object-oriented politics' (Marres, 2007; Marres and Lezaun, 2011), 'ontological politics' (Mol, 1999; Woolgar and Lezaun, 2013), or 'material democracy' (Marres 2012; Barry, 2013; Brown 2015). By exploring material politics in the context of this special issue, contributions share the interest in politics entangled with border control technologies with respect to its outcomes – the objects, issues, actors, and collectivities constituted through politics. This conception of politics comes with an empirical interest in how political subjects and material objects are constructed through technoscience of border control technologies and related sociotechnical controversies.

Studying material politics of border control technologies means for our panel contributions to not taking the functioning of new technologies for granted, but interrogating how they are put into operation, and with which political consequences. They trace the actors, practices, discourses and material conditions involved in deploying border control technologies, and shed light on capacities of contestation and the political controversies sparked through the proliferation of such technologies.

Literature

Barry, A., (2013). Material politics: Disputes along the pipeline. John Wiley & Sons.
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