Call for participation

Cost Action DATAMIG – Hybrid Workshop 2026

Traveling technologies, regulations, and resistance in the context of datafied migration and borders

hosted by Dr. Zuzana Uhde and Dr. Linda Monsees
Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Sociology
June 4-5, 2026

Location
Academic conference centre (AKC), Husova 4a, 110 00 Praha
(http://www.akc-avcr.cz/)

As part of COST action Data Matters: Sociotechnical Challenges of European Migration and Border Control (DATAMIG), the interdisciplinary **Working Group 1 INVENTORY** invites participants to join this year's workshop which will take place at the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague.

The workshop invites contributions to **four thematic streams:**
Theme 1: **Trading Technologies**. Tracing private Actors across multiple Geographies of Border Control
Theme 2: **Traveling Technologies** in and beyond the Nexus of Tech, Humanitarianism and Gender
Theme 3: **Traveling Policy.** Mapping datafied migration governance across geographical and institutional sites
Theme 4: **Contesting Digital Borders from Below**. Mapping Traveling Counter Strategies of Digital Technologies in the Context of Migration, Humanitarianism and Border Control

The workshop starts on June 4 (09:00) and ends on June 5 (17:00) (CEST).

Please find the group specific submission requirements and contact details in the calls below. Please, indicate in your submission if you apply for on-site or online participation. For your submission email, please use the header "COST-WG1-Prague-Theme [NUMBER]". Submissions are to be sent by **26 March 2026.** The convenors of the four thematic groups will review submissions. Decisions will be communicated by **3 April 2026**.

Fees & travel grants
There is no workshop fee. Lunch and dinner need to be paid individually. We have limited funding for reimbursing travel and accommodation costs for on-site attendance. 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. We cannot guarantee that all requests for travel grants will be granted.

Workshop organizing team: Alice Fill, Koen Leurs, Annalisa Meloni, Linda Monsees, Veronika Nagy, Sarah Perret, Silvan Pollozek, Philipp Seuferling, Zuzana Uhde

Theme 1: Trading technologies. Tracing private actors across multiple geographies of border control

<u>Convenors</u>: Zuzana Uhde, Kelly Bescherer, Veronika Nagy, Beata Paragi, Linda Monsees

This sub-group proposes to look at the ways in which multiple geographies of migration and border control become entangled through the involvement of private sector actors. Transnational corporations such as Cellebrite, Palantir, or Thales as well as less known companies and start-ups operating domestically shape agendas of border and mobility control, resulting in many parallels in methodologies of control and financial interests, and potential synergies for civil society actors resisting this securitization. While critical scholarship has examined securitization, humanitarian governance, and externalization, less attention has been paid to the political economy of trading these technologies and to the concrete impact that "privatized" digital infrastructures have on rights, accountability, and sovereignty.

Mapping this corporate landscape, spanning technologies such as biometric identification and recognition, cloud hosting, data analytics, or aerial intelligence, makes visible how private actors actively transnationalize the EU's datafied border regime. Their technologies circulate not only among EU agencies but also across the Western Balkans, Turkey, and African partner states involved in EU externalization frameworks. Initiatives like the Copernicus Border Surveillance Service further integrate Earth-observation data supplied by corporate partners into EU border governance systems. This circulation of technology is not merely operational but also normative and political. As proprietary systems and analytics platforms become infrastructural, they embed corporate standards into public policy processes while diffusing accountability across overlapping chains of subcontractors, cloud providers, defence manufacturers, and venture-capital-backed start-ups.

Mapping the market of technological solutions for migration and border management across different fields sheds a light on the agency of private actors in transnationalizing datafied border control and in advancing a hegemonic future vision of a tech-driven global mobility regime. We are interested not only in how technologies circulate, but in **how their trade restructures responsibility, diffuses accountability, embeds corporate standards into public policy, and affects migrants' lived realities.** What happens when border governance is assembled through cloud providers, subcontractors, defense industries, and venture capital? How does outsourcing reconfigure democratic oversight? How do corporate ecosystems operate across the EU, the Western Balkans, Turkey, Africa, and beyond across the transatlantic region?

We invite participants **interested in exploring the role of private companies, investors, procurement regimes, and infrastructural partners in shaping contemporary border governance across multiple geographies.** In Prague and onwards, we will build **a multisituated cooperation that adopts a transversal perspective on borders and trading technologies and thinks across different contexts**. Whether you have conducted extensive research on private actors or you are interested in exploring this line of inquiry, we invite participants keen to think about a research agenda and methodologies for mapping and analyzing private sector involvement.

In Prague, we will organise a roundtable discussion based on participants' inputs (about 3 pages shared in advance) and collective workshops on methodologies and potential collaborations (e.g. a publication or mapping project based on a shared interest in several companies across multiple geographies). Submissions should include a **300 to 500 words synopsis** outlining how you think in your research about the role, involvement or agency of private actors in tech-driven border control, migration management and/or the humanitarian industry, which questions you pursue, which methodologies you apply (if any); and **a brief statement** what you would like to explore further in the collective workshop and the kinds of collaboration you would like to pursue after the Prague meeting.

Send your submissions to zuzana.uhde@soc.cas.cz; bescherer@posteo.de and datamig.wg1@gmail.com.

Theme 2: Traveling Technologies in and beyond the nexus of Tech, Humanitarianism and Gender

Convenors: Valentina Biondini, Giovanni Dini, Marija Grujic, Nikolas Kouloglou

Digital technologies are proliferating in the gendered and politicised humanitarian sector, with implications for the rights of people on the move. The liminal contexts in which digital tools are applied, such as asylum administration processes or refugee camps, involve diverse actors (humanitarian, institutional, security, private) with contrasting goals and overlapping jurisdictions. This entails that so-called humanitarian technologies are given to function creep and often travel across geographic and institutional settings. Thorough critical analysis of digital and data-based technologies can help identify the perils and pitfalls they entail, as well as potential mitigation measures and guardrails to protect fundamental rights.

This workshop will explore how policies of protection are operationalised through humanitarian technologies, while overlapping with security, externalising and surveillance apparatuses. It also asks how international and national humanitarian actors produce and sustain the image of "compassionate saviours" (Sanchez & Antonopoulos, 2023; Pallister Wilkins, 2015, Walters, 2011) through data-driven practices, and how humanitarian technologies are reshaped as they circulate through increasingly authoritarian regimes, reconfiguring and articulating both humanitarianism and gendered forms of intervention (Ticktin, 2011, Hess, et al., 2022).

A gendered lens is essential for analysing how humanitarian technologies travel and acquire meaning across contexts. Feminist and critical scholarship shows that humanitarianism operates through selective visibilities of vulnerability and responsibility, producing hierarchies of "protectable" and "suspect" subjects that are stabilised through data-driven classifications (Sandvik, 2018). As digital tools circulate between humanitarian agencies, states, and private providers, moral economies of compassion are translated into bureaucratic and algorithmic labels, enabling function creep and new forms of control (Leboeuf, 2025; Chouliaraki, 2021).

We invite contributions:
On how data practices circulate between states and humanitarian actors, and back again, and how these traveling technologies enact humanitarian interventions while intersecting with gendered constructions of vulnerability, protection, and responsibility.

Participants are invited to submit their contributions to address the following questions:

- How do humanitarian technologies travel, and what do they (re)configure as they move across borders, institutions and political regimes?
- How do feminist, sociological, and postcolonial analyses of gender and humanitarianism help to understand how gendered narratives shape the design, use, and effects of travelling humanitarian technologies?
- How do traveling technologies entangle humanitarian protection with punitive forms of control as they move across policy, security and racialised migration regimes?

Scholars interested in participating are invited to submit **an abstract (max 250 words).** Prior to the workshop, selected participants will be invited to submit a **working paper (max 3.000 words).**
The objective is to compile a collection of thematically linked papers for a special issue or edited volume.

Participants are invited to submit the abstract to gdini@ibei.org and datamig.wg1@gmail.com.

Theme 3: Traveling Policy. Mapping datafied migration governance across geographical and institutional sites

Convenors: Sifka Etlar Frederiksen, Iwan Oostrom, Alice Fill, Annalisa Meloni

In this workshop, we are interested in (historical) chains of decision-making related to migration policies and the formalised and informal practices that enact situated realities of mobility. We aim to explore and map how policies intersect with the datafication of mobility and migration across geographical and institutional sites, focusing on the travel of migration policies and their embeddedness in international political economy, nation-states and interactions with migrant and national citizen identities. We understand policies broadly: as laws, regulations, norms, and discourses; as the financialisation of all aspects of life; as well as techniques and technologies that facilitate and control mobility.

We are interested in unpacking the various forms that the "travel" of policies takes – translation, implementation, diffusion, externalisation, adaptation, and so on. We encourage the interrogation of traveling policies by examining the concepts, values, and ideologies underlying them; studying how policies are operationalised and implemented through language, institutions and in/formal practices, and more; and scrutinising policy formulation, translation, and effects on bodies' mobilities through chains of decision-making, both present and historical.

We invite contributions that engage with questions such as:
- **How do policies travel across temporal, geographical and institutional sites?** For example: how policies such as The Common European Asylum System (CEAS) are implemented differently across EU Member States; how in/formal practices shape their (reality) effects; and how technical standards are adopted, adapted and/or contested as they diffuse.
- **How are technologies mobilised to operationalise, diffuse, and/or harmonise migration policies?** This includes examining how technical instruments de/politicise policy interventions and how they shape and constrain the practices of authorities.
- **How do policies shape and constrain the configuration and/or reach of technologies and data infrastructures?** For example: how imaginaries (such as modernisation or coloniality) travel across geo-temporal contexts, or how data protection law acts as both a constraining and enabling force in the externalisation of migration control (e.g. in ECOWAS or Balkandac).

Modes of participation and submission guidelines
The workshop is conceived as a collective working space oriented towards a shared publication outcome in the form of a writing forum. Rather than a conventional conference format, the aim is to foster dialogue across different empirical, methodological and analytical entry points, and to collectively articulate situated reflections around a shared theme.
The workshop will be structured around two sessions:
1. **Public panel:** Short presentations in which participants briefly introduce their 'starting point paper': the empirical material, analytical problem, or conceptual argument from which they propose to engage with the workshop theme.
2. **Closed working session:** Dedicated to collectively developing the writing forum proposal and to building a dialogue across contributions, clarifying points of connection, tension, and complementarity.

Submissions are intentionally open and flexible. Contributors are invited to submit a short text (**max. one page**) that may take the form of an abstract, argument, or problem statement. Submissions should indicate how the notion of travelling policies figures in the contributor's work.

Participants are invited to submit the abstract to sifka.frederiksen@leuphana.de; alice.fill@ens.psl.eu and datamig.wg1@gmail.com.

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Theme 4: Contesting digital borders from below. Mapping Traveling Counter Strategies of Digital Technologies in the Context of Migration, Humanitarianism and Border Control

<u>Convenors</u>: Sara Bellezza, Andrés Pereira, Michelle Pfeifer, Silvan Pollozek, Philipp Seuferling

The datafication and digitalization of migration and border control, and their contestation, have become global and transnational phenomena. At the intersection of critical research and civil society activism, our goal is to engage with collectives and initiatives that develop strategies and tactics to visibilize, trace, map, hold accountable, campaign and advocate against the innovation, marketing, and deployment of new migration and border technologies across the globe. We seek to discover active forms of exchange and networking among such collectives and actors and **understand how shared positionings, approaches, epistemologies, critiques and narratives emerge, travel – and diversify – on a trans- and international scale.**

This workshop explores and assembles 'contestations from below' against datafied and digital borders across the globe. Researchers are invited to contribute to the following and related questions:

- Which *strategies and tactics* of resistance to border-tech circulate across bordering spaces and across critical research, civil society, and activism? How do such practices - and the knowledge around them- travel, are translated and reappropriated into certain contexts and situations over time?
- Which globalized and localized *epistemologies,* narratives, critiques and positionings against datafied and digital borders exist and emerge across collectives? In which ways do they diversify, e.g. along the axis of reactive - proactive, technopessimistic - technooptimistic, or abolitionist - reformist approaches?
- What actors, formats and practices stimulate *trans- and international exchange* and network building?

The workshop consists of two parts. On day one, contributors will present and discuss their research in public panels. On day two, we will kick off a collaborative mapping project for strategies and tactics of contestations from below across the globe. The mapping will continue remotely in the upcoming months. At the end of the workshop, the group will jointly discuss potential forms of dissemination, publication.

Participants are invited to submit **title** and **abstract** (150 words) for a presentation (day1) as well as their interest, what they would like to explore further as part of the **mapping** process (day 2).
In your submissions, please spell out in which ways you would like to contribute to the workshop. We welcome contributions that are (but not limited to):
- presentations of finished, ongoing or planned research on resistances against border tech across the globe
- experiences or projects on mapping, connecting, tracing forms of resistances
- experiences with participation in globally shared or travelling resistances

Participants are invited to submit the abstract to Philipp.Seuferling@glasgow.ac.uk and datamig.wg1@gmail.com.

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