Navigating uncertainty: Leveraging digital technologies for migration decisions
*Workshop co-convened by **Anna Triandafyllidou,** Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration, Toronto Metropolitan University, **Igor Grossmann**, Professor of Psychology, University of Waterloo, **Faisal Garba**, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Cape Town, and **Ana Beduschi**, Professor of Law, University of Exeter.*

Date: February 11-12, 2025
Time: 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM (DAY-1)
     9:00AM - 2:30 PM (DAY-2)
Location: Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) Manor House Library

This workshop will explore how migrants make critical life decisions to migrate, and how they use technology for information gathering under conditions of uncertainty—from mainstream media to social networks and direct contacts, balancing opportunities with the challenges of misinformation. Participants will explore both the empowering aspects of these technologies and their potential pitfalls, examining differences between regular and irregular migration pathways.

Information seeking and processing, and decision making in migration have been an important focus in migration studies for the past 15 years. There is an emerging literature looking into how people process information and make decisions in conditions of significant uncertainty, notably when moving without appropriate documentation and when facing high levels of vulnerability and risk. The recent global disruptions, including the pandemic, and moments of global technological outages/failure, have further complicated these pathways, affecting even privileged and the most skilled migrants' ability to navigate international borders smoothly.

This interdisciplinary workshop, a collaboration between the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies (STIAS) and the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration (CERC Migration), aims to merge insights from social psychology and decision science. We will explore:

● Strategies to apply social psychological and decision science theories to migration studies to better understand and support migrant decision-making in uncertain conditions
● How migrants use digital tools and other aids in decision-making processes
● The influence of technology on both regular and irregular migration
● The meaning and implication of technology for social relations in the context of migration

Join us for a transdisciplinary dialogue that bridges social psychology, decision sciences, and migration studies to better understand and support the decision-making processes of migrants in the digital age.

PROGRAM

Tuesday, February 11, 2025

8:30 AM SAST   Welcome coffee

8:45 AM - 9:00 AM SAST   Welcome remarks, **Anna Triandafyllidou**, Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration, Toronto Metropolitan University and **Edward Kirumira**, Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) Stellenbosch

Panel 1

9:00 AM – 10:45 AM SAST   **Decision-making and information processing under (radical) uncertainty – what do we know from social psychology and cognitive science perspectives and can how these insights be applied to the uncertainty of the migration context?**

                            Chair: Igor Grossmann, University of Waterloo

                            The psychology of life's most important decisions **| Ralph Hertwig**, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin

                            Migration, misinformation, and intergroup relations in multicultural societies | **Kinga Bierwiaczonek**, The Leibniz Institute for Psychology, Trier

                            Clicking towards a new horizon: How digital technology shapes cognitive processes and Migration Decisions | **Dzifa Atta**, University of Ghana

10:45 AM - 11:00 AM SAST   Coffee break

Panel 2

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM SAST   **Migrant information processing and decision making in relation to the use of advanced digital technologies before leaving and while in transit**

                            Chair: Pragna Rugunanan, University of Johannesburg

                            Migrant domestic workers, digital communication technologies and emotion work in critical pandemic Times | **Brenda Yeoh**, National University of Singapore

                            Role of social media in influencing migration decisions of potential labour migrants and the aspiration of displaced populations: Perspectives from Kenya | **Linda Oucho,** African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC), Nairobi

                            The mediating role of traditional and social media in African migration | **Leander Kandilige**, University of Ghana

                            Digital tech, inequality, and migration: Ethical and political considerations | **Tim Unwin**, Royal Holloway, University of London

1:00 PM - 2:30 PM SAST   **Lunch break**

| 2:30 PM - 3:15 PM SAST | **Film presentation and talk by Cyrus Sundar Singh**: Imagining and representing migration and mobility in the 20th and 21st centuries |

Panel 3

3:15 PM - 5:00 PM SAST	**Migrant information processing and decision making in relation to the use of advanced digital technologies: Insights from the African continent**
	Chair: Faisal Garba, University of Cape Town
	Digital viabilities: Technologies of repair and reconstruction in South Asian migration to Cape Town, South Africa | **Leah Koskimaki**, University of Western Cape
	The role of digital transfers in the formalisation of migrant remittances | **Alexandra Tapsoba**, Joseph Ki-Zerbo University, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
	Decision-Making among Hadiya migrants: Digital technologies, borders, and brokers | **Fana Gebresenbet**, Addis Ababa University
	The role of digital technology in constraining migration in Africa: A reflection of the role of the European Union | **Cletus Muluh Momasoh**, University of Cape Town
06:30 PM	Dinner at Dewarenmarkt

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

| 9 AM SAST | Welcome coffee |

Panel 4

9:15 AM - 11:15 AM SAST	**Researching the ethical and legal considerations related to the use of advanced digital technologies by people on the move particularly as regards data privacy and surveillance**
	Chair: Ana Beduschi, University of Exeter
	The legibility of asylum seeker bodies in era of datafication: the case of smartphone screening | **Koen Leurs**, University of Utrecht Divine Fuh, University of Cape Town
	Migration, gender, care, and law: Perspectives from the Americas | **Helena Alviar Garcia,** Sciences Po and STIAS Fellow
	Rebooting migration? The role of technology and digital tools in migration| **Jasmijn Slootjes**, Migration Policy Institute Europe
	Mobile phone data analysis as part of the asylum procedure: A critical appraisal | **Niovi Vavoula**, University of London
11:15 AM - 11:45 AM SAST	Coffee break
11:45 AM - 1:15 PM SAST	**Concluding Roundtable:**

What have we learnt on migration, advanced digital technologies and decision making: Interdisciplinary perspectives

Chair: Anna Triandafyllidou

Ilan Chabay, Arizona State University and STIAS fellow
Alex Ezeh, Drexel University and STIAS Fellow
Haroon Akram-Lodhi, Trent University and STIAS fellow
Stephen Gelb, STIAS Fellow

1:15 PM - 2:30 PM SAST   Lunch and conclusion of the workshop

ABSTRACTS & BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL 1

Decision-making and information processing under (radical) uncertainty – what do we know from social psychology and cognitive science perspectives and can how these insights be applied to the uncertainty of the migration context?

The psychology of life's most important decisions | Ralph Hertwig, Max Planck Institute for Human Development

Abstract
Research on judgment and decision making typically studies 'small-worlds'—highly simplified and stylized tasks such as monetary gambles—among homogenous populations, rather than big real-life decisions made by people around the globe. These transformative life decisions—for instance, whether or not to emigrate or flee a country, disclose one's sexual orientation, or get divorced — can shape lives. Here I will argue that rather than reducing such consequential decisions to fit 'small world' models, researchers need to analyze their real-world properties. Drawing on principles of bounded and ecological rationality, we propose a framework that identifies five dimensions of transformative life decisions: conflicting cues, change of self, uncertain experiential value, irreversibility, and risk. The framework also specifies simple, versatile choice strategies that address these dimensions by, for instance, breaking down a decision into steps, avoiding trade-offs between different selves, or sampling others' experience. Finally, it suggests benchmarks for assessing the rationality of transformative life decisions.

Ralph Hertwig is a cognitive psychologist and behavioural decision scientist. He is the director of the Centre for Adaptive Rationality at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. His research examines models of bounded rationality such as simple heuristics, the importance of learning and decisions from experience, the measurement of risk preferences, and ways to change people's behaviour for the better by boosting their cognitive and motivational competences in the online and offline world. His research regularly appears in journals such as Psychological Review, Behavioural and Brain Sciences, Psychological Bulletin Trends in Cognitive Science, Psychological Science, Nature Human Behaviour, and PNAS.

Migration, misinformation, and intergroup relations in multicultural societies | Kinga Bierwiaczonek, Leibniz Institute for Psychology/University of Oslo

Abstract
As a major life event, migration is often accompanied by significant stress and uncertainty related to being immersed in a new and unfamiliar cultural environment. Misinformation research shows that conditions of uncertainty increase people's proneness to different forms of mis- and disinformation. Put together, these two facts may imply that migrants are more vulnerable to misinformation than non-migrants. This notion seems to be supported by research showing that ethnic or religious minorities, often overlapping with migrant groups, show higher tendency to endorse conspiracy theories and, during the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation about the disease. Other studies, however, suggest that misinformation endorsement only increases if those groups perceive themselves as stigmatized minorities, pointing to the importance of migrant integration into the receiving societies. In this talk, I review this and other research on misinformation and conspiracy beliefs among migrants and minorities in the light of current models of misinformation. I link these phenomena to possible aggravating factors such as prejudice and discrimination, and I discuss potential distal outcomes such as radicalization.

![Toronto Metropolitan University logo] **Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration & Integration**

Kinga Bierwiaczonek holds a double PhD in psychology from Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and ISCTE-IUL in Lisbon. She is head of psychological meta-science at the Leibniz Institute for Psychology in Trier, Germany, and principal investigator at the University of Oslo, Norway, where she currently leads a large-scale meta-analytical project that integrates findings from over 1,400 studies on migrant adaptation to living in the receiving societies. Her research follows two main thematic lines: the psychological aspects of migration and the psychology of misinformation and conspiracy beliefs. She has published several meta-analyses and literature reviews on these topics.

Clicking towards a new horizon: How digital technology shapes cognitive processes and migration decisions | Dzifa Atta, University of Ghana

Abstract
Digital technology is transforming how people make decisions about life, with people increasingly relying on digital resources for information, connecting with others, and making decisions about migration. The decision to migrate is not always straightforward, emigrants periodically contemplate the decision to leave the host country, on account of personal needs, desires, and aspirations. Equally, family needs as well as the economic stability, political freedom, structural conditions, and quality of life in the destination country, influence other migration considerations. Migration decisions are presumed highly rational and well-informed, but in reality, people frequently make these decisions under stress, urgency, and uncertainty, with limited information about their destination. Research is steadily moving away from simplistic explanations of the push and pull model, towards a cognitive perspective. More work is needed to explore how individuals process information and make decisions. What can we learn from the experiences of Ghanaian migrants and non-migrants? In my discussion, I will delve into the role of imagination and prospective thinking in the migration decision making and technology use. A deeper understanding of migration decision-making and its complexities in a digitalized world, are important to support and empower migrants in their journeys.

Dzifa Abra Attah, a clinical psychologist with over 14 years of clinical experience, provides mental healthcare, conducts research, and teaches at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Ghana Medical School. Her expertise lies in treating trauma and stress-related disorders in women, children, and adolescents, and promoting positive mental health through psychosocial interventions. Attah has co-authored a number of publications in peer-reviewed journals, covering topics like sexuality, abuse, digital mental health interventions, migration, and cultural adjustment. She dedicates a portion of her time to mental health advocacy and community service in Ghana.

PANEL 2

Migrant information processing and decision making in relation to the use of advanced digital technologies before leaving and while in transit

Migrant domestic workers, digital communication technologies and emotion work in critical pandemic times | Brenda Yeoh, National University of Singapore

Abstract
With the rise of the digital age, migration scholarship has increasingly grappled with the Janus-faced nature of digital technologies. On the one hand, migrants leverage information and communication technologies (ICTs) to assemble multiple sources of (mis)information and assistance, connect with family and build networks, and mobilise support to participate in digital activisms and claims-making. On the other hand, a whole suite of digital technologies has been developed and used to strengthen technological surveillance and control of migrant bodies. In this context, this paper focuses on the role and meaning of ICT use among Southeast Asian women who move to Singapore as migrant domestic workers under the disciplinary regime of temporary migration, where migrants are valued as unencumbered labouring bodies and separated from their families. Based on in-depth interviews and photovoice exercises with Indonesian and Filipino domestic workers in Singapore, the paper explores two related themes: (a) how information-gathering and decisions regarding healthcare and food care practices are mediated across borders through the use of ICTs, primarily the smartphone, between the migrant and left-behind family members during the critical times of the COVID-19 pandemic; (b) how

6

digital tools are not only important resources for time-sensitive decision-making when borders harden (or totally shut) against bodily travel, they create a virtual 'always-on' space for 'temporal emotion work' (Lois 2010) to cope with the increased precarity of pandemic times. The spaces of digital communication and their affordances are not only animated by the flurry of everyday decision-making relating to 'doing' transnational family but have longer-term consequences for navigating migration decision-making at critical junctures, including whether to stay, when to return, and for how long more the migration project should be sustained.

Brenda S.A. Yeoh FBA is Raffles Professor of Social Sciences, National University of Singapore (NUS) and Research Leader, Asian Migration Cluster, at NUS' Asia Research Institute. She was awarded the Vautrin Lud Prize for outstanding achievements in Geography in 2021. Her research interests in Asian migrations span themes such as gender, social reproduction, and care migration; skilled migration and cosmopolitanism; higher education and international student mobilities; and marriage migrants and cultural politics. Her recent books include Student Mobilities and International Education in Asia (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, with R. Sidhu and K.C. Ho), Handbook of Transnationalism (Edward Elgar, 2022, with F.L. Collins), and Handbook of Migration and the Family (Edward Elgar, 2023, with J.L. Waters).

Role of social media in influencing migration decisions of potential labour migrants and the aspiration of displaced populations: Perspectives from Kenya | Linda Oucho, African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC), Nairobi

Abstract

Potential migrants and displaced persons resident in host countries often have aspirations to migrate to destination countries where they believe will meet their immediate needs. Social media has played a role in informing these potential migrants about opportunities, lifestyles in destination countries but also potential risks they face in their migration journey. The increased use of social media and technology in migration decision-making and throughout the migration journey has the power to determine whether an individual migrates or not and identify the pathway they use. My presentation will share some insights from the DYNAMIG study in Kenya which is a three-year Horizon 2020 funded project focused on understanding how migration decisions influence migration policy processes. I will highlight how our results can impact policy discussions with regards to ethical recruitment practices considering potential migrants.

Linda Adhiambo Oucho is a leading voice in the field of migration, driving impactful research at the African Migration and Development Policy Centre (AMADPOC) in Nairobi, Kenya. She is also a part time Professor at the Migration Policy Centre (MPC) based at the European University Institute (EUI), in Florence, Italy. As an established migration expert, she explores the intricate relationships between migration and development sub-Saharan Africa and beyond with a focus on influencing policy processes. With a PhD in Ethnic Relations from the University of Warwick, where she focused on the international migration of African women, Prof. Oucho research work has expanded to delving into various migration patterns in Africa. Her work addresses critical issues like poverty, climate change, and youth employment, highlighting the complex dynamics that shape migration in the region. Her expertise has led her to collaborate with prestigious international agencies, including IOM, ICMPD, AUC, GIZ, IDRC, and FES, where she has provided invaluable insights on migration governance and policies on Africa. Prof. Oucho continues to be at the forefront of discussions with African governments, the AUC and RECs playing a pivotal role in integrating key migration issues.

The mediating role of traditional and social media in African migration journeys | Leander Kandilige, University of Ghana

Abstract

Migrants face multifaceted challenges during migration journeys. The ability to communicate among themselves or with migration intermediaries has been instrumental in defining migrants' experiences as well as the outcomes of their migration. The horde of challenges migrants to a new destination face, including in terms of their adaptation and communication, have been significantly bridged by information and communications technology (ICT) (Holmes and Janson, 2008). Human mobility is impacted both

positively and negatively by technology which now provides a range of channels of communication options which are important in migration networks. Furthermore, the ease with which information may now be shared online and the new communication capabilities made possible by the advancement of internet technologies, have led to a proliferation of social media content (Pan and Crotts, 2012). As one of the online media options available to migrants worldwide, social media plays a pivotal role in their lives. Borkert et al. (2010) conceptualise migration as incorporating both geographical mobility and digital mobility as migrants use social media for a wide range of migration-related activities including as sources of information, communication, networking, intelligence gathering and for promoting social ties. The significance and impact of new technologies in migration, including social media and mobile phones, especially for migrants in and from Africa, came to the fore during the so-called migrant crisis in Europe in 2015 (Stremlau and Tsalapatanis 2022; Santos, 2023). My presentation will reflect on how migrants increasingly use media platforms and technologies to facilitate pre-migration planning, the execution of migration journeys and the maintenance of social networks across different spatial levels.

Leander Kandilige is an Associate Professor of Migration at the Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana. He obtained his DPhil. (PhD.) in Migration Studies from the University of Oxford and an MSt. in Forced Migration also from the University of Oxford. He also holds a PGCert. in Managing Voluntary Organisations from the University of Southampton. In addition, he holds an MA in International Affairs and a BA in Political Science with Philosophy from University of Ghana. His areas of academic research interest include migration policy formulation; migration and development; labour mobility and regional integration; labour migrations in Africa; return migration and reintegration and theories of migration. He has been Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator and Researcher for several large projects that have been funded by diverse international funders such as the AU, ILO, OECD, IOM, ICMPD, UKRI/GCRF, GIZ, EU and ECOWAS.

Digital tech, inequality, and migration: ethical and political considerations | Tim Unwin, Royal Holloway, University of London

Abstract
This contribution highlights the fundamental question as to whether digital tech can be used by migrants to reduce the inequalities that they experience in their mobile lives. It draws mainly on research undertaken with migrants as part of the MIDEQ research programme (2019-24) mainly in Nepal and South Africa (but also in Ghana, Malaysia, Haiti and Brazil), as well as more recent research-practice in Brazil and Mozambique. Three main issues are addressed: the complexities of defining "inequalities" during migration; the interests underlying so-called Advanced Digital Technologies (focusing on EU definition: IoT, Blockchain, and Next Generation Internet); and whether the existing global geo-political system is capable of providing the leadership necessary beneficially to impact the use of digital tech by and for migrants. It concludes pessimistically that these latest technologies primarily serve the interests of a powerful minority within the global capitalist system, and that rather than reducing inequalities digital technologies will increasingly be used as tools of enslavement further to exploit and dehumanise migrants.

Tim Unwin is a British academic and public figure, specialising in the uses of digital technology by the world's poorest and most marginalised peoples. Trained as a geographer, he enjoys crossing boundaries between disciplines and sectors, and seeks to enhance international understanding between peoples and governments. He led the UK Prime Minister's Imfundo initiative (creating partnerships for using IT in education in Africa) between 2001 and 2004, was Secretary General of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation between 2011 and 2015, and Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair in ICT4D at Royal Holloway, University of London between 2007 and 2023. He has written or edited 17 books, and more than 250 other publications.

PANEL 3

Migrant information processing and decision making in relation to the use of advanced digital technologies: Insights from the African continent

Digital viabilities: Technologies of repair and reconstruction in South Asian migration to Cape Town, South Africa | Leah Koskimaki, University of Western Cape

Abstract
This paper explores the use of digital technologies in migration decision making, with a focus on both the digital and material. The paper specifically explores the role of the cell phone in migrant social spaces in Cape Town, with a focus on South Asian (mostly Pakistani) migrants working in the ubiquitous cell phone accessory and repair shops in the city. In these trans local migrant and digital infrastructures, I focus on 1) the link between an older generation of migrants and newcomers between Pakistan and South Africa, through cell phone apps to plan journeys, build futures, and navigate uncertainty, and 2) the less written about material aspect of this technology, namely how the apparatus of the cell phone itself is repaired and reconstructed in these shops. Based on ongoing qualitative research, the paper discusses how migrants have learned new skills of cell phone repair and technology, which have created networked opportunities for newcomers and allowed for ecosystems of viability in Cape Town's urban neighbourhoods. Overall, the paper explores the social life of this digital technology as always being reconstructed. Drawing from Hage (2009), as "life is just going on" for many of the men working in the shops, I explore how this technology is reworked in both a figurative and material sense to sustain their idea of a viable life.

Leah Koskimaki is Senior Lecturer at the Institute for Social Development (ISD) at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa, where she also is a founding member and Coordinator for the Migration and Mobilities Interdisciplinary Collective in Africa (MMICA). She received her PhD from the University of Washington, Seattle in Sociocultural Anthropology and has conducted research in India and South Africa on migration related issues. She is also a co-investigator on the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) partnership project titled, "Urban Sanctuary, Migrant Solidarity and Hospitality in Global Perspective."

The role of digital transfers in the formalisation of migrant remittances | Alexandra Tapsoba, Joseph Ki-Zerbo University, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Abstract
Surveys on migration across the continent have shown for a long time that the preferred way for migrants to send money to their origin countries has been informal. Formal remittance channels' barriers, such as financial costs, literacy, and documentation, exclude a large number of migrants as they do not suit their socio-demographic and economic characteristics. With the rise of digital coverage across the continent, accompanied by mobile phone companies' service innovation, migrants now have access to new ways of remitting. Several mobile phone companies are now involved in money transferring, offering easier, cheaper, and more accessible ways of sending money across countries. Other entirely digital services developed by diaspora members also offer cheaper ways of remitting across the continent, changing the decision-making of migrants when it comes to remitting. The development of these services will undoubtedly contribute to SDG 10. c, aiming to reduce to less than 3% the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittances corridors with costs higher than 5%.

Tebkieta Alexandra Tapsoba is a Higher Institute for Population Sciences (ISSP in French) researcher at the University Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. She holds a PhD in development economics from the University of Clermont Auvergne, France. Her research interests vary from economic migration and remittances to conflicts and forced migration. Being a development economist plays a crucial role in her research as it allows her to work in an interdisciplinary way with researchers from other disciplines like Sociology, Anthropology, Demography or Geography. She worked on several international migration projects, one of the latest being the Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ), a project looking at international migration within twelve countries organised in migration corridors across all continents.

Decision-Making among Hadiya migrants: Digital technologies, borders, and brokers | Fana Gebresenbet, Addis Ababa University

Abstract
Irregular migration from the Hadiya community of Southern Ethiopia is predominantly to South Africa transiting through a number of Eastern and Southern African states. This paper argues that digital technologies empower and influence the decisions of irregular migrants only until they start their journey to Moyale, the first border crossing with Kenya. Even within their own villages and towns potential migrants use digital technologies to compliment and make meaning a pervasively existing socially sanctioned discourse which favours migration to South Africa. The digital technologies will primarily enable potential migrants to receive latest information on life and possibilities in South Africa from trusted relatives and family in South Africa, as well as safety conditions of the route. The moment after crossing into Kenya, the migrant will be delinked from the digital world and will have a mediated connection with the digital world through a broker, the one facilitating their migration. Migrants lose their phones and other valuables as they cannot get new SIM cards in the countries they cross into, they cannot re-charge their electronics, and they get stolen or change them for immediate necessities. As such, the mediated connection to the digital world makes the migrants dependent on the preferences, interests, and priorities of the broker. Thus, digital technologies enable the exploitation and disempowerment of the migrants by brokers, who also play a crucial role in ensuring the dreams of migrants are achieved.

Fana Gebresenbet received his PhD from the University of Leipzig and is the Director of the Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University. He has conducted research on security and political economy, conflict and migration dynamics in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa. Among his recent publications include 'Lands of the Future' (co-editor, Berghahn, 2021), 'Youth on the Move: Views from Below on Ethiopian International Migration' (co-editor, Hurst, 2021) and "The Pretoria Agreement: Mere Cessation of Hostilities or Heralding a New Era in Ethiopia?" (co-written with Yonas Tariku, 2023).

The role of digital technology in constraining migration in Africa: A reflection of the role of the European Union | Cletus Muluh Momasoh, University of Cape Town

Abstract
Existing literature and theories ascertain the important role digital technology plays in enhancing migration in Africa. Digital technology affects every aspect of migration including providing access to information, pre-migration, during migration, and in destination countries; facilitating remittances, helping migrants stay connected to family. Also, digital technology does not only limit the natural fundamental rights of people to move but also perpetuates a culture of domination in global politics between the global north and the global south. My discussion will focus on how digital technology reveals the extent of global inequality but also how the externalization of European borders through digital technology limits the movement of Africans not only to Europe but within Africa.

Cletus Muluh Momasoh, comes from a multi-disciplinary background in Political Science, Development Studies, and Sociology. His research interests focus on African migration, global inequality, social movement, and social theory. In addition to lecturing several courses in the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town (UCT), he is a part-time researcher with the Scalabrini Institute of Human Mobility in Africa (SIHMA), from which he seeks to build bridges between migrants and their host communities through several interventions implemented by the organization. He is also a member of the Migration and Mobility Research Group at UCT.

PANEL 4

Researching the ethical and legal considerations related to the use of advanced digital technologies by people on the move particularly as regards data privacy and surveillance

The legibility of asylum seeker bodies in era of datafication: the case of smartphone screening | Koen Leurs, University of Utrecht

Abstract
Contributing to the interdisciplinary research area of digital migration studies, this paper proposes the concept of "legibility" as a lens through which to comprehend the complex interplay between asylum seekers, communities, organizations, and authorities in the digital age. Bringing critical migration studies, media and communication studies, science, and technology studies (STS) and information studies into dialogue, this paper develops the concept by drawing from an empirical case study of the screening of smartphones and other data carriers of asylum seekers in the Netherlands and beyond. To do so, the paper investigates how police and immigration officers employ smartphone screening to render asylum seeker bodies legible within bureaucratic procedures. Through the lens of legibility, it examines the ways in which government agencies create and interpret digital data-points patterns to categorize, monitor, and manage the movements of asylum seekers. Conversely, I also examine how asylum seekers navigate, negotiate, and resist these systems. By connecting with formal knowledge networks of lawyers and NGO's and engaging in informal digital practices, asylum seekers actively seek to make legible the procedures, institutions, and authorities that govern their migration journeys. Based on this critical analysis, I call for a critical examination of the power dynamics embedded within digitized asylum migration governance. I emphasize the need for more inclusive information provision and rights-based approaches to the deployment of digital solutions and tools in asylum procedures. Furthermore, by discussing the methodological challenges of producing knowledge and pursuing impact in this terrain I reflect on the politics of impact and public engagement in migration research.

Koen Leurs is an associate professor in Gender, Media and Migration Studies in the Department of Media and Culture, Utrecht University, the Netherlands. His most recent books are Digital Migration (Sage, 2023); and Doing Digital Migration Studies (Amsterdam University Press, 2024). Currently, Leurs is part of the Management Committee of the Cost-Action DATA-MIG CA22135 - Data Matters: Sociotechnical Challenges of European Migration and Border Control. Recently, Leurs was the PI of the Team Science project Co-designing a fair digital asylum procedure, funded by the Universities of the Netherlands and COMMIT/, a public-private ICT research community (2022-2023).

Migration, Gender, Care and Law: Perspectives from the Americas | Helena Alviar Garcia, Sciences Po and STIAS Fellow

Abstract
This presentation will have as its goal to explore the unique characteristics of care and the migrant (local and foreign) women who provide it in the Americas. Care occupies multiple spaces and as such is fertile ground to explore the limitations and possibilities of law and international law. In fact, care can be a job regulated and unregulated by law; a commodity that can be acquired by some but is elusive to many; a site of affection and emotional investment or profound cruelty, as a form of expanding the terms of family law by establishing who is in and out of a family unit. This discussion will be advanced by linking artistic expressions that delve into the multiple dimensions of care and migration in the movies Roma (Alfonso Cuarón), The Second Mother (Anna Muylaert) or the novel Elena Sabe (Claudia Piñeiro) to the legal architecture that structures this unique space (from refugee law, trade law, economic development policy, welfare regimes and family law).

Helena Alviar García is a professor at Sciences Po law school. Professor Alviar García is a Colombian SJD from Harvard Law School and lawyer from Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia. She served as Dean of Los Andes Law School where she also held tenure as full professor (profesora titular), teaching courses on Property, Public law, legal theory, and feminist theory. She has been a visiting professor in universities in Latin America, Europe and the United States including Harvard Law School, University of Pennsylvania, Università di Torino, University of Miami, Universidad de Puerto Rico, and University of Wisconsin in Madison. Notably, she was the Robert F. Kennedy Visiting Professor at Harvard Law School in 2017; the Bok Distinguished Visiting Professor at Penn Law School in 2015 and the Tinker Visiting Professor at the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 2008.

Toronto Metropolitan University | **Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration & Integration**

Rebooting Migration? The Role of Technology and Digital Tools in Migration| Jasmijn Slootjes, Migration Policy Institute Europe | Jasmijn Slootjes, Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Europe

Abstract
Digital tools have been transforming migration systems, with pilot projects and innovations impacting different stages of the migration journey. These technologies hold the promise to make systems more efficient, improve service delivery, and free up staff capacity. Amidst increasing arrivals and with conflict at Europe's doorstep, the stakes could not be higher. Yet, they also bring risks, such as biases engrained in algorithms, risks to data security, and overreliance on tech providers, which could harm the rights of migrants. A lack of technical know-how among policymakers and scattered efforts in this area exacerbate these risks.

This presentation explores the potential benefits of the increasing use of digital technology in different stages of migration processes as well as key legal and ethical considerations that need to be addressed, including concerns about data privacy and opaque decision-making. This presentation will reflect on how policymakers could deliver on the promise of digitalization while mitigating these risks through mapping policy developments, technological advancements, risks and opportunities, and lessons for policymakers, while assessing how these may impact the decision-making processes of migrants.

Jasmijn Slootjes is an Associate Director with MPI Europe. At MPI Europe, Jasmijn led work on, for example, the SPRING Horizon project on evidence-informed integration policies, digitalization in migration processes, and is currently leading work on the MIRREM Horizon project on measuring irregular migration, the PACES Horizon project on how policies shape the decision-making processes of migrants, and the Global Strategy for Skills Horizon project on tackling skills shortages. Before joining MPI Europe, Dr. Slootjes was Executive Director of the Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative (BIMI) at the University of California, Berkeley. In this role, she worked on spatial inequality in migrants' access to services and organized the Summer Institute in Migration Research Methods. Before joining BIMI, she completed her PhD research on how migrants overcome health problems as obstacles to labor market integration. During her PhD, she was the coordinator of the Migration Diversity Centre and a Pat Cox Fellow at the Migration Policy Group. Previously, she studied the impact of budget cuts on integration courses at the Municipality of Utrecht, the Netherlands. Dr. Slootjes holds a PhD in migration studies from VU University Amsterdam, a Master of Science in migration studies from Utrecht University, and a BA in political science and international relations from Utrecht University.

Mobile phone data analysis as part of the asylum procedure: A critical Appraisal | Niovi Vavoula, University of London

Abstract
Since the past few years different European states have resorted to the analysis of mobile phones and other available 'data carriers' either through confiscation of mobile phones or mandatory request for submission of such devices. Mobile phone data analysis provides an automated report that can be used for identity determination and/or the assessment of the applicant's submission. This practice has taken place in various forms; through legislative intervention, for example, in Germany, which has been found on numerous occasions as unlawful, or without such legal basis, as in the case of the United Kingdom, raising significant rule of law challenges. In other countries, the confiscation of mobile phones has been taken place in the far more dubious manner of stealing the phones to analyse contacts, searches on the internet as well as photographs and videos taken by applicants of international protection. This practice has raised significant concerns regarding its compatibility with fundamental rights, such as the right of privacy and the rule of law, but this area remains somewhat under-researched. This contribution aims to shed light into the different iterations of this practice in different European states – research demonstrates that mobile phone data analysis is currently implemented largely in the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, and to some extent in Denmark and the UK. Then, the analysis will highlight the legal challenges posed by mobile phone data analysis, as well as the potentially limited effectiveness of the automated reports produced in this respect, particularly as part of assessing asylum applications.

Niovi Vavoula is Associate Professor in Cyber Policy and Chairholder, funded by the Ministry of International and European Affairs, at the University of Luxembourg. Prior to her appointment in February 2024, she was Senior Lecturer in Migration and Security at Queen Mary University of London.

She holds a Ph. D and LLM from Queen Mary University of London and a Bachelor of Law from the University of Athens. She has published extensively on the intersection of migration law with digital technologies, including AI, and her research interests lie in EU data protection, cyber and Artificial Intelligence law.

Roundtable

Haroon Akram-Lodhi is Professor of Economics, Global Justice and Development at Trent University, Peterborough, Canada, and he is an Associate Editor of Feminist Economics. The focus of Haroon Akram-Lodhi's research is on the engendered political economy of agrarian change in the countries of the global South, on the economic dimensions of gender relations, and on the political ecology of gendered sustainable rural livelihoods in contemporary low- and middle-income countries. He is currently a Gender and Livelihoods Advisor to the World Food Programme, and has acted as an advisor to UN Women, UN Environment, UNDP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund. Haroon Akram-Lodhi has lived, taught, and conducted research in numerous countries, published extensively in peer-reviewed journals, and has received honorary appointments at universities in Canada, the US, and the UK.

Ilan Chabay Research Professor, Arizona State University School for Global Futures, Washington, DC Center; Co-director, KLASICA international research alliance After earning his Ph.D. in chemical physics from the University of Chicago, Ilan's several careers included A) 12 years developing several novel molecular spectroscopic methods at US National Institutes of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Stanford University's Chemistry Department, B) Serving as associate director of the Exploratorium science museum in San Francisco with its founder and director, Frank Oppenheimer, C) Founding and 18 years of running a social entrepreneurial company in Silicon Valley designing and building exhibitions for Disney, NASA, and 230 museums in 16 countries to inspire curiosity about our world and its rapidly changing conditions, D) Shifting to social science research on public learning and understanding of science for sustainability as Victor & Erna Hasselblad Professor of Sociology and Applied IT in two universities in Gothenburg, Sweden (2006-2011), E) Becoming Senior Fellow (2012-2015), Head of Strategic Research Programs (2016-2022), and Senior Investigator (2021-2022) of the Real Deal project of the European Commission at the Research Institute for Sustainability Helmholtz Centre Potsdam (RIFS) Germany (the former Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies, IASS) and F) Currently focusing on understanding, fostering, and supporting transitions to sustainable futures as integral parts of complex social-ecological systems in communities worldwide through the transdisciplinary synthesis of arts, humanities, and sciences. Since founding it in 2007, Ilan co-directs the knowledge, learning, and societal change alliance (KLASICA), which is an open international research network for understanding and catalyzing collective behaviour change to sustainable futures at the community scale across the world. In the past 15 years, Ilan and KLASICA colleagues have pioneered a growing field of study on roles of narratives in influencing collective behaviour change in complex social-ecological systems. Their focus is on narratives of social identity and future visions that motivate, influence, and support contextually enriched inclusive decision-making for adaptive cultures of sustainability.

Alex Ezeh is Dornsife Professor of Global Health at the Dornsife School of Public Health, Drexel University. Dr. Ezeh's work focuses on urban health, population change, and models to strengthen knowledge-based institutions. Previously, he served as the founding Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) and led APHRC to become one of Africa's foremost research institutions. Dr. Ezeh initiated and directed the Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa. He serves on numerous international and non-profit boards, including the UN High-Level Advisory Board for Economic and Social Affairs and currently Co-Chairs a new Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing. He received the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Royal Society for Tropical Medicine and Hygiene's 2020 George Macdonald Medal; The World Academy of Sciences 2018 Prize for the Social Sciences; and holds a PhD and two Honorary Doctor of Science degrees.

Stephen Gelb leads the work on private sector development. He is an economist with thirty years of research and policy experience in South Africa and several other developing countries. He grew up in South Africa and has an BA from the University of Toronto and a PhD from the University of Manitoba

in Canada, both in Economics. He was an activist in the anti-apartheid movement in Canada and South Africa. He has been an adviser to President Mbeki in South Africa and a consultant for several UN and other multilateral agencies. He has written extensively on South African economics and politics, on investment between Asia and Africa, on global value chains in manufacturing and agro-processing, and on the financial services sector. He has taught economics, political science, and development studies at universities in South Africa, Canada, the US, and Switzerland. He established and ran The EDGE Institute, an independent research organisation in Johannesburg, and has also worked at the Development Bank of Southern Africa and the World Trade Institute in Bern, Switzerland.