

Migration in the Age of AI

Work, Education and Belonging

October 3-4, 2026
Room 1702, 17 F Building 2,
Sophia University



Organizers: Megha Wadhwa, David H. Slater (Sophia University) and **Michiel Baas** (Leiden University)

Digital technologies have long shaped how migrants sustain family ties, navigate borders, and build belonging. Artificial intelligence now pushes this further—promising to smooth language barriers and settlement, yet raising the question of whether such tools genuinely help or foster dependence that erodes the drive to learn, while also reshaping who is selected, ranked, surveilled, or turned away. This two-day symposium at Sophia University brings together scholars and practitioners to examine what AI is doing to contemporary mobility. Across keynotes, three panels, and a book talk, participants trace algorithmic borders and datafied governance, the contested role of translation tools in language learning and integration, and the social-media imaginaries that shape migration aspirations. A closing roundtable asks where these digital futures lead. Together, the contributions probe the promises, tensions, and consequences of migration in an age increasingly mediated by machines.

Register Here: <https://forms.gle/NZu9XzqdYP5emfB2A>

Sessions in English / No translation

DAY ONE: October 3 (Sat)

Opening Welcome and conference introduction
By **Megha Wadhwa**
10:00 to 10:30

Keynote Opening keynotes: AI, borders, and the future of migration
10:30 to 12:00

The Present Future of Migration: Artificial Intelligence and the question of (Cross Border) Mobility (10:30 to 11:00) in-person
Michiel Baas, *Leiden University*

Transgressive Surveillance: Digital Borders and Resistance Between Datafication and Forced Disappearance
(11:00 to 11:30) in-person
Romm Lewkowicz, *Max Planck Institute*

11:30 to 12:00 Q&A

Lunch Break 12:00 to 13:00

Panel 1 **Algorithmic borders and datafied migration governance**
13:00 to 15:00

When Borders Become Algorithms: An Anthropological Perspective on Datafied Welfare and Situated Agency among Unaccompanied Minors (13:00 to 13:20) online
Elisabetta Di Giovanni, *Gloria Zuccaro*,
Massimiliano Schirinzì, *University of Palermo*

Making the Digital Homeland: Everyday Data and Citizenship Narratives (13:20 to 13:40) in-person
Suruchi Mazumdar, *University of Nottingham Malaysia*

“Anyone got into trouble for this?”: Partner Migration and Proof of Relationship Genuineness in the Age of AI (13:40 to 14:00) online
Alexandra Ridgway, *RMIT University*

Taiwan as an AI Island? Labour control regimes, sovereignty, and the geopolitics of the ‘Future of Work’ (14:00 to 14:20) in-person
Yannis-Adam Allouache, *Asia Research Institute, NUS*

14:20 to 15:00 Q&A with the audience

Coffee Break 15:00 to 15:20

Panel 2 **AI, work, communication, and the making of migrant belonging**
15:20 to 17:00

AI Translation and the Politics of Belonging: Does Technology Replace Language Learning? (15:20 to 15:40) in-person
Muhammad Ala Uddin, *University of Chittagong*

Algorithmic Acculturation in Social Care: How Migrant Workers Learn “Professional Care” Through Conversational AI (15:40 to 16:00) online
Neerej Dev, *University of Wolverhampton*

Between Machine Translation and Cultural Memory: Migrant Language Learning in Contemporary Japan (16:00 to 16:20) online
Aadya Sabu Ambika, *University of Kerala*

16:20 to 17:00 Q&A

End of day one - informal networking

DAY TWO: October 4 (Sun)

Opening Day two welcome and recap by **David H. Slater**
10:00 to 10:30

Book Talk **The Walls Have Eyes: Surviving Migration in the Age of Artificial Intelligence**
Petra Molnar, *York University*

10:30 to 12:00 (Talk and Q&A) in-person

Lunch Break 12:00 to 13:00

Panel 3 **Social media, AI, and migration imaginaries**
13:00 to 15:00

Escaping First (#KaburAjaDulu): AI, Social Media, and Pre-Migration Imaginaries in Indonesia (13:00 to 13:20) in-person
Raihan Rizqi Aghniyaa, *Chiba University*

Misinformation and the “Japa” Migration Narrative: AI-Driven Social Media Algorithms and Migration Aspirations among Nigerian Youth (13:20 to 13:40) online
Philip Egbule, *University of Delta*

Anti-Foreigner Discourse in the Age of GenAI: An Exploratory Study Using Japanese Social Media Data (13:40 to 14:00) in-person
Diletta Fabiani, *Sasakawa Peace Foundation*

Byte-Sized Love? Digital Companionship, Care, and Constrained Intimacy among Migrants in Japan (14:00 to 14:20) in-person
Clarise Ong, *University of Tokyo*

14:20 to 15:00 Q&A

Coffee Break 15:00 to 15:30

Roundtable **AI, migration, and the politics of digital futures**
15:30 to 17:00 (in-person)

Michiel Baas, *Leiden University*
Romm Lewkowicz, *Max-Planck-Institute*
Petra Molnar, *York University*
Yukiko Fujita, *University of Tokyo*

In Discussion with Megha Wadhwa & David H. Slater,
Sophia University

Closing Closing remarks and conference wrap-up

This conference is a part of Sophia Symposium funded by Sophia University and Organised by Institute of Comparative Culture, Sophia University Research Unit [“Visual Studies and Displacement in/to Japan”](#)

For further queries please contact: wadhwamegha@sophia.ac.jp