



## Marie Curie Workshop on visual governance: Theorizing the role of images in migration governance

Co-convended by **Alice Massari**, Marie Curie Global Fellow and **Anna Triandafyllidou**, CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU)

**Date:** October 24, 2023

**Time:** 9:30 AM - 4 PM EST

**Location:** Hybrid (In person at CERC Migration office / online via Zoom)

As the adage goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. Images have become usual, if not essential, elements of communication on practically every issue. Topics of global relevance in particular have been represented by a wide array of images: images of overcrowded migrant boats, starving polar bears on melting glaciers, and infographics showing the latest COVID-19 mortality rates have gone viral. Visuality has assumed even more relevance in the contemporary world where social media, heavily based on images, are widely used to both produce content and as source of information by a wide range of actors. Different strands of scholarship from distinct perspectives have indeed reflected over the interaction of images and international politics. Although the role of visuality in global affairs has been to some extent addressed by some notable studies, its role in governance dynamics remains largely untheorized. In an increasingly audio-visual and interconnected world, what is the power of images and how do powerful actors use images and visuality? Images can transcend the boundaries of language and at the same time are even more open than verbal community to multiple interpretations depending on the audience and the audience's context.

This workshop explores the relationship between visuality (or visual communication or visual objects), power and governance from both theoretical and methodological perspectives. Some of the questions that we are asking include:

- Is visual communication more powerful than verbal communication in today's world, why and how?
- What governance level and actors should be included in this new research strand?
- How to assess images' impact and effects outside of a cause-effect logic?
- What is the role of media and particularly social media as carriers and multipliers of the visual dimension?

- How can we conceptualise this role? Do social media provide the context within which governance takes place or are they actors in their own right?
- Do different visual products (i.e., pictures, street art, videos, meme, etc.) need different methodological approaches?
- What are the features of images collection and production on social media?
- What are the methodological challenges and opportunities offered by the analysis of digital images?
- Are there some methodologies that are more suitable for the study of governance dynamics?

## PROGRAM

09:30 AM - 10 AM EDT

Welcome coffee

10 AM EDT

Opening remarks, **Anna Triandafyllidou** and  
**Alice Massari**, CERC Migration, TMU

### Panel 1

10:10 AM - 12:30 PM EDT

**Theorizing the role of images in the study of migration governance**

**Chair: Zhixi Zhuang**, School of Urban and Regional Planning, TMU,  
**Co-chair: Younes Ahouga**, CERC Migration, TMU

Visual communication and migration governance at the age of social media | **Anna Triandafyllidou**, CERC Migration, TMU

The state of the art of the theory of images in international politics. What we achieved and what are we missing? | **Lene Hansen**, University of Copenhagen

How the world is not a map: Forensic and humanitarian angles in the visual culture of migration | **Krista Lynes**, Concordia University

Visual Governance – Theorizing the role of images in migration governance | **Alice Massari**, CERC Migration, TMU, and University of Copenhagen

12:30 PM - 01:30 PM EDT

**Lunch break**

### Panel 2

1:30 PM - 03:45 PM EDT

**Visual methodologies in the study of migration governance**

**Chair: Katty Alhayek**, The Creative School, TMU, **Co-chair:**  
**Ashika Niraula**, CERC Migration, TMU

Assessing the impact of images portraying the Vietnam war and the struggle for civil rights on international refugee law: The Case of the 1967 Refugee Protocol | **Robert Barsky**, Vanderbilt University

Stories matter: Using photovoice to understand migrants' perceived and lived experiences in smaller Canadian cities | **Zhixi Zhuang**, School of Urban and Regional Planning, TMU

Visualizing migration in times of crises: Governing Polish-Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian border movement - Perspectives from Poland | **Karolina Nikielska-Sekula**, University of Warsaw and Jagiellonian University

Understanding migrants' use of government social media: a comparative study of user interactions | **Maria Gintova**, McMaster University

3:45 - 4 PM EDT

Reflections and concluding remarks