

Queen's BSIA Graduate Symposium in Migration and Mobilities March 20 & 21, 2026

Borders and (Un)Bordering: Analyzing Migration and (Im)Mobility in an Era of Polycrisis

Queen's University, 138 Union St., Kingston
Robert Sutherland Hall, Room 202

SCHEDULE

Day 1 (20 March)
2:30 pm – 6:00 pm

2:00 – 2:30	Registration
2:30 – 2:45	Welcome and Remarks: Dr. Reena Kukreja, Queen's University & Dr. Kim Rygiel, Wilfrid Laurier University & Balsillie School of International Affairs, Land acknowledgement, expression of thanks, symposium details
Panel #1: Bordering of Identities: Borders and (re)shaping of identity of formation/Bordering through far-right populism, racism, and xenophobia	
2:45 – 3:45	<p>Student Presentations: 12-14 min/student</p> <p>Aashay Dalvi, Wilfrid Laurier University: <i>Disposable Bodies, Permanent Threats: The Great Replacement and the Racialization of South Asian Presence in Canada</i>. (Discussants: Dr. Sailaja Krishnamurti and Dr. Reena Kukreja, Queen's University)</p> <p>Erin Duran, Wilfrid Laurier University: <i>Life Outside and In Between</i>. (Discussant: Dr. Özlem Attar, Queen's University)</p> <p>George Kofi Danso, Queen's University: <i>Race, Immigration Policies, and the Canadian Permanent Residency Journey: Insights into the Experiences of West African Graduates in Canada</i>. (Discussant: Dr. Paul Nesbitt-Larking, Queen's University)</p>
4:00 – 4:30	Feedback & discussion: Discussant feedback, open floor, closing remarks
Break 4:30 – 4:45	
Roundtable 1: Bordering-out Healthcare Access	
5:00 – 5:30	<p>Student Presentations: 10min/student</p> <p>Emma Patterson, Queen's University: <i>What Is the Association Between Official Identity Documentation and Mental Health Outcomes in Displaced People in Burma?</i></p> <p>Bernice Yamoah, Queen's University: <i>Becoming Immigrant, Becoming Patient: Migration, Identity Formation, and Mental Health Access Among Black Immigrant Men</i>.</p> <p>Justine Blais, Queen's University: <i>Meeting People Where They Are: Cultural Safety in Occupational Therapy Clinical Reasoning with First-Generation Immigrants</i>. (Roundtable Discussant: Dr. Kilian Atuoye, Queen's University)</p>
5:30 – 6:00	Feedback & discussion: Discussant feedback, open floor, closing remarks

Day 2 (21 March)

8:30 am – 4:40 pm

8:30 – 9:00	Coffee & Assemble
Panel #2: Institutional & Digital Borders	
9:00 – 10:00	<p>Student Presentations: 12-14 min/student</p> <p>Pinar Ensari, University of Waterloo: <i>Bordering from Below: Gendered Negotiations of Sovereignty in the Turkey – Georgia Borderland.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Kim Rygiel, Wilfrid Laurier University)</p> <p>Valdrin Dragusha, Wilfrid Laurier University: <i>Borderscapes of Violence: Normalization of a Psycho-Physical Liminal Space of Mobility.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Suzan Ilcan, University of Waterloo)</p> <p>Jana Walowski, Queen’s University: <i>Social Reproduction and the Grassroots Refugee Sector: The Politics of Depletion in Berlin.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Kim Rygiel, Wilfrid Laurier University)</p> <p>Halima Ahmed, Balsillie School of International Affairs/WLU: <i>Digital ID as Border: (Un)Bordering, Polycrisis, and Refugee (Im)Mobility in Kenya.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Sarah Turnbull, University of Waterloo)</p>
10:00 – 10:30	<p>Feedback & discussion Discussant feedback, open floor, closing remarks</p>
Break 10:30 – 10:45	
Panel #3: Temporal Borders	
10:45 – 11:30	<p>Student Presentations: 12-14 min/student</p> <p>Hasina Hamidi, Wilfrid Laurier University: <i>The Quest for Permanence: An Auto-ethnography of Temporal Liminality.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Sarah Turnbull, University of Waterloo)</p> <p>Manel Miaadi, Balsillie School of International Affairs/WLU: <i>Guilty Until Proven Guilty: Temporal Borders and the Immobilisation of Civil Society.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Reena Kukreja, Queen’s University)</p> <p>Marika Jeziorek, Balsillie School of International Affairs/WLU: <i>Bordering Through Temporariness: Temporary Protection and Post-Entry Control.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Suzan Ilcan, University of Waterloo)</p>
11:30 -12:00	<p>Feedback & discussion Discussant feedback, open floor, closing remarks</p>
Lunch Break 12:00 -1:00	
Roundtable 2: Identity and (Un)Belonging	
1:00 – 1:45	<p>Student Presentations: 10min/student</p> <p>Xinyang Sun, Queen’s University: <i>Mapping Belonging Queer Chinese (Im)migrant in Canada.</i></p> <p>Shanzay Afzal, Queen’s University: <i>Bordered Masculinities: Migration, Intimacy, and the Reconfiguration of Pakistani Men’s Identities in Canada</i></p>

	<p>Paula Antonakos-Boswell, Queen's University: <i>Borders Beyond the Border: Everyday Bordering, Polycrisis, and Rural Greek Diasporic Life in Canada.</i></p> <p>Emily Stokman, Queen's University: <i>Immigrant Labour and the Liturgy of Asylum: Charting Canada's Evolving Immigration Stance through the Intersection of Labour, Culture and Religion in the Canadian Private Sponsorship Program.</i></p> <p>Justin Lahey, University of Waterloo: <i>Borders and Mobility: Examining Social Implications of Border Technology.</i> (Roundtable Discussants: Dr. Dorit Naaman, Dr. Paul Nesbitt-Larking and Dr. Reena Kukreja, Queen's University; Dr. Kim Rygiel, Wilfrid Laurier University)</p>
1:45– 2:30	<p>Feedback & discussion Discussant feedback, open floor, closing remarks</p>
Break: 2:30 -2:45	
Panel #4: Displacement, Human Rights and (Im)mobility	
2:45 – 3:30	<p>Student Presentations: 15 min/student</p> <p>Millie Emily Hannan, Balsillie School of International Affairs/WLU: <i>Transboundary Crises, Transgressive Solidarities: Human Rights, Climate Displacement and Everyday Unbordering.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Reasat Faisal, Queen's University)</p> <p>Neela Hassan, University of Waterloo: <i>Deportation as Gendered Violence: An Analysis of Afghan Refugees' Deportation and Forced Return from Iran.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Ayca Tomac, Queens University)</p> <p>Saurabh Chaudhary, Queen's University: <i>Rebordering Refugee Protection: Burden-Sharing and Special Protection Zones in an Era of Polycrisis.</i> (Discussant: Dr. Colin Grey, Queens University)</p>
3:30 – 4:00	<p>Feedback & discussion: Discussant feedback, open floor, closing remarks</p>
4:00 – 4:20	<p>Symposium Closing Remarks: Dr. Reena Kukreja & Dr. Kim Rygiel</p>



Panel 1: Abstracts

Aashay Dalvi - Disposable Bodies, Permanent Threats: The Great Replacement and the Racialization of South Asian Presence in Canada

This paper examines how contemporary bordering in Canada operates beyond formal immigration policy through everyday practices of suspicion, surveillance, and differential belonging. Centering the Great Replacement narrative as a racial technology, the paper argues that anti-South Asian racism in Canada is increasingly legitimized through a language of scarcity—housing, infrastructure, and affordability—where race is disavowed on the surface while structuring the logic beneath. Methodologically, the paper employs an autoethnographic approach, “writing from the body,” to explore how bordering is lived as affect: fear, vigilance, and conditional belonging. Drawing on personal experience as a South Asian migrant and queer community organizer in Kitchener–Waterloo, the analysis traces how international students are simultaneously recruited as economic assets and scapegoated as sources of social strain. The paper situates these dynamics within a longer history of racialized migration governance in Canada, including the Komagata Maru incident, alongside contemporary digital anti-South Asian hate. Through this multi-scalar analysis—historical, digital, and everyday—it demonstrates how replacement anxieties translate structural crises into demographic blame.

Erin Duran - Life Outside and In Between

This border story (in progress) explores the lived experiences of borders across identity: race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and nationality. This autoethnographic work chronologically explores my life grappling with internal and external borders. It explores moves across the United States and ultimately to Canada in search of spaces of safety and recognition that welcome and embrace complexity. This work is anchored in references to *Borderlands/La Frontera* by Gloria Anzaldúa, the trailblazing queer Chicana feminist scholar whose work has been deeply professionally and personally impactful. Incorporating additional border theory, as well as current legislative developments, this piece offers a lens into a modern borderlands existence.

George Kofi Danso - Immigration Policies, and the Canadian Permanent Residency Journey: Insights into the Experiences of West African Graduates in Canada

This paper looks at the experiences of West African international graduates in Canada’s two-step immigration system. This system guides graduates from temporary residency to permanent residency (PR). While often seen as a seamless, merit-based pathway to integration, this study argues that it functions more like a probationary system, creating conditional belonging. Using qualitative interviews with 15 West African graduates in Ontario, the research outlines a three-phase model of belonging. The first phase, Anticipatory Belonging, shows an early trust in the immigration process. The second phase, Precarious Belonging, highlights uncertainty and deferred membership as graduates face changing policy thresholds and racialized labor-market barriers. The final phase, Stabilized but Qualified Belonging, occurs when PR offers legal security but doesn’t ensure full social recognition or remove racialized social borders, racialized labor-market barriers. The final phase, Stabilized but Qualified Belonging, occurs when PR offers legal security but doesn’t ensure full social recognition or remove racialized social borders. By analyzing how administrative sequencing and internal borders affect presence in the national space, this paper redefines the student-to-PR pathway.

Roundtable 1: Abstracts

Emma Patterson - What Is the Association Between Official Identity Documentation and Mental Health Outcomes in Displaced People in Burma?

Background: Burma (Myanmar) has experienced prolonged political instability that intensified following the February 2021 military coup. The ensuing conflict escalated into civil war, and by August 2025, more than 5.15 million Burmese people had been forcibly displaced. Mental health is a critical yet under-addressed component of wellbeing in this context, particularly among marginalized and displaced populations. Since 2015, individuals who do not meet documentation requirements have been issued National Verification Cards, which do not confer citizenship and can restrict access to healthcare, education, and employment – barriers that may increase psychological distress. While studies among Burmese refugees in Bangladesh report high prevalence of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, quantitative research within Burma remains limited. The objective of this paper is to determine whether possession of official identity documentation is associated with mental health outcomes in Eastern Burma and whether this relationship differs by recent migration or residence in internally displaced persons camps. Using cross-sectional data from the 2024 Ethnic Demographic and Health Survey (>15,000 individuals), associations between ownership of identity documents and mental health outcomes will be analyzed while assessing effect modification and potential confounders. This study addresses a critical evidence gap to inform humanitarian response and health equity policies in conflict-affected populations.

Bernice Yamoah - Becoming Immigrant, Becoming Patient: Migration, Identity Formation, and Mental Health Access Among Black Immigrant Men

Black immigrant men in Canada face compounded barriers to mental health and addictions services, shaped by healthcare system strain, economic marginalization, and racialized social exclusion. In mid-sized Canadian cities, they navigate racialized stereotypes, restrictive masculine norms, and healthcare systems that function as borders, determining who receives culturally safe care and who remains marginalized. This research employs community-engaged narrative inquiry to examine help-seeking journeys across four stages: recognition of need, attempted access, initial engagement followed by discontinuation, and sustained participation. Unlike studies that sample only those already in services, this study recruits across the full help-seeking continuum, addressing a critical gap in understanding where barriers emerge before individuals reach service providers. Guided by intersectionality, cultural safety, and Levesque’s access-to-care framework, the study examines how migration reshapes identity and influences help-seeking. It explores epistemic, linguistic, temporal, and relational bordering practices embedded in healthcare systems. Three participant groups are engaged: Black immigrant men, family members, and partners in care. This roundtable invites discussion on methodological considerations for researching healthcare access with marginalized communities. As an early-stage doctoral student, I seek feedback on conceptual framing, methodology, and ethics for community-engaged research in settler colonial contexts.

Justine Blais -Meeting People Where They Are: Cultural Safety in Occupational Therapy Clinical Reasoning with First-Generation Immigrants

Canada's growing immigrant population faces an increased risk of mental health challenges due to factors such as racism, economic precarity, barriers to employment and education, and immigration-related stressors. Despite this reality, significant gaps remain in the accessibility and cultural appropriateness of community-based mental health services in occupational therapy. Occupational therapists' cultural assumptions and theoretical biases can influence how first-generation immigrants feel understood and included in the care setting and by practitioners. Although principles of cultural safety, equity, and inclusion are increasingly promoted, their integration and enactment into clinical reasoning remain underexplored. This research examines how occupational therapists working in community mental health settings integrate culturally safe practices into their clinical reasoning to better meet the needs of first-generation immigrants. Using a transformative mixed-methods design, the study will include a scoping review, a survey of occupational therapists in Canada, and a final study with focus groups of key stakeholders to inform mental health approaches, policy, and educational avenues for the field. Grounded in participatory and occupational justice frameworks, this research aims to advance ethical, anti-racist, and culturally safer occupational therapy practices in mental health care.

Panel 2: Abstracts

Pinar Ensari - Bordering from Below: Gendered Negotiations of Sovereignty in the Turkey – Georgia Borderland

This paper examines the negotiation of sovereignty in the Turkey–Georgia borderland through everyday bordering practices. Drawing on six months of feminist ethnographic fieldwork in Hopa, Artvin, it introduces the concept of negotiated borderland sovereignties to analyze sovereignty as a relational, multi-scalar, and gendered process produced through everyday life. It argues that gendered subjectivities and hierarchies are co-constitutive of these negotiations. Since the opening of the Sarp gate in 1988, cross-border mobility, trade, and neoliberal restructuring have reshaped the local political economy and claims to authority, prompting borderland residents to engage in borderwork from below across overlapping regimes of state authority, market risk, and patriarchal power. The paper traces these negotiations across three terrains: mobility, border crossing, and everyday space. It shows how borderlanders negotiate overlapping state, market, and nationalist sovereignties through pragmatic and gendered mobilities; how local intermediaries enact masculine micro-sovereignties through territorial and temporal gatekeeping at the border crossing; and how patriarchal sovereignty is both reproduced and contested across public, homosocial, domestic, and Batumi casino spaces. Sovereignty in the Turkey–Georgia borderland is neither monopolized by the state nor simply resisted from below; it is continuously reproduced, contested, and pragmatically accommodated by ordinary people.

Valdrin Dragusha - Borderscapes of Violence: Normalization of a Psycho-Physical Liminal Space of Mobility

Normalization is most tangibly experienced through borders as lived spaces, where conflict, displacement, and division are continuously materialized and enforced. The paper asks how elite actors and everyday people contribute to or experience normalization through border governance and everyday mobility. The paper develops the theoretical framework of perpetual partial normalization (PPN) as an ongoing condition sustained by partial access, conditional mobility, and unresolved return, in which normalization neither succeeds nor fails. The Green Line functions as a liminal border space, embodying a duality of security and insecurity: it enables regulated contact while continuously reproducing division. The border enacts both symbolic and bodily violence, embedding the memory of conflict into everyday mobility practices. Since 1974, the Green Line administered as a United Nations Buffer has functioned as a de facto border between Turkish-occupied Northern Cyprus and the Greek-controlled Republic of Cyprus. While the border has become more permeable over time, it has not ceased reproducing identity-based and physical divisions. Rather, its permeability has reconfigured how violence and displacement are experienced in everyday life. This paper constitutes a single-case study of Cyprus with a temporally oriented historical analysis to examine how border practices and mobility governance institutionalize liminality in Cyprus.

Jana Walowski - Social Reproduction and the Grassroots Refugee Sector: The Politics of Depletion in Berlin

Using Berlin as a case study, this paper examines refugee support workers and asks how their labour is increasingly depleted by the intensifying politicization of migration and the corresponding cuts to social services in Germany, particularly since 2015. It conceptualizes refugee support work as social reproductive labour, wherein non-profit organizations play an indispensable role in caring for and sustaining refugee communities (Mendelin and Hall, 2025). Drawing on interviews conducted between May and July 2025 with members of refugee support initiatives and employing a feminist political economy framework—particularly Shirin Rai's (2024) concept of “depletion”—this paper interrogates the affective and material consequences of this work. It highlights three key harms: (1) burnout among staff, (2) shifting and increasingly precarious labour conditions, and (3) financial insecurity affecting both individuals and organizations, all of which risk pushing workers and initiatives beyond sustainable limits. These pressures are intensified by the surveillance of non-profit organizations expected to remain politically neutral, alongside declining funding and organizational capacity amid widespread social service cuts that expand gaps in support. While foregrounding these costs, the paper also considers the strategies and collective struggles through which workers and communities seek to counter depletion and sustain solidarity with refugees in their city.

Halima Ahmed - Digital ID as Border: (Un)Bordering, Polycrisis, and Refugee (Im)Mobility in Kenya

This paper examines how digital identification systems function as instruments of border governance within states, shaping patterns of mobility and immobility for refugees in Kenya. Drawing on the concept of “digital borders,” it argues that biometric and digital identification infrastructures increasingly operate as internal bordering mechanisms that regulate movement, access to services, and legal recognition. In Kenya's evolving digital ID ecosystem, including systems such as Huduma Namba and the emerging Maisha Namba, documentation regimes intersect with refugee governance structures to produce new forms of administrative control. Situating these developments within the broader context of global polycrisis, securitization, and humanitarian contraction, the paper explores how digital identification technologies reconfigure state power over mobility. While digital ID systems are frequently framed as tools for efficiency, inclusion, and development, they can simultaneously reinforce longstanding hierarchies of citizenship and belonging. For refugees and other non-citizens, documentation status becomes a critical determinant of everyday mobility, shaping the ability to move between camps, cities, and borders. Using Kenya as a case study, the paper contributes to debates in migration governance and border studies by demonstrating how identification system act

Panel 3: Abstracts

Hasina Hamidi - The Quest for Permanence: An Auto-ethnography of Temporal Liminality

This paper explores the concept of temporal borders and liminality through an auto-ethnographic lens, emphasizing the personal narrative of living as a temporary refugee and migrant. By integrating personal experiences with broader theoretical discussions, the paper argues that temporal constraints imposed by migration regimes often exacerbate the liminal state of refugees and immigrants, who find themselves suspended between the past and an uncertain future, and a here-and-there kind of situation. It also underscores the transformative potential of these liminal states, particularly through education, in bridging the gap between temporary and permanent residency. Ultimately, this research aims to enrich the discourse on migration by advocating for greater recognition of migrant voices in scholarships as well as political and social contexts, challenging traditional notions of borders and belonging.

Manel Miaadi - Guilty Until Proven Guilty: Temporal Borders and the Immobilisation of Civil Society.

Borders are commonly imagined as lines drawn in space. In contemporary Tunisia, that spatial imagination obscures how state power is increasingly exercised through time. This paper argues that temporal bordering, understood as the deliberate creation of delays, suspensions, and protracted procedures, functions as a central technique of both migration governance and authoritarian consolidation. Grounded in decolonial theory and drawing primarily on Tunisian and Global South scholarship, alongside fieldwork interviews and multilingual sources, the analysis demonstrates that Tunisia's strategic use of time as a border mechanism is not an aberration but an extension of colonial logics of presumptive suspicion and bureaucratic subordination. Three migration-linked cases unpack this argument: the judicial harassment of the lawyer Sonia Dahmani under Decree 54; the administrative suspension of the Forum Tunisien pour les Droits Économiques et Sociaux (FTDES); and the open-ended investigations of migrant-assistance organizations Terre d'Asile Tunis and the Tunisian Refugee Council. In each instance, hearings are postponed indefinitely, suspensions become permanent, and investigations are never closed. The border shifts from the nation's edge into court calendars, administrative dockets, and waiting rooms. The findings reveal a governance of permanent provisionality in which bodies, institutions, and knowledge are held in bureaucratic suspension, producing what this paper names as a condition of being guilty until proven guilty.

Marika Jeziorek - Bordering Through Temporariness: Temporary Protection and Post-Entry Control.

Temporary protection programs are often framed as humanitarian responses to mass displacement, offering quick access to safety without granting full refugee status. This paper examines Canada's Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) to show how temporariness itself operates as a form of migration governance. While CUAET provided Ukrainian nationals with up to three years of legal stay and open work authorization, it did not include a direct pathway to permanent residence. Drawing on interviews with displaced Ukrainians and civil society organizations in Canada, the paper argues that border control increasingly occurs after entry through the governance of time. I identify three temporal dynamics shaping conditional belonging: horizon (the three-year countdown), suspension (administrative waiting during permanent residence processing), and compression (pressure to secure work and eligibility within limited time). Together, these dynamics show how temporary protection expands admission while preserving state discretion over long-term membership.

Roundtable 2: Abstracts

Xinyang Sun - Mapping Belonging Queer Chinese (Im)migrant in Canada

In the time of homophobia and the rise of the conservative era, sexuality and gender identity are increasingly regulated through state power, particularly at national borders. In both China and the United States, border regimes and immigration systems actively police bodies, relationships, and forms of belonging, and many suffer under the strict scrutiny. Borders do not merely regulate movement as they enforce forms of violence and control that shape how sexuality, identity, and legality are lived and negotiated. Canada is often portrayed globally as a welcoming destination for sexual-minority migrants, yet the lived experiences of queer Chinese (im)migrants remain underrepresented in gender and migration scholarship. This study addresses this gap by examining how queer Chinese (im)migrants in Canada navigate institutional constraints while producing their own forms of belonging and identity. The research draws on two to three ethnographic, semi-structured interviews combined with a participatory map-making activity in which participants create hand-drawn maps of meaningful places, institutional encounters, and sites of exclusion. Interviews will be conducted in English, Mandarin Chinese, or both and translated into English. By analyzing these maps alongside interview narratives, the project examines how participants negotiate legal status while imagining alternative forms of belonging in urban space.

Shanzay Afzal - Bordered Masculinities: Migration, Intimacy, and the Reconfiguration of Pakistani Men's Identities in Canada

This paper examines how migration reshapes masculinity among Pakistani immigrant men in Canada by situating gendered identity within regimes of displacement, racialization, and moral surveillance. Pakistani men often arrive in Canada socialized into gender norms emphasizing breadwinning, authority, and emotional restraint. Following migration, these expectations are frequently destabilized by credential devaluation, precarious employment, and restructured household economies that limit access to socially recognized forms of masculine legitimacy. At the same time, Pakistani and Muslim men are positioned within public discourses shaped by Islamophobic and Orientalist narratives that frame their masculinity as inherently patriarchal or threatening. These discursive frameworks flatten complex gendered lives and influence how immigrant relationships are interpreted and governed. Drawing on an interdisciplinary literature review across migration studies, gender studies, and critical race scholarship, this paper conceptualizes masculinity as a relational and historically contingent practice shaped by transnational movement. It argues that migration produces ongoing renegotiations of masculine identity within intimate relationships. While some men respond to displacement through control or withdrawal, others renegotiate masculinity through care, emotional intimacy, and relational interdependence. By foregrounding masculinity as a site of negotiation, the paper challenges cultural essentialist explanations of gender inequality in migration contexts.

Paula Antonakos-Boswell - Borders Beyond the Border: Everyday Bordering, Polycrisis, and Rural Greek Diasporic Life in Canada

Borders are often imagined as territorial lines crossed during migration, yet their effects persist in everyday life long after settlement. This paper examines how bordering is experienced, negotiated, and resisted within Greek diasporic communities in small-urban Eastern Ontario. Centring an autoethnographic account of my own migration, settlement, and community engagement, I reflect on growing up as part of the second wave of Greek migration to the region. My analysis draws on personal narrative alongside decades of community involvement as well as oral histories, archival research, and material culture from the Kingston Greek History Project (KGHP), which I co-founded and led.

Emily Stokman - Immigrant Labour and the Liturgy of Asylum: Charting Canada's Evolving Immigration Stance through the Intersection of Labour, Culture and Religion in the Canadian Private Sponsorship Program

The Canadian Private Sponsorship Program (PSR) leverages the private sector, individuals, and community organizations to help refugees settle into Canadian life. Outsourcing care to organizations or small groups often run by former refugees raises questions of exploitation, and the prescribed use value of refugees in Canada. It also potentially undermines the safety and understanding that can be offered to refugees by service groups and like communities. Using Marxist labour studies, this paper poses a critique of the mixed nature of immigration privatization supported by Elizabeth Shakman Hurd's liturgy of asylum to describe favouritism for certain faiths in refugees, and a nation's secular promise of freedom, salvation, or redemption, not by conversion to any world religion but to the project of the country itself. Such a dynamic will also be investigated for its potential to leave asylum seekers who are unable to conform or are labeled undesirable for various reasons in limbo through analysis of Canada's welcoming of Ukrainian refugees, in contrast with those from Afghanistan and Palestine. I argue that Canada's PSR program is based on an idea of multiculturalism driven by concerns of national unity and the proliferation of a dominant cultural identity, requiring refugees and asylum seekers to accept, perform, and then proliferate a liturgy of asylum.

Justin Lahey - Borders and Mobility: Examining Social Implications of Border Technology

Advanced biometric systems, such as facial recognition technology (FRT), offer a partial solution to making identity confirmation more efficient, but have also led to unintended consequences, such as demographic bias. The problem with demographic bias in FRT is multi-layered. Researchers identified significant inaccuracies with its use with different demographic groups over 20 years ago, which is further exacerbated by competing vocabularies and multiple interpretations of bias.

Panel 4: Abstracts

Millie Emily Hannan - Transboundary Crises, Transgressive Solidarities: Human Rights, Climate Displacement and Everyday Unbordering

As climate change reshapes the habitability of our planet, human mobility across borders will become increasingly necessary for survival. However, contemporary border regimes continue to deny dignified mobility pathways to many affected by climate change impacts, particularly in the global South. Given recent erosion in the spheres of climate and social justice, the securitization of global North borders heightens the possibility for populations to be exposed and immobilized to the point of death. This paper examines how climate-related mobility is governed through necropolitical logics that differentiate whose lives are protected and whose are exposed to harm. Understanding contemporary border regimes through the concept of borderscapes, I analyze how borders operate not only as territorial lines but as assemblages of practices that facilitate movement for some while foreclosing it for others. To do so, I draw on the experience of Ioane Teitiota, an I-Kiribati man who sought refuge in Aotearoa New Zealand due to climate risks at home. Still, at the same time that the border hierarchically divides access to mobility, there are alternative logics embedded within transgressive solidarities that contest and renegotiate these necropolitical logics, helping to illuminate more just imaginaries of climate mobility governance.

Neela Hassan - Deportation as Gendered Violence: An Analysis of Afghan Refugees' Deportation and Forced Return from Iran

This paper explores the gendered impact of mass deportations of Afghan refugees from Iran following the Taliban's return to power in 2021. It draws on qualitative document analysis of over 45 reports and publications produced by seven humanitarian and human rights organizations actively involved in monitoring deportations and supporting Afghan returnees. These organizations include UNHCR, UN Women, IOM, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the Center for Human Rights in Iran, and Zan Times (a women-led organization that covers human rights violations in Afghanistan). The findings reveal that Afghan women face widespread harassment, mistreatment, and abuse during arrest, detention, and deportation by Iranian authorities. Upon return to Afghanistan, they encounter severe restrictions, economic hardship, and systemic exclusion under Taliban rule. The study highlights that single mothers, pregnant women, and female-headed households are especially vulnerable due to intersecting challenges such as lack of legal protection, limited access to services, and heightened exposure to gender-based violence. The analysis demonstrates that while deportation is inherently violent and traumatic, Iran's deportation of Afghan refugees, especially under the harsh and often unregulated conditions in which these removals occur, places individuals, particularly women, at risk of both immediate and long-term violence and exploitation. Although the Iranian government claims that Afghan refugees are deported due to a lack of documentation, both the act of deportation given Afghanistan's current situation and the manner in which it is carried out reflect a form of state violence against women.

Saurabh Chaudhary - Rebordering Refugee Protection: Burden-Sharing and Special Protection Zones in an Era of Polycrisis

Contemporary refugee protection regimes are increasingly strained by a global polycrisis marked by armed conflict, climate-induced displacement, economic instability, and political fragmentation. In response, many states have intensified bordering practices that restrict mobility and externalize protection responsibilities onto neighbouring countries. As a result, a disproportionate share of refugees is hosted by developing states with limited institutional capacity, often generating precarious protection conditions and dangerous onward movement. This paper proposes a differentiated international burden-sharing model centred on the establishment of Special Protection Zones (SPZs) in safe neighbouring states. Unlike "safe zones" within countries of origin, SPZs are conceived as internationally governed protection spaces outside territories of persecution, designed to provide lawful protection while reducing irregular and perilous migration. Responsibility for sustaining these zones would be allocated through a quota-based system calibrated to states' capabilities and policy preferences, allowing contributions through financial resources, infrastructure, logistics, or mobility pathways. Through legal and normative analysis, the paper examines whether SPZs risk reinforcing containment through the externalization of borders, or whether, when coupled with binding burden-sharing and international governance, they may help recalibrate responsibility within the international refugee protection regime.

Presenter Bios

Aashay Dalvi

Aashay Dalvi (they/them) is a South Asian, trans-femme non-binary writer, researcher, and community organizer based in Kitchener–Waterloo, Canada. They are a graduate student at Wilfrid Laurier University whose work sits at the intersection of migration and border studies, critical race theory, queer of color critique, and autoethnography. Their research examines anti–South Asian racism, the political economy of international education, and the everyday practices of bordering that shape migrant life in Canada. Alongside academic work, Aashay is the founder of Rad Riot Books, an anti-racist, queer, and migrant-centered literary curation service prioritizing translated literature.

Erin Duran

Erin Duran (he/him/his) is currently an international student in the Cultural Analysis & Social Theory M.A. program at Wilfrid Laurier University, having returned to the classroom after fourteen years working as a higher educational professional focused on advancing equity and inclusion at colleges and universities in the United States. He holds a B.A. in Sociology, with a concentration in Women & Gender Studies from Grinnell College and a M.Ed. in College Student Affairs from The Pennsylvania State University.

George Kofi Danso

My research focuses on immigration and immigrant integration. I study how institutions and policy shape settlement, belonging, and inclusion. I am interested in the everyday experiences of immigrants and in the uneven access to community, services, and opportunity across place. My earlier work explored sustainability, planning, and environmental governance. That background still shapes my thinking on policy, place, and lived experience. My work aims to deepen understanding of integration and contribute to broader questions of equity, governance, and social justice.

Emma Patterson

I am a first-year MSc Epidemiology student in the Department of Public Health Sciences at Queen's University. I also completed my Bachelor of Science (Honours), majoring in Life Sciences, at Queen's. After my undergraduate degree, I took some time off to travel which deepened my interest in the health landscape in different parts of the world and I came back to start my MSc with a renewed interest in global health. As part of my MSc, I am working with Dr. Colleen Davison on research focused on migrant populations in Burma and Thailand.

Bernice Yamoah

Bernice Yamoah is a Doctoral student in Rehabilitation and Health Leadership at Queen's University. Her dissertation employs community-engaged narrative inquiry to examine access to mental health and addiction services among Black immigrant men in Kingston, Ontario, using intersectionality, cultural safety, and Levesque's Access-to-Care Framework.

Justine Blais

Justine Blais is an occupational therapist in mental health and a first-year PhD student in Rehabilitation Science in the School of Rehabilitation Therapy at Queen's University under the supervision of Dr. Setareh Ghahari. As a clinician, she has worked in a community-based mental health setting in Québec. She holds bachelor's and master's degrees in OT from Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. Lately, she has been involved in academic teaching and has focused her research interests on lies immigration, mental health and occupational justice. She has published and collaborated on articles in scientific occupational therapy journals in the past year.

Pinar Ensari

Pinar is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Waterloo. She holds dual BA degrees in Philosophy and Political Science & International Relations and an MA in Cultural Studies. Prior to her doctoral studies, she worked with NGOs in Turkey on hate speech monitoring, civil society capacity-building, and philanthropy. She also contributed to Horizon 2020 research projects and conducted fieldwork across Turkey on migration, development, gender, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Her research interests include migration and border studies, gender, and critical masculinity studies. She has published on migration policy, the migration–development nexus, hate speech, and COVID-19.

Valdrin Dragusha

Valdrin Dragusha holds an Honours Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with High Distinction and is a SSHRC-funded Master of Applied Politics graduate student at Wilfrid Laurier University. He serves as a Project Officer at the International Migration Research Centre, and its affiliated Gender + Migration Hub and Migration + Technology Hub where he assists and conducts research on various intersections of migration and mobility. His research focuses on migration, mobility, identity, post-conflict reconstruction, transitional justice, international law and global governance.

Jana Walkowski

Jana Walkowski (she/her) is a PhD Candidate (ABD) in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University, specializing in international relations (International Political Economy) and comparative politics. Her doctoral research uses a multi-scalar approach and qualitative methods to develop a holistic understanding of refugee shelter governance with a focus on Toronto and Berlin. Jana holds a master's degree in political science from McGill University and a bachelor's degree in Global Development Studies from Queen's University. Outside her work you can find her training for triathlons, walking by the waterfront or reading her favourite books in local coffee shops

Halima Ahmed

Halima Ahmed is a PhD Candidate in Global Governance at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University. Her research examines Kenya's identification and refugee documentation regimes as technologies of bordering that shape refugee mobility, belonging, and everyday survival. Drawing on qualitative fieldwork in Dadaab and Nairobi, her work bridges migration governance, postcolonial theory, and mobility justice, with a particular focus on infrapolitics and everyday resistance. Halima has over eight years of professional experience working with civil society organisations and policy actors across Kenya and the Horn of Africa on migration, displacement, and governance. Her research interests include digital borders, citizenship and identity, refugee urbanization, and the colonial afterlives of documentation systems.

Hasina Hamidi

Hasina Hamidi holds a Master of International Public Policy (MIPP) from the Balsillie School of International Affairs at Wilfrid Laurier University, where her academic work focused on International Economic Relations and Global Migration. During her graduate studies, she pursued research examining the intersections of economic policy, mobility, and global governance, areas that continue to shape her scholarly interests. She also holds an MBA in Marketing from Kazakh British Technical University. Hasina co-authored the policy brief "Greening Canada: Transforming the Nation's Energy Landscape," produced for Global Affairs Canada and published by the Balsillie School of International Affairs. She is currently considering the publication of the paper she will be presenting at this symposium. In addition to her research activities, Hasina works as the Dean's Office Administration Coordinator at the Faculty of Social Work at Wilfrid Laurier University, supporting academic operations and institutional initiatives.

Manel Miaadi

Manel Miaadi is a PhD candidate (ABD) in Global Governance at Wilfrid Laurier University and a current SSHRC Doctoral Fellow (2025–2027). Her research explores the entangled politics of migration governance, bordering practices, and resistance narratives. She teaches Sociology, Human Geography, and Creative Writing at Yorkville University and brings over 15 years of experience in education across academic, vocational, and community settings. Manel is also a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC), running a consultancy that offers personalized, justice-driven support to refugee claimants, international students, and migrant families navigating Canada's immigration system. She has contributed to community and international initiatives with IOM, NDI, and Reception House. Her work bridges academic, creative, and advocacy spaces, with a commitment to amplifying migrant voices and challenging exclusionary policy frameworks.

Marika Jeziorek

Marika Jeziorek is a PhD candidate in Global Governance at the Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University. Her research focuses on migration governance, temporary protection, and the politics of belonging. Her doctoral work examines the experiences of displaced Ukrainians under temporary protection in Canada and the EU. She has published on migration governance, digital humanitarianism, and labour precarity.

Xinyang Sun

Xinyang Sun is a first-year master's student in the Gender Studies Department at Queen's University in Canada. Xinyang's research focuses on queer (im)migration, borders, and the spatial dimensions of identity and belonging. She is also interested in how visuals and participatory activities convey information and foster senses of belonging. Prior to coming to Queen's for Masters, she interned at Meridians: feminism, race, transnationalism, and has been involved in designing a visually accessible and user-friendly website for the Meridians journal's 25th anniversary. She speaks Chinese and English fluently and is currently learning French.

Shanzay Afzal

Shanzay Afzal is a Master's student in the Gender Studies department at Queen's University. Her research examines how migration reshapes masculinity among Pakistani-origin men in Canada, with a focus on labour precarity, identity disruption, and the renegotiation of intimate relationships. Drawing on feminist and migration scholarship, her work explores how masculinity is reconfigured under conditions of displacement, Islamophobia and racialized scrutiny. Alongside her research, she works as a counsellor at a Muslim mental health organization. She is broadly interested in diasporic masculinities, care, and the intersection of migration, gender, and mental health.

Paula Antonakos-Boswell

Paula Antonakos-Boswell is a first-year PhD student in Cultural Studies at Queen's University, examining Greek diasporic life in rural and small-town Eastern Ontario. Her research focuses on intergenerational memory, language preservation, and community resilience, using oral histories, archival research, and museum initiatives. She co-founded and leads the Kingston Greek History Project and has conducted research in Canada, Greece, and the United States. Paula curates heritage initiatives, including international diasporic events, and serves on the Hellenic Heritage Foundation History Committee and as a Historian and Archivist for the PanLakonian Federation, emphasizing inclusive and accessible narratives through hybrid museum curation, digital storytelling, and community-based archival practice.

Emily Stokman

Emily Stokman is an MA candidate in the Global Development department at Queen's University in Kingston. Her master's research paper focuses on the cultural, labour, and religious politics surrounding private sponsorship of refugees and asylum seekers in Canada and how changes in this program can be used to contextualize Canada's wider immigration and refugee policy. She holds a BA (Honors) in Global Development from Queen's University and a Diploma from the Ontario Agricultural College. When not in school, Emily can be found working at a vet clinic in her other life as a Registered Veterinary Technician.

Justin Lahey

Justin Lahey is a PhD student in Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo. His research addresses demographic bias in the use of facial recognition technology at the border, focusing on the lived experiences of marginalized groups to obtain a more complete understanding of bias and improve policies and standards. Justin holds a Master's degree in Arts (Sociology) from the University of Ottawa. Justin has also been working in the Government of Canada for over 20 years in various policy and program areas such as stakeholder consultation and engagement, regulatory affairs, cabinet affairs, and border transformation and modernization.

Millie Hannan

Millie Hannan is a PhD student in the Global Governance program at the BSIA, Wilfrid Laurier University. Her research analyzes the governance of climate-related mobilities, exclusionary border practices and discourses, and alternative governance architectures. Millie is driven by a commitment to decolonial, environmental, and social justice, and her work engages with questions of power, humanitarianism, mobility, border studies, and multilateral governance. Millie often examines the relationship between local and global perspectives on the future, finding new theorizations of peace, justice, and sustainability that prioritize peace for people and the planet.

Neela Hassan

Neela Hassan is a refugee a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies at the University of Waterloo. Her dissertation project examines the intersection of domestic violence and immigration status, with a particular focus on the experiences of women with precarious immigration status. She is a former Fulbright Scholar, through which she earned her MA in Communications and Development Studies at Ohio University.

Saurabh Chaudhary

Saurabh Chaudhary is a second-year PhD candidate at the Faculty of Law, Queen's University, supervised by Sharry Aiken. His research focuses on international refugee law and responsibility-sharing in contexts of mass displacement. His doctoral project examines the feasibility of Special Protection Zones (SPZs) in safe neighbouring states, supported by international burden-sharing arrangements, as a potential alternative to existing protection models that place disproportionate pressure on developing first-asylum countries.

Panel Discussants

- ❖ Dr. Sailaja V. Krishnamurti, Associate Professor, Department Head, Gender Studies, Queen's University.
- ❖ Dr. Reena Kukreja, Associate Professor, Department of Global Development Studies, Queen's University.
- ❖ Dr. Özlem Attar, Queen's University, Assistant Professor (Term Adjunct), Department of Gender Studies, Queen's University.
- ❖ Dr. Paul Nesbitt-Larking, Term Adjunct, Department of Political Studies, Queen's University.
- ❖ Dr. Kim Rygiel, Professor, Department of Political Science, School of International Policy and Governance, and Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University.
- ❖ Dr. Suzan Ilcan, Professor and University Research Chair, Sociology and Legal Studies, University of Waterloo.
- ❖ Dr. Sarah Turnbull, Associate Professor, Sociology and Legal Studies, University of Waterloo.
- ❖ Dr. Reasat Faisal, Teaching and Learning Assistant in the Office of Provost and Vice Principal (Academic), Queen's University.
- ❖ Dr. Ayca Tomac, Assistant Professor, Department of Global Studies, Queens University.
- ❖ Dr. Colin Grey, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, Queen's University.

Round Table Discussants

- ❖ Dr. Kilian Atuoye, Assistant Professor, Department of Global Development Studies, Queen's University
- ❖ Dr. Dorit Naaman, Associate Dean (Academic), Queen's University.
- ❖ Dr. Paul Nesbitt-Larking, Term Adjunct, Department of Political Studies, Queen's University.
- ❖ Dr. Reena Kukreja, Associate Professor, Department of Global Development Studies, Queen's University.
- ❖ Dr. Kim Rygiel, Professor, Department of Political Science, School of International Policy and Governance, and Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University.