



UNIVERSITY
OF AMSTERDAM

Call for Applications

Dialogues on Mobility, Surveillance, and Resistance: IMI Winter Academy

January 26–30, 2026 | Tijuana, Mexico

The re-election of US President Donald Trump in 2024, together with the spread of increasingly restrictive migration control regimes worldwide, reflects the consolidation of a global assemblage through which human mobility is rendered “governable”. Calls to “secure borders” and “dismantle smuggling networks” operate as discourses that normalize a securitized logic under the rubric of “safe, orderly, and regular migration.”

These mechanisms not only manage life and circulation biopolitically: they also reproduce necropolitical hierarchies by determining whose mobility is facilitated and whose is obstructed, criminalized, or rendered disposable. The dominance of security and economy-centered perspectives—particularly within Global North policy and knowledge regimes—underscores the urgency of rethinking migration and mobility through frameworks that unsettle reductive paradigms and open alternative imaginaries of movement, belonging, community, and care.

The goal of the **IMI Winter Academy** (organized by [IMI](#) and supported by the University of Amsterdam’s [Decolonial Futures Research Priority Area](#)) is to challenge the logics of migration criminalization and control, and to reimagine mobility and the futures of migration. Recognizing borders as sites of both resistance and possibility, we invite scholars, practitioners, and community organizers working on critical approaches to mobility to join us in the US–Mexico border city of Tijuana, January 26–30, 2026.

Like many border cities worldwide, Tijuana has endured state-sponsored violence and surveillance linked to the vilification of people on the move. At the same time, it is also a site of resilience, knowledge, and creativity generated by migrant communities and those who live alongside them. By engaging with these experiences, IMI Winter Academy participants will be able to examine how borders and borderlands are lived, contested, and resisted under conditions of violence, control, and surveillance. Through a combination of immersive and reflective work – including field visits, lectures and group discussions – the IMI Winter Academy provides participants with opportunities to link regions, dynamics and personal experiences.

Eligibility

The IMI Winter Academy is open to scholars, early-career researchers, practitioners, artists, and community organizers critically engaged with issues of migration, borderlands, and resistance. We especially welcome applications from PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and practitioners underrepresented in academic and policy spaces. We expect a cohort of up to 12 participants.

Logistics

Participants will be hosted at Casa Manresa on the campus of Universidad Iberoamericana in Tijuana, Mexico. Accommodations, most meals, and local transportation will be provided by the organizers. International travel, visas and insurance costs are the responsibility of participants. The Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs has designated the US-Mexico border region an [orange zone](#) and therefore specialist travel insurance will be required. Details will be shared with selected participants. Limited travel support may be available for applicants from underrepresented backgrounds; those wishing to be considered for financial assistance should indicate this in their application.

Application Requirements

Applicants must complete the [online application](#) and submit:

- Short Curriculum Vitae (max. 2 pages)
- Statement of Interest (250 words) outlining how your work could benefit from a field-based experience on the US–Mexico border, and how participation in the academy may advance your academic or practitioner trajectory.

Application deadline: September 25th, 2025

Notification of acceptance: Week of October 6th, 2025

We acknowledge the ongoing climate of censorship and repression faced by many people, including scholars, activists, and practitioners worldwide, particularly those denouncing border controls, surveillance, state violence and genocide. We are aware that these conditions may restrict individuals' ability to travel. If you face any of these challenges but are still interested in participating, please contact us to discuss possible alternatives.

Organizers

- Yacine Ait-Larbi – University of Amsterdam
- Alejandro Olayo-Méndez – Boston College School of Social Work
- Gabriella Sanchez – Georgetown University

Questions: imiacademy2026@gmail.com