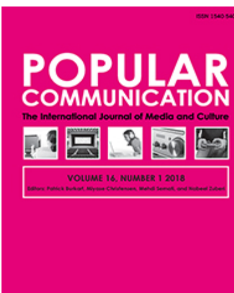

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Connected migrants: Encapsulation and cosmopolitanization

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ABSTRACT

Taking a cue from Dana Diminescu's seminal manifesto on "the connected migrant," this special issue introduces the notions of encapsulation and cosmopolitanism to understand digital migration studies. The pieces here present a nonbinary, integrated notion of an increasingly digitally mediated cosmopolitanism that accommodates differences within but also recognizes Europe's colonial legacy and the fraught postcolonial present. Of special interest is an essay by the late Zygmunt Bauman, who argues that the messy boundaries of Europe require a renewed vision of cosmopolitan Europe, based on dialogue and aspirations, rather than on Eurocentrism and universal values. In this article, we focus on three overarching discussions informing this special issue: (a) an appreciation of the so-called "refugee crisis" and the articulation of conflicting Europeanisms, (b) an understanding of the relationships between the concepts of cosmopolitanization and encapsulation, and (c) a recognition of the emergence of the interdisciplinary field of digital migration studies.

Introduction

> "The migrant" is often a placeholder, marking memories of empire, or fears of globalization, or a sense of impending catastrophe. This has consequences for academic research (Anderson, 2017, p. 1535).

The figure of the migrant has become central in popular communication, mobilizing imaginaries about digital media practices and the place they have in the construction of the haves and the have-nots. This creates hierarchical cultural, social, and political ordering mechanisms between the West and the Rest, magnifying broader patterns of inequality between the Global North and the Global South. Focusing on the geopolitically charged situation of Europe, the scholarship included in this special issue contests and intervenes in the narrow and exclusionary cultural representations of connected migrants. Europe functions as a hinge between the legacies of past colonial expansions and the current multicultural settings, further complicated by the recent refugee crisis, which heightens the disjunctions between the local and the global. This special issue features digital migration research as first presented during the Connected Migrants Academy Colloquium and Masterclasses that took place December 14–16, 2016, at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. As noted in the colloquium's call for papers, the event aimed to further develop the notion

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of the “connected migrant” (Diminescu, 2008, 2002) as a distinctly located geopolitical figuration (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2016).

> Europe as an ideal (let us call it ‘Europeanism’) defies monopolistic ownership. It cannot be denied to the ‘other’ since it incorporates the phenomenon of ‘otherness’: in the practice of Europeanism, the perpetual effort to separate, expel and externalize is constantly thwarted by the drawing in, admission, accommodation and assimilation of the ‘external.’ (Bauman, 2004, pp. 6–7)

This special issue is dedicated to the late Zygmunt Bauman, and we seek to be attentive to the workings of conflicting ideological Europeanisms. We had hoped to end our colloquium with Bauman’s scheduled public keynote lecture. Upon our invitation sent in December 2015, Bauman wrote to us: “On condition I survive that long, I’d be glad to partake in the Amsterdam conference.” Unfortunately, shortly before the colloquium he developed a serious health condition. We only realized fully how serious it was when he passed away shortly after the event, on January 9, 2017, aged 91. Despite his deteriorating condition, we are extremely grateful Bauman shared with us his keynote lecture blueprint, which we managed to discuss with the participants at the event. His spirit and tireless intellectual endeavor characterized by hope and a far-reaching vision was present with us during this conference. It is an honor to publish these notes as the preface to this special issue, and we appreciate the fact that the rights holders have granted us permission to do so.

The seminal manifesto on “connected migrants” by Dana Diminescu guides this project. It signals a clear shift from the notion of migrants being uprooted and separated from their home toward a connective presence (2002, 2008) in their diasporic settings. This turn in digital media studies is significant because until recently, media and migration scholarship had mostly focused on the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of migrants in news and popular culture, or else on their isolation (Madianou, 2014, p. 324). Therefore, there is a tendency to focus on digital migrants as either strengthening ethnic ties—by bonding with co-nationals and creating forms of ethnic “encapsulation,” which means “to nurture pre-existing social networks and communities” (Jansson, 2018; p. 74; see also Christensen & Jansson, 2015a; Erikson, 2007)—or on digital migrants providing connecting and bridging communications leading to cosmopolitanization (Vermeulen & Keskiner, 2017). The articles included in this special issue demonstrate how—in the context of digital migrant connectivity—these two constructs, namely, “the cosmopolitan Self” and the “encapsulated Self,” are not mutually exclusive but can operate simultaneously (Christensen & Jansson, 2015a). The authors address social, cultural, and political implications of everyday practices of mediation among migrants. In line with *Popular Communication*’s current interest in “geopolitics and the popular” (Burkart & Christensen, 2013, p. 3), we question how connected migrants across the world are located in intersecting grids of power relations and how they may use and challenge “grammars of everyday life” (Burkart & Christensen, 2013, p. 4).

The so-called “European refugee crisis” is the first of its kind, in terms of scale, in a fully digital age. At the height of the crisis in 2015, Syrian forced migrants emerged in public media carrying smartphones and taking selfies upon safely reaching dry land. Their images were mobilized in a new form of geopolitical “symbolic bordering” (Chouliaraki, 2017), triggering fear of undesired others. For example, in a headline, the German

newspaper *Zeit* asked "Refugees: Why do you need a mobile phone?" (Habekuß & Schmitt, 2015), while on its front page the Dutch daily *Algemeen Dagblad* ran a story entitled "Why are those refugees taking selfies all the time" (Rosman & Mersbergen, 2015). Social media circles were replete with right-wing anti-immigrant posters criticizing selfie-stick carrying refugees with the meme "you know you've been had … when the 'refugees' pull out a selfie stick" (Literat, 2017, p. 5). The appearance of digitally connected refugees was perceived as incongruent with Eurocentric ideas of sad and poor refugees fleeing from war and atrocities. As Ticktin writes, "[i]n other words, humanitarianism requires innocent sufferers to be represented in the passivity of their suffering, not in the action they take to confront and escape" (2016, p. 259). The promise of connectivity that is guaranteed even under duress becomes fraught with the profound disconnection brought about by the disciplining gaze of Western media and publics (Risam, 2018, in this special issue).

In addition to our introductory essay, this special issue consists of six articles. In the opening essay of the volume, Zygmunt Bauman sets out the geopolitical stakes of contemporary Europeanism in "Between separation and integration: Strategies of cohabitation in the era of diasporization and Internet" (Bauman, 2018, in this special issue). Subsequently, the articles move from bottom-up experiences and user practices toward top-down framing, control, and surveillance. First, in her article entitled "The Digital Force in Forced Migration: Imagined Affordances and Gendered Practices," Saskia Witteborn (2018) documents how two women seeking asylum in Germany make use of digital technologies to negotiate institutionalized patriarchical living associated with the asylum bureaucracy. Alexander Dhoest (2018) addresses the cosmopolitanizing and encapsulating intersections between sexuality and ethnicity among LBGTQs with a migration background in Belgium. Myria Georgiou's (2018) article explores how digital initiatives aimed at letting migrant voices speak with/to Europe operate in relation to the representational space of mainstream media. Roopika Risam (2018) expands on the politics of representation by comparing images of refugees taking selfies included in print media with selfies taking by Syrian refugees themselves. Finally, Sanjay Sharma and Jasbinder Nijjar (2018) draw upon the Prevent program in Britain to critique paranoid and racialized algorithmic counterterrorism machineries of control.

These articles contribute to three interrelated overarching debates: (a) the "refugee crisis" and the articulation of conflicting Europeanisms, (b) a relational understanding of cosmopolitanization and encapsulation, and (c) the emergence of the interdisciplinary field of digital migration studies.

The "refugee crisis" and conflicting Europeanisms

In *Europe: An Unfinished Adventure*, Bauman in 2004 reflected on the state of Europe as a non-geographically bounded site of ideological battles, which is mutually shaped by the interplay between exclusionary ideologies of containment and boundary making and border transgressions. Fourteen years after its publication, what remains of the unfulfilled hope and promises that were expressed in that book? In his 2016 book *Strangers at Our Door*, Bauman surmised that despite "migration panic," or the polarization of political parties and resurgent nationalism in its darkest clothes, we can still believe in this idea of a "transgressive civilization," which, as Bauman puts it, is a condition that has already internalized its difference. "this civilization or this culture was and remains a civilization

which is *allergic to borders*, indeed to all *fixity* and *finitude*" (2004, p. 7, emphasis in original). However, as he notes in the preface published for the first time in this special issue of *Popular Communication*, the "European refugee crisis" is in fact a manifestation of Europe's outdated consciousness. In this "state of interregnum," established habitual procedures have lost their function but "new ways" have not yet been developed. Rather, they "are still at best stuck at the drawing-board stage" (Bauman, 2018, in this special issue).

Currently, Europe's consciousness seems to end at its physical borders: For the last 3 years Europe has maintained its macabre status as the deadliest migration destination in the world. The deal reached between the European Union (EU) and Ankara, Turkey, in March 2016—which in exchange for an estimated 6 billion euros resulted in the closure of the Turkish border and the Aegean route into Europe—is celebrated by politicians as an agreement that solved the crisis. However, publicly available data demonstrate that the proportional death rates and massive loss of life in the Mediterranean Sea have been rising. In 2015, alongside 1,000,573 arrivals by sea or land, a registered 3,735 people died or went missing that year (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2015). The next year, 5,143 people died or went missing, while 387,895 people arrived, and as of December 20, 2017, 181,543 people were registered as having arrived in Europe by land and sea while an estimated 3,116 people have died or gone missing (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2017).

According to Sigona, the crisis trope and the framing of forced migrants as irregular migrants have "helped EU leaders to shift public attention from the causes that force people to flee their homes" (2017, p. 3). In recurrent news images, refugees waving EU flags walk along the motorways of Hungary and Austria. The images declare, "We share your respect for justice, freedom and human rights and here we are! We belong!" (Anderson, 2017, p. 1527), but are nonetheless met with silence, or worse. The lack of public outcry over the massive loss of life in the Mediterranean Sea, as Ticktin notes, reveals migrant deaths to be "seemingly outside politics" and to leave "no space for the experiences of life" (2016, p. 257). The reality of the images is not a crisis belonging to Europe, but a crisis experienced by individual human beings of all ages and walks of life who are forced to flee their homes.

The traumatic experiences of refugees is further exacerbated because they meet with hostility, criticism, and rejection upon arriving in Europe. In Western media, the mass movement of forced migrants was only narrated as a crisis when refugees began traveling to Europe, while larger numbers of forced migrants, including Syrian refugees, had already been living in countries including Lebanon, Turkey, and Egypt, sometimes for years. In Europe, politicians and journalists all agreed that 1 million newcomers in 2015 was "too many" for Europe to handle. Seen in context, this threshold was indicative of an ideological position premised upon exclusionary renderings of Europeanism. The number could very well have been perceived as perfectly manageable if one thinks of it as being under "0.5 per cent of the EU population" (Anderson, 2017, p. 1529). Europe's looming demographic decline and dropping birth-rate figures are other factors to be noted here.

As Georgiou and Zabarowski (2017) note in their comparative study of cross-European news media, the news narratives about refugees arriving in Europe changed from early 2015 onward, shifting from an initial tolerance and humanitarianism to militarization and securitization. The authors observe that particularly after the November 2015 attacks in

Paris, the "emotional, humane narrative surrounding the refugees and national citizens" shifted to a "relatively distant, emotionless framing" (2017, p. 11) across Europe. Following the terror attacks, migrants were increasingly framed as geopolitical dangers, without further contextualization, historical information, or the migrants' own words and voices. Weather metaphors like "flood," "surge," and "spillover" detached refugees from their individual or collective humanity (Abid, Abdul Manan, & Adul Rahman, 2017), while metaphors such as opening "barn doors" framed refugees as animalized subjects (Vaughan-Williams, 2015).

The UK Independence Party (UKIP) pro-Brexit campaign poster featured an image of a row of refugee men supposedly en route to Germany. This poster included the heading "Breaking point. The EU has failed us all." As Castles notes, the party leader Nigel Farage often made campaign appearances in front of the poster: "The image of the 'strong, white leader' standing in the way of a flood of desperate people—many of 'Middle Eastern appearance'—threatening 'our way of life' helped shape public opinion in the UK" (2017, p. 1540). Akin to the campaign of the anti-immigrant politician Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and Donald Trump's racist lobbying in the United States, these practices are aimed at convincing voters that migrants and refugees are to blame for the decline of the welfare state and the lack of job opportunities. This development may be understood in the geopolitical context of the dehumanizing othering of refugees as a mass of non-White noncitizens, non-Judeo-Christian, nonsecular Muslims and Arabs, an influx of a brown mass of bodies consisting possibly of terrorists, radicalized, extremist others.

Contemporary mainstream Europeanism displays the institutionalization of a "European apartheid" (Balibar, 2004, pp. 31–50). The "refugee crisis" is thus principally also a racialized crisis: The migration and border regime draws on the colonial ethos of hierarchical sorting, ranking, and subordinating. This process is brutally organized to maintain the color line, and this is a racialized configuration that is "hardly acknowledged," argues De Genova, who compares how similar Europeanism is to the lack of recognition of "Black Lives Matter" in the United States (De Genova, 2017, p. 3).

The prolonged and renovated "European Apartheid" stems from Europe's unwillingness to deal not only with its irreversible multicultural present but also with its colonial past. As Hansen and Jonsson have rightly pointed out, the history of Europe has always excluded the colonies, even when they were officially still part of Europe after 1945: Algeria as part of France until 1962, the protectorate of Somaliland under Italian administration (AFIS) until 1960, Angola and Mozambique belonging to Portugal until 1975, Suriname and the Caribbean islands belonging to the Netherlands until 1975, and the Western Sahara as part of Spain until 1975. Their wars of independence were seen as taking place not in Europe, but displaced elsewhere, and therefore not damaging to the European project of peace and freedom (Hansen & Jonsson, 2014).

The rewriting of European history is essential to the understanding of contemporary geopolitical shifts (Ponzanesi, 2016). As Balibar has recently written, the question of borders is not the only one that affects European identity, European destiny, or European projects. But, as he states, it is hardly separable from any of these (2016). The intellectual dimension of the latent conflicts in Europe (Syria; Lampedusa in Italy; Libya; Ukraine), show that history and geography are tightly intertwined in their political regimes:

> In each of the cases to which we can refer, it appears that borders have escaped the figure of linear demarcations more or less steadily inscribed in the territory by juridical and administrative means. They have become essentially mobile, and—as complex institutions themselves, which are contested from different sides—they extend their effects widely into the spaces that a conventional representation of Europe identified as 'internal' and 'external'. (Balibar, 2016, p. 166)

Europe's messy boundaries are becoming even messier, as the more distant EU territories still do not constitute any part of typical news media representations of the European Union. The invisibility of these borders further points to the European Union's history and legacy of colonialism, of which these borders are active remains (Hansen, 2004). Bhambra suggests that the acknowledgment, or lack of acknowledgment, of Europe's colonial past continues to have implications for the inclusion and exclusion of countries and people in the European Union today (2009) in terms of who belongs and who does not. The implications bear clear consequences for the implementation of militarized frontiers and increased securitization and surveillance beyond the clear confines of Europe.

Gillespie, Osseiran, and Cheesman explore the "digital passage" to Europe (forth-forthcoming)—the digitally mediated journeys of forced migrants across the Mediterranean, which have become paradoxical trajectories, dialectically shaped top-down by such digital "infrastructures of movement of control" (Latonero & Kift, forthcoming), as well as bottom-up through refugees' use of devices to manage rights, aspirations, liminality, and connectivity (Leurs, 2017). The European "migration machine" (Dijstelbloem, Meijer, & Besters, 2011) increasingly draws on intensified data collection and analysis for border control and migration management. This includes Frontex, the European border and coast-guard agency, and the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR) that combines drones, reconnaissance aircrafts, offshore sensors, and satellite remote sensing to prevent "irregular migration" (European Commission, 2017). Asylum seekers are processed as machine-readable bodies through the collection of individual biometric data for storage in the European Dactyloscopy (EURODAC) database. Social media trace data provide predictive analytics and are used to verify individual asylum claims and stories of flight. Digital data sets are processed according to the Big Data ideology of algorithmic, enhanced, efficient, neutral, and objective decision making. The process of datafication masks human intervention and decisions that have configured the parameters of datafied decision making and discrimination (Leurs & Shepherd, 2017). Gillespie et al. (forthcoming) add further complexity to the notion of digital passages by placing it in dialogue with postcolonial critiques of the "Middle Passage" taken by slaves on transatlantic voyages. The "Black Atlantic" was shaped by those forcibly moved across the Atlantic, constructing a space of hybrid, transnational Black experience, within the constraints of unequal power hierarchies (Gilroy, 1993). The digital passage then "concerns specially the power wielded by politicians, police and military personnel *over* refugees in determining their everyday existence, and their fate and future" (Gillespie et al., forthcoming). Thus, the "Black Mediterranean" (Di Maio, 2014) has become a sea of death (Ponzanesi, 2011), which the ideological formation of European "white innocence" (Danewid, 2017) renders invisible.

It is not just a space of crossings and contaminations that rewrites European modernities from the location of the peripheries (Chambers, 2008).

Sharma and Nijjar scrutinize how the "racialized surveillance assemblage" severely impacts on the lives of Muslim migrants in the United Kingdom (forthcoming in this special issue). Importantly, they signal that the push toward massive data mining has actually stifled efforts to identify terrorist threats. The UK Prevent counterterrorism control machine and wider migration management and external border control mechanisms are haunted by the "fear of unknowability." Mass surveillance has been normalized, resulting in a data deluge; however, terrorist prediction and detection rates are extremely low and the rate of false positives is enormous, wrongly accusing and breaching the human rights of many innocent civilians. This fear is further compounded by European orientalist perceptions of Muslims as potentially dangerous abject, unknowable "others." This paranoid racial surveillant assemblage (see also Christensen, 2016) targeting the inscrutable other is also evident in the political rhetoric and news media attention paid to individuals assisting refugees during their journeys, but even more importantly to those returning Europeans, particularly Muslims, who have traveled to Syria. For example, Gavin Williamson, the UK secretary of state for defense, noted that "British Isis fighters should be hunted down and killed" (Elgot, 2017). Similarly, the United States, France, and Australia have been noted as working with kill lists and collaborating on detecting and eliminating Europeans and Westerners in Syria and Iraq using special forces on the ground and coordinated drone strikes (Dyer, 2017).

The scholarship discussed in this section focused on top-down processes of social sorting, while in the next section we discuss studies that are oriented toward describing and explaining bottom-up meaning-making. They consider the ways in which connected migrants' digital practices may offer an entry point to understand their everyday, situated negotiations across time and space.

Cosmopolitanism and encapsulation

Dana Diminescu's 15-year-old manifesto on the emergence of a new migrant figure, "the connected migrant" (2002, 2008), remains a key source of inspiration for us, as is apparent from the title of our colloquium. Rather than defining migrants solely on the basis of life experiences of disruption and uprooting, she innovatively made a plea to consider migrants' mobility, media use, and space-making on a relational continuum: Rather than in "twofold absence" (Diminescu, 2012, p. 451) from one's "home" country and "host" country, the use of digital technologies is indicative of the "portability of the networks of belonging" (Diminescu, 2008, p. 573). Connected migrants can maintain a sense of co-presence, of being "neither here nor there but here and there at the same time" (Diminescu, 2008, p. 578). The urgency of the manifesto has not waned, particularly now as we are witnessing a proliferation of research on connected migrants, which commonly focuses either on encapsulating transnational or cosmopolitanizing local practices.

On the level of transnational communication, researchers study the impact of digital technologies on maintaining diaspora communities, as well as family relations and friendships across distance. For example, scholars have researched the ways in which migrants resort to digital technologies for "transnational parenting" (Madianou & Miller, 2012), to maintain a sense of "digital togetherness" (Marino, 2015), "ICT-based co-presence"

(Baldassar, Nedelcu, Merla, & Wilding, 2016), "virtual intimacies" (Wilding, 2006), and "digital diasporas" (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Candidatu, Leurs, & Ponzanesi, forthcoming; Everett, 2009; Gajjala, 2008). The level of local intercultural practices remains somewhat understudied, but in this paradigm, researchers are studying the roles of social media and smartphone usage in processes of integration. The focus remains on digital technologies and practices of "intercultural adaptation" (Chen, 2010) and "social inclusion" (Andrade & Doolin, 2016). Alencar (2017) recently demonstrated the importance of social media use as one of the means to initiate intercultural contact between inhabitants of the Netherlands and refugee newcomers, as well fostering improvements in language skills and the attainment of cultural competencies.

However, we argue that either isolating transnational communication or focusing on local connections runs the risk of presenting those practices as dichotomous, incompatible, or somehow mutually exclusive. Furthermore, "homophily," the assumption that "birds of a feather flock together" (Boyd, 2014, pp. 155–156), is popular among those who argue that transnational communication among non-elite migrants hinders integration and leads to segregation and radicalization (Conversi, 2012). However, more attention is needed on highly mobile expatriates, who in particular have been found to draw on digital technologies in order to live a "geo-socially encapsulated" life (Jansson, 2018, pp. 137–138). We contend that encapsulating boundary-making and cosmopolitan boundary crossings happen simultaneously. Digitally, migrants connect with members of the diaspora to maintain bonding capital, and they simultaneously develop bridging, cosmopolitan capital by networking with the host society (Codagnone & Kluzer, 2011). We theorize further how migrant connectivity revolves around the relational continuum of "encapsulation" and "cosmopolitanization" (Christensen & Jansson, 2015a).

Rethinking the notion of encapsulation and cosmopolitanization is particularly relevant for rethinking cosmopolitan Europe and the role migrants play in the re-articulation of its ethos (Baban, 2016; Beck & Grande, 2007; Bhambra, 2016; Habermas, 2003a). As Bhambra argues, most normative accounts of European studies ignore the colonial and imperial histories that constitute the broader context of European integration. This means that "taking this history seriously would, at the very least, highlight the parochial nature of the cosmopolitan commitment presently at the heart of the European project and, perhaps more radically, provide the opportunity to develop a more inclusive and just postcolonial cosmopolitan project in Europe" (2016, pp. 197–198). This implies a revision not only of the notion of Europe but also of cosmopolitanism and the position that migrants occupy in it. Instead of a binary between encapsulation and cosmopolitanization, we would suggest a different connection to media and migration by foregrounding the notion of the "cosmopolitanism from below" that is the vernacular cosmopolitanism defined by Homi Bhabha in the contexts of British migrants and minorities (2000). Bhabha develops his thesis of the vernacular cosmopolitanism moving onto those "who occupy marginal or minority positions within cultures and societies" (Bhabha, 2000, p. 139). If there is a world community that is transnational and across boundaries, it is that of migrants, who have to adapt to new cultures and worlds, and translate the specifics of their original culture into the new generalities of assimilation and integration, to embrace a shared sense of civic virtues while preserving "language, food, festivals and religious customs." Bhabha (2000, p. 139) writes that

> it is this double life of British minorities that makes them vernacular cosmopolitans, translating between cultures, renegotiating traditions from a position where 'locality' insists on its own terms, while entering into larger national and societal conversations. (p. 139)

This view is corroborated by Schiller, Tsypylma, and Gruner-Domic (2011), who argue:

> If cosmopolitanism is viewed as arising from social relationships that do not negate cultural, religious or gendered differences but see people as capable of relationships of experiential commonalities despite differences, then we have another lens through which to view and theorize social experiences. This perspective moves researchers beyond the binaries of inclusion vs. exclusion, sameness vs. difference. (p. 403)

Hence, a cosmopolitan approach acknowledges that individuals are able to hold multiple ethnic, national, or religious belongings simultaneously (Amelina & Faist, 2012), drawing from different diasporic traditions without renouncing individual trajectories and collective identifications. Therefore, we could argue that the new cosmopolitans are actually the migrants, or the uprooted refugees and asylum seekers who move en masse and adapt to new cultures, languages, and systems of rights. Hall has dedicated considerable attention to the diasporic roots of Europe, and accounted for the outcome of this process as producing "cultures of hybridity," since cultural identities are emerging that are in transition, drawing on different traditions while resisting wholesale assimilation (Hall, 1992).

These understandings of cosmopolitanisms have incorporated diversity within and allow for new visions of digitally connected migrants whose networks and relations co-construct multiple layered worlds between the local and the global. For example, in their work with Karen refugee youth from Burma in Melbourne, Australia, Gifford and Wilding note that they carve out "digital escapes" that are oriented toward both their homelands and their country of arrival, as well in between toward a global deterritorialized youth culture (Gifford & Wilding, 2013). In this special issue in his article on migrant gay men in Belgium, Dhoest problematizes the singular ethnic/racial axis interpretation that seems to underpin the continuum of connected migrants' encapsulation and cosmopolitanization. His participants, a group of gay migrants distinctly located at the intersection of categories of difference, were "culturally cosmopolitan, but sexually rather encapsulated" (Dhoest, 2018). As legal migrants to Belgium with economic and symbolic capital, they were culturally cosmopolitan in line with their relatively privileged class positions, while simultaneously being encapsulated, not within ethnic diasporic communities, but within their families of choice, namely, as members of the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer) community. Myria Georgiou examines how migrants' and refugees' voices feature in the broader communicative structure of digital Europe (2018, in this special issue). The grass-roots and institutionalized platforms under study play a role in border power and contemporary boundary formation. On these platforms, refugees share their narratives, possibly in an attempt to invite Europeans to see the world from their perspectives. Georgiou assesses whether these discourses demarcate once again the newcomer as the encapsulated other or constitute a space where subalterns can not only voice themselves but also get heard. Alongside rethinking migrant digital encapsulation and cosmopolitanization as a relational process, this special collection also seeks to provide an introduction to digital migration studies in Europe more broadly.

Digital migration studies

In this final section we elaborate the emerging field of digital migration studies. With the term *digital migration*, we refer to the expanding and intensifying roles digital technologies play in migration processes, ranging from top-down governmentality and bottom-up practices of everyday meaning-making, discussed in the preceding sections. These phenomena cannot be confined within the borders of specialized academic disciplines. As a result, a multidisciplinary research focus is emerging that spans disciplines including media and communications, anthropology (Zijlstra & Van Liempt, 2017), information studies (Maitland & Xu, 2015), psychology (Chen, 2010), human rights (Leurs, 2017), sociology (Damian & Van Ingen, 2014), migration and refugee studies (Harney, 2013), and postcolonialism (Ponzanesi & Leurs, 2014), among others. The emergence of the field of digital migration studies is marked by the increased circulation of academic buzzwords including "e-diasporas" (Diminescu, 2008), "mediating migration" (Hegde, 2016), and "migrant polymedia" (Madianou & Miller, 2012), alongside other concepts noted in the previous section. More recently, digital migration studies seek to capture the situation of refugees and asylum seekers, (UNHCR, 2016) and, in this area, the following concepts are gaining currency: the difficulties refugees have in negotiating bureaucracies and situations of "information precarity" (Wall, Campbell, & Janbek, 2017), refugees' desire for "becoming (im)perceptible (Witteborn, 2015), risks of "networked authoritarianism" (Moss, 2016) experienced within, for example, the Syrian diaspora, and the workings of algorithmic governmentality through "digital deportability" (Trimikliniotis, Parsanoglou, & Tsianos, 2015).

The three words—digital migration studies—that we use to identify an emerging field demand critical interrogation. First, there are new opportunities to study migration by means of the Internet and digital tools, but the digital should not be fetishized. Rather, digital technologies can serve a broader purpose an entry point to a critical human-centered and social justice-oriented research endeavor. We draw inspiration from the work of Pink et al., who offer a valuable critique of "digital-media-centric-ness" (Pink et al., 2016, pp. 9–11). Rather than foregrounding specific information and communication technology (ICT) systems, platforms, devices, tools, or data sets, digital technologies cannot be understood in isolation from offline, material, social, cultural, political, economic, and emotional factors. Second, on the topic of migration, critical migration scholars have aptly demonstrated that categories such as "forced migrant," "asylum seeker," "refugee," "economic migrant," "expat," and so on are not neutral, empty vessels, but performative social categorizations that have serious material consequences (Sigona, 2017; Anderson, 2017). Digital migration researchers too play an important role in challenging in the era of Big Data what, how, where, and why boundaries between categories are drawn, and we should make serious efforts to avoid perpetuating power-ridden categorization logics. Rather than offering generalizations and making universal claims about groups of people, we should work toward relational understandings, for example, of economic and forced migration motives that are not mutually exclusive but exist in a continuum, and scholarly renderings of individuals and communities should acknowledge diversity, dynamism, and complexity. Third, on the level of knowledge production, there is an important genealogy to what is now called digital migration studies that needs to be acknowledged.

Three paradigms with diverging theoretical and methodological approaches can be recognized in the scholarship on migrants, diasporas, and transnationalism from the 1990s onward: (a) "migrants in cyberspace"; (b) "everyday digitally mediated migrant life"; and (c) "migrants as data" (Candidatu et al., forthcoming). The first paradigm emerged from the initial utopian celebrations of cyberspace and virtuality among Internet studies scholars in the 1990s as a distinctive, libertarian space. Scholars explored whether digital networks could offer migrants alternative means to assert their voice, stake out their identity, and engage in community formation. Over time, the technological-determinist celebration of new possibilities subsided. For example, Bernal in her work on Eritrean online activities works toward "grounding cyberspace" by understanding that the "Internet is not primarily a product of science and technology but rather a cultural medium where social texts and cultural artifacts are produced and circulated" (2014, p. 6). The second paradigm focuses on "everyday digitally mediated migrant life," and scholars operating within this space argue against "self-enclosed cyberian apartness," and champion instead an understanding of the Internet as "continuous with and embedded in other social space" (Miller & Slater, 2000, p. 3). Illustratively, Hirata studied inequalities experienced among migrants in South-East Asia by conducting multisited ethnographies at Internet cafés in Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and Taiwan (2013). The third paradigm, "migrants as data," has emerged in the broader context of the recent boom in data gathering, aggregation, and computational analysis. However, before Big Data was big, Diminescu blazed a trail with the large scale *e-Diasporas Atlas* project, which consists of a longitudinal mapping of 27 e-diaspora communities and more than 8,000 migrant websites (Diminescu, 2008). Since the outset, digital studies on migration have tended to avoid the "digital positivism" of Big Data (Fuchs, 2017), which is particularly important given the risk of data-driven generalizations and oversimplifications that reproduce violent categorizations of communities and individuals.

Illustrating the impact of the "everyday digitally mediated migrant life" paradigm, Saskia Witteborn's contribution in this special issue draws from extensive in-depth interviews and participant observation conducted in Germany between 2011 and 2013 (Witteborn, 2018). Focusing on the situated experiences of two key female informants, Witteborn combines interviews with observations of their routines negotiating urban settings, accommodations, and rooms, as well as their engagement with technologies, social media, and mobile phones. Revisiting this contextually rich historical data (predating the so-called "European refugee crisis"), the author untangles how gender and technology norms mutually constitute experiences and imaginaries of living in an asylum bureaucracy system. Roopika Risam, in her article, presents an affirmative critique of the "migrants as data" paradigm from the perspective of postcolonial digital humanities (Risam, 2018). Her quantitative textual analysis concerns news media articles on refugees talking selfies from the United States and United Kingdom. Articles typically feature photos of refugees taking selfies, rather than including the selfies taken by refugees themselves in their narratives. She combines sentiment analysis with a theorization of the refugee selfie to explore to what extent the refugees' selfie-taking practice presents alternative possibilities for representation needed to reclaim subjectivity, gaze, and agency. Sharma and Nijjar further problematize the logics of knowability that shapes the "migrants as data" paradigm. They emphasize that algorithms can and do exacerbate inequalities and injustices experienced by migrant groups. Unpacking the example of the

paranoid racialized surveillant assemblage in the United Kingdom, they show algorithm-driven approaches to measurable Islamic-terrorist-suspect types as "discernable objects of knowledge" that affirm biopolitical dichotomies based on fixed racialized phenotypical features (Sharma & Nijjar, 2018). This article can thus also be read as an open invitation to digital migration scholars to address more widely the discriminatory workings of algorithmic social sorting. In order to remain aware of the ways in which categorizations and data-driven decision making impact upon populations, reverse-engineering algorithms will increasingly have to be a part of our critical toolkit.

The three paradigms briefly outlined here coexist simultaneously, and researchers increasingly combine these multiple paradigms. For example, Alinejad et al. (forthcoming) combine in-depth fieldwork with digital-data driven approaches to research Romanian, Somali, and Turkish women in Amsterdam, London, and Rome, as well as connections with their homelands. They have taken the distinctly situated case of the Turkish–Dutch girl Bade Çakır, who was diagnosed with childhood acute lymphocytic leukemia and around whom an online campaign was mobilized to find matching stem cells on time. They use this case to develop the method of producing "mattering maps." These combine a critical awareness of digital media practices in migrants' lived experiences and attention to the circulation of digital traces of these practices across social media platforms. Incorporating elements from the three paradigms already mentioned may allow digital connections and social meanings to be valued as relationally constructed and the dynamism of political mobilization and diasporic formation to be captured in its complexity. Finally, embracing their distinct pros and cons as well as opportunities and limitations will allow digital migration studies scholars to theorize the specific findings and situatedness of their own research exercises.

Conclusions: Beyond connected refugees

In this special issue, we seek to move beyond the fetishization of the smartphone-carrying, selfie-taking, connected refugee by deconstructing this categorization and acknowledging that individuals and communities are complex and multilayered, and function in a broader context of historical, cultural, and geopolitical causes, patterns, and aspirations. Notions of encapsulation and cosmopolitanism are not unidirectional. By stating that plurality coexists within a renewed notion of cosmopolitanism from below, we have proposed an intervention in "cosmopolitan Europe" from the perspective of deep time. The histories of colonialism have multiple refractions in our current multicultural present (Ponzanesi, forthcoming). In contrast with contemporary Europeanism, this is a cosmopolitanism that accommodates differences without doing away with the notion of equality, justice, and common humanity. It is based on the predicament that Bruce Robbins has so cogently expressed as "If we agree that there is 'no easy generalization,' don't we want to retain the right to *difficult* generalization?" (Robbins, 1998, p. 251, emphasis in original).

The "connected migrant" inaugurated by Dana Diminescu (2002, 2008) has very much redirected the field of digital migration studies toward rethinking cosmopolitanism as an everyday practice that helps in a "banal" way to overcome the unsustainable divide between online and offline, local and global, encapsulation and cosmopolitanization. These banal ways are understood differently from Beck's notion of "banal

cosmopolitanism" (2002). For Ulrick Beck, the distinction between cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitanization emerges due to the fact that the latter affects modern society at large typically in "banal" ways (Beck, 2002), in neo-liberal manifestations of economic cosmopolitanism that nobody can escape. This is particularly the case for those more vulnerable subjects (Robbins, 2017). Therefore, we have to take into account how, in this increasingly interconnected world, mediation and mediatization bring with them new forms of cosmopolitanism and cosmopolitization (Christensen & Jansson, 2015b; Georgiou, 2013) that need to be accounted for and articulated from subaltern positions as well.

These subaltern positions are central in notions of digital diasporas that allow for difference within sameness, creating a cosmopolitanism that is both part of this digital turn in migration studies and a revision of the cosmopolitanism from below as argued above. As Christensen and Jansson write, "The media are tools for sharing knowledge, making connections and stitching together our everyday lives in time and space … they are tools for communication and co-constitute ecologies of communication" (2015b, p. 158). This idea of cosmopolitanism is aspirational and has still not fulfilled its potential. As noted by Bauman, cosmopolitanism is not just a theory, a normative ideal, but a practice, a way of life. The current refugee crisis has put to dire test Europe's self-proclaimed identity premised upon shared cosmopolitan values. This is a cosmopolitanism under erasure, but one that we "cannot not want." To close with his words:

> In other words, just as the proof of the pudding is in the eating, the proof of the conversation as the royal road to mutual understanding, reciprocated regard and eventually agreement (even if only an agreement reduced to 'agreeing to disagree') is in entering it and conducting it with a view to jointly negotiating the obstacles bound to arise in the course. Whatever the obstacles, and however immense they might seem, conversation will remain *the* royal road to agreement and so to peaceful and mutually beneficial, cooperative and solidary coexistence simply because it has no competitors and so no viable alternative. (Bauman, 2016, p. 116, emphasis in original)

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