

DIGITAL DIASPORAS: AN OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AREAS OF MIGRATION AND NEW MEDIA THROUGH A NARRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract: *Academic research on migration and the use of new media constitutes a growing field. The first studies dealing explicitly with the field appeared in the end of the 1990s. Now, it has become an established research area. The impact and importance of the new technologies for migrants is well established. Appropriation of ICTs and new media environments have become a ubiquitous feature of everyday life in migrant groups. The research area is still understudied, characterized by rapid changes and shifts, and is shaped by the changing structural conditions of migrants and the proliferation of forms of media. In this article, I provide an overview of the developing research area through a review of the existing literature on migration and the use of new media. I elaborate the various aspects of the research field, the research category, current themes and topics, theoretical and conceptual discussions, and methodological approaches.*

Keywords: *digital diaspora, migration, mobility, transnationalism, ICTs, new media, social media.*



INTRODUCTION

In this article, I provide an overview of the developing research area of migration and new media through a narrative literature review. Academic research in the area of migration, diaspora, transnationalism, and mobility are closely related to factors within media and communication. In diaspora studies, initiated in the end of the late 1980s, for example Hall (1994), ascribed media a constitutive role in the construction of social and political life in the diasporic context and diasporic identity construction. In discussion of transnationalism, media and communication were ascribed a central role and a component that formed the basis for the emergence of transnationalism on a mass scale. Transnationalism, defined as the process by which migrants forge and sustain multistranded relations and create transnational social fields, was described as a constant traversing of national boundaries by processes of communication and exchange, such as capital expansion, the Internet, and other telecommunications (see, e.g., Portes, Landolt, & Guarnizo, 1999). In “the second wave of transnationalism” (Rogers, 2005, p. 405) that appeared around 2005, advanced high-speed communication systems and the impacts of simultaneity and copresence were considered to be constitutive factors of the transnational terrain (Smith, 2005, pp. 239–240).

The rapid development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has led to an increased attention to factors such as media and communication in migration studies, as well as in studies of other population groups. In the field of migration and new media, the research area is characterized by rapid changes and fluctuations, influenced by the structural conditions and social reality of migrants and the continuous development of forms of new media (see also Borkert, Cingolani, & Premazzi, 2009). For example, the 2015 European refugee crisis led to a number of studies on the impact of new media on forced migration (see, e.g., Cabot, 2018; Gillespie, Osseiran, & Cheesman, 2018). The research area is interdisciplinary, drawing on approaches from a number of subject areas, such as anthropology, migration studies, diaspora studies, media and communication studies, globalization studies, studies in new science, Internet studies, sociology, and cultural studies. The structure of the research area is defined by its close relationship to the development of the new technologies. ICTs were introduced on a popular level in the 1990s, and the first studies of migration and ICTs appeared at the end of that decade. Initially, the research area contained a limited number of studies; however, the field has expanded rapidly, in parallel with the development of the new technologies, increased access to the technologies, and increased digital literacy. However, field needs further research and elaboration (see, e.g., de Kruijf, 2014; Leurs & Smets, 2018).

My goal in this article is to review the existing literature on migration and new media to provide an overview of the research field. I focus on the body of literature that has emerged at the intersection of the two related fields of migration studies and new media studies: the field of migration, transnationalism, mobility and diaspora on the one hand, and the field of ICTs, new media, social media and Web 2.0, on the other. The analytical lens is placed on studies that discuss media appropriation and communicative practices in the various categories of migration, in other words, studies that center on the implications of Internet, new media, social media, and Web 2.0 for migrant categories.

I elaborate on various aspects of the research field, such as the research categories that scholars deal with in their investigations of migration and new media. A great number of the studies include case studies on migrants, with respondents and informants from various backgrounds, countries of origin, and migration mechanisms, for example, internal, external, temporary, voluntary, or forced

migration. Secondly, I discuss the central themes and topics that have emerged in studies of migration and new media, such as investigations of the impact of new media on the migrant family, how migrant identity construction is influenced by the appropriation of the new technologies, just to mention a few. Further, I elaborate on the theoretical and conceptual areas that scholars researching the area of migration and new media have investigated and analyzed. New theoretical and conceptual discussions have appeared in the field, as well as a renewed focus on established theoretical and conceptual areas. Finally, I look closer at the very complex area of methodology that characterizes the research area and the various methodological approaches the scholars have used in research on migration and new media.

The balance of the article is structured within these four main aspects addressed in the various literature. I first look at the research categories that are encompassed within studies in digital diasporas. The following three sections address the findings of my analysis of the literature, grouped within the central themes and topics of the research, the significant theoretical and conceptual issues being discussed by scholars of digital diasporas, and finally the methodological approaches employed in research in this field.

METHODOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

This article represents a long-term project. My first ethnographic encounter with the area of migration and new media (Andersson, 2000) was in 2000, and I subsequently have engaged the topics and the field's development (Andersson, 2007, 2011). To solidify and update my knowledge in the field, I began a project of systematically surveying, reviewing, and mapping the literature in research area in 2014. Initially, I used methods such as literature searches on databases and reference list analyses (snowballing). The literature in the field is dominated by articles, journal special issues, and edited volumes, and I focused my searches on scholarly articles, edited volumes and, to certain extent, monographs. The material surfaced is predominantly written in English. And, in line with my goal, I concentrated on literature that demonstrates a clear focus on the topic of migration and new media.¹

In the literature searches, I combined keywords from the field of migration (e.g., migration, diaspora, transnationalism, mobility) and the field of new media (e.g., ICTs, new media, social media, Web 2.0), and conducted the searches using various constellations of the terms. Initially, I used resources such as Social Science Premium Collection; however, considering the interdisciplinary character of the research field, I found them too limiting. I then turned to databases such as Regina, Rex, Libris (Swedish research resources), and resources available at the Uppsala University Library. To develop a global perspective, I also searched the WorldCat. Further, because I had already acquired extensive background knowledge in the field, the reference list searches proved very fruitful. After completing the literature searches, I continued to monitor the research area closely for any new additions to the body of literature. At the end of 2016, I drew the line for incorporating new literature into the current study.

I present the results of the project in the form of a review article in the genre denoted alternately as a narrative literature review, overview, or descriptive review (see, e.g., Grant & Booth, 2009; Green et al., 2015; Yang & Tate, 2012). As Green et al. (2015) stated, a narrative review attempts to summarize or synthesize what has been written on a particular topic but does not seek generalization or cumulative knowledge from what is reviewed. Thus, my aim is to

provide an objective, inclusive, and comprehensive overview of the emerging research area through mapping the surveyed literature and providing a comprehensive synthesis of the field in narrative form. The material has been structured in sections based on the themes and topics that emerged as significant during the analysis process of the material. At the start of my analysis, I put forward some initial categories to structure the material, such as the date of research and the form of media discussed in the article. This established a foundation for the continued structuring and systematization of the material. My aspiration putting together this article is to provide the reader with an overview of the research area to serve as an information source of the field and a possible guide for future research.

I wish to state forthrightly two limitations in this study. First, I drew a line for continued literature searches at the end of 2016, a necessary choice that restricts the range of the study. However, this essential measure allowed me to conclude my investigation with the already-gathered material. The article was submitted for publication in autumn 2018. Second, in this article, sections of the material are presented in the form of tables, displaying for example overviews over authors and research in specific areas. I am well aware that this form of presentation renders the sources in a rather broad and general manner, leaving out significant elements.²

I use the concept *digital diaspora* in my discussions on new media and migration. The concept has been introduced in previous research on migration and new media, however, it has not been clearly defined, and several suggestions have been put forward. For example, digital diasporas have been described alternatively as new forms of coexistence, a technologically mediated diaspora, a diaspora organized on the Internet, an electronic migrant community, and an immigrant group that uses ICT connectivity to participate in virtual networks for a variety of communicational purposes (Axel, 2004; Brinkerhoff, 2009; Everett, 2009; Laguerre, 2010a; Mainsah, 2014; Tsagarousianou, 2004). In this article, I will not dwell on the definition of the concept. Rather, I use the concept of digital diaspora as an umbrella term to denote the new configurations that appear at the intersection of the two related fields of migration studies and new media studies: the field of migration, transnationalism, mobility and diaspora on the one hand, and the field of ICTs, new media, social media and Web 2.0, on the other.

THE RESEARCH CATEGORIES IN STUDIES ON DIGITAL DIASPORAS

The target groups and research categories that appear in research on digital diasporas are quite expansive, covering research interests from, for example, asylum seekers to transnational knowledge workers. Moreover, the body of research presents migrants and diasporic groups as frequent users of new media: They are digital natives, early adopters, and heavy users of digital technologies (Ponzanesi & Leurs, 2014) as well as more proficient than the host country's population at the same level of instruction in using ICTs (Borkert et al., 2009). Whether or not studies on digital diasporas provide an adequate understanding of the research area has been contested by various scholars. Nessi and Bailey (2014) stated that the literature on migration, diaspora, and Internet usage tends to focus on the underprivileged other. However, Borkert et al. (2009) criticized the predominant focus on studies of niche groups and elite groups, while leaving out the largest part of the migrant population. In this thematic section, I provide an overview over the various research categories that appear in research on digital diasporas—such as vulnerable groups, middling transnationalism and middle class mobility, and highly skilled migration—and

offer some examples on the character of these categories. For a full overview of scholars researching digital diasporas and the various categories they address, see Table 1.

Vulnerable Groups, Low Status, and Forced Migration

Scholars studying digital diasporas frequently include research on the categories' vulnerable groups, that is, groups with low social and economic status, displaced people, and forced migrants. For example, Tripp and Herr-Stephenson (2009) and Katz (2010) researched Latino children in the

Table 1. The Research Categories and Authors of Studies of Digital Diasporas (2000–2016).

Categories	Authors
VULNERABLE GROUPS	
Labor migration	Ackah & Newman (2003), Benítez (2006, 2012), Bonini (2011), Cabanes & Acedera (2012), Chib, Malik, Aricat, & Kadir (2014), Francisco (2015), Hoang & Yeoh (2011, 2012), Katz (2010), Madianou (2012, 2016a, 2016b), Madianou & Miller (2013), Mallapragada (2014a), McKay (2010, 2012), Miller & Madianou (2011), Nishitani (2014), Parreñas (2005), Platt et al., (2016), Rosel & Pascual (2016), Saxena (2014), E. C. Thompson (2009), Tolstokorova (2010), Tripp & Herr-Stephenson (2009), Uy-Tioco (2007)
Downward social mobility	Burrell & Anderson (2008), Lim & Pham (2016), Lorenzana (2016), Mainsah (2014)
Displaced peoples, refugees, asylum seekers	Cho (2011), Green & Lockley (2012), Halilovich (2013), Harney (2013), Leung (2011), Leung, Finney, Lamb, & Emrys (2017), Leurs (2014), Rinnawi (2012), Robertson, Wilding, & Gifford (2016) Wilding & Gifford (2013), Witteborn (2014, 2015)
MIDLING TRANSNATIONALISM AND MIDDLE CLASS MOBILITY	
Middle-class mobility	Adams & Ghose (2003), Alinejad (2011), Baldassar (2016a, 2016b), Christensen (2012), Costa-Pinto (2014), Georgiou (2012b), Mitra (2006, 2014), Schier (2016), Skop (2014), Skop & Adams (2009)
Students	Chin (2016), Collins (2009), K. Kim, Yun, & Yoon (2009), Li & Chen (2014), C. Lin (2006), J. H. Lin, Peng, Kim, Kim, & LaRose (2012), Narayan & Purkayastha (2011), Narayan, Purkayastha, & Banerjee (2011), Park, Song, & Lee (2014), Plaza (2010), Sandel (2014), (Shi 2005)
Precollege students	Durham (2004), Maira (2010), T. I. Yoon (2016)
Highly skilled migration	Bhimji (2008), Chen & Choi (2011), Hanafi (2005), Kang (2011), Y. Kim (2011, 2016), Nedelcu (2012), Nedelcu & Wyss (2016), Nessi & Bailey (2014), Ong & Cabañes (2011), Radhakrishnan (2008)
Expatriates, KTWs	Bork-Hüffer (2016), Colic-Peisker (2010), Mai (2016), Polson (2015)
COMPARATIVE APPROACHES	Baldassar (2016b), Denis & Paulos (2011), Fong, Cao, & Chan (2010), Kaur & Shruti (2016), Voigt-Graf (2005)

United States of America, Platt et al. (2016) investigated the precarious situation of Indonesian domestic migrant workers in Singapore, and Nishitani (2014) elaborated on Tongan mothers and daughters in Melbourne, Australia.

Filipino labor migration has been researched by a number of scholars (see, e.g., Cabanes & Acedera, 2012; Madianou, 2012; Madianou & Miller, 2013; McKay, 2010). The Philippines is one of the largest exporters of migrant labor in the world. Over 10% of the population is working abroad and a great number of them are women hired as care workers. The Philippine government actively encourages overseas migration. To legitimate female migration, the government, in collaboration with the main Philippine ICT companies, advance the position that ICTs and mobile phones alleviate the social costs of migration (Madianou, 2016b; Miller & Madianou, 2011).

Further, in their discussions on digital diasporas, scholars have recognized the phenomenon of downward social mobility in the host country. For example, Burrell and Anderson's (2008) research on Ghanaians living in London illustrated how migrants typically end up in low-paying, low-status jobs, even though they had a high educational level or a high-status family background. They were affected by their categorization as migrants from a developing country in Africa.

Another subcategory that is dealt with in studies on digital diasporas is the category of forced migration; displaced people; refugees, and asylum seekers. Leung (2011) described studies of refugees and their use of new media as a rather neglected area. The studies undertaken predominantly concentrated on refugees living in resettlement countries and focused on, for example, immigration administration and the provision of health and education services. Wilding and Gifford (2013) elaborated on the topic and pointed out the need to attend to the capacity of ICTs to be used for both harm and good. ICTs might be used as a tool for surveillance and control by governments and other bodies. However, ICTs also might be a tool of empowerment for refugees by, for instance, mediating social relationships, sustaining homeland identities, and supporting transnational activism. For example, Harney's (2013) study of asylum seekers, refugees, and irregular migrants in the Naples (Italy) region illustrated how mobile phone use might mediate and secure some reassurance amid the uncertainties of the migrant's lives.

Middling Transnationalism and Middle Class Mobility

The second wave of transnational studies that was introduced in migration studies in 2005, focused on "middling transnationalism" (Rogers, 2005, p. 204) and the everyday practices of middle class migrants (Smith, 2005). Scholars introduced a more general concept of mobility, that encompassed the categories of middle class migrants, working holidaymakers, tourists, festival goers, international students, and other mobile individuals (Rogers, 2005). According to scholars working on middling transnationalism, instantaneous communication and simultaneity and copresence impacted the constitution of the category (see, e.g., Smith, 2005).

In studies on digital diasporas, middling transnationalism and middle class mobility have been explored by, for example, Costa-Pinto (2014). She described how her respondents, Indian female migrants in Melbourne, who relocated in accord with Australia's immigration selection criteria, are typically middle class, English-language educated, Western-oriented, and well-positioned to take advantage of 21st-century technology. Alinejad (2011) described his

respondents, Iranian bloggers outside Iran, as predominantly middle class and leading middle-class lifestyles. They represented a variety of migration narratives. Some were first-generation migrants, while others were born in the United States or Canada. The Indian diaspora in the United States constitute another frequently discussed example of middle-class mobility. Adams and Ghose (2003), Skop and Adams (2009), and Mitra (2006) elaborated on the distinct character of the Indian diaspora in the United States. The category has a high socioeconomic status, high educational level, and are working high-income jobs. Both men and women generally have high levels of participation in the labor force. A large number of them work in the information–technology industry or managerial, professional, or related occupations. Often, they earn more than the U. S. American native population.

The category of students, a subcategory in middling transnationalism and middle-class mobility, has received considerable attention from scholars discussing digital diasporas. A number of studies have focused on the use of new media in this category and how new media and social media impact international students' adjustments to their new environments. Further, scholars have discussed younger students, such as South Asian Muslim high school students in the United States with a working-class background (Maira, 2010). Yoon (2016) analyzed education-driven transnational families and their use of new media and social media. In Asian middle-class families, precollege education of children has become a significant driving force in transnational migration. Sending the children to the West or other internationally renowned educational centers for precollege study is seen as a strategy to enhance the children's global cultural capital and place the children on the pathway toward upward social mobility. Yoon's (2016) study dealt with young Koreans attending precollege studies in Canada. Two thirds of them were living alone—that is, both parents remained in Korea—while one third lived with their mothers in Canada. The study illustrated how family interaction through use of new media, such as the smartphone, was incorporated into the rhythm of the everyday.

Talent Migration and Highly Skilled Migration

Studies on talent migration and highly skilled migration and the use of new media constitute a relatively recent research area in discussions of digital diasporas. According to Yeoh and Eng (2008), concepts such as talent migration, highly skilled migration, expatriates, and transnational elites are used variously to describe this category. The category is generally considered to be a recent phenomenon. For example, Colic-Peisker (2010) stated that studies of transnational professionals only recently have started to feature in systematic social research; Polson (2011) described the emergence of a new globally mobile middle class, composed mostly of college-educated individuals who migrate because they can find better opportunities abroad than in their countries of origin. According to some, the emergence of this category is closely related to contemporary globalization processes, economic logics, and transnational flows of capital. In globalization processes and a neoliberal framework, highly skilled migrants constitute a growing human capital in the global knowledge economy (see, e.g., Colic-Peisker, 2010). These studies emphasize the role played by new media and social media in the constitution of the category. According to Nessi and Bailey (2014), who focused on privileged Mexican migrants living in Europe, prior research has emphasized that more highly educated people and those with greater economic resource tend to be more active Internet users.

Some of the research categories that are discussed in this section are, for example, Indian women working in the IT sector in Silicon Valley and Bangalore (Radhakrishnan, 2008) and Filipino elite migrants in London (Ong & Cabañes, 2011). Hanafi (2005) studied Palestinian professionals in the diaspora and illustrated how new immigrant communities have appeared in the Palestinian diaspora. The research category consisted mainly of scientists and engineers that had stayed on in Lille (France) following their studies at the city's universities. Colic-Peisker (2010) introduced the category of transnational knowledge workers (TKWs). TKWs represent a diverse group of serially migrating career professionals who have spent extended periods of time in at least three countries. The majority of her informants came from less-developed, small, and/or non-English-speaking countries. The main purpose for migration was to improve professional and social status, and they were firmly embedded in Western ways. The majority had a doctorate or other higher degree of education.

Comparative Approaches

Some scholars have undertaken comparative studies on migrant groups engaged in the use of ICTs to explore how individuals within the various research categories appropriate new media and the implications and various outcomes of new media use in the groups. For example, Kaur and Shruti (2016) compared the use of mobile and Internet technologies among two sets of Indian migrants to Cambodia: highly educated professionals and rural and less educated single male migrants from eastern India. They concluded that education, income levels, and the cost of technologies at the destination country shape migrants' access to technologies. The category of professionals used more sophisticated technologies, while the rural migrants depended more on basic and commercially available public facilities.

CENTRAL THEMES AND TOPICS IN STUDIES OF DIGITAL DIASPORAS

In this section, I deal with the central themes and topics that emerged in studies of migration and new media, including the following subdivisions: the impact of new media on the migrant family, how migrant identity construction and cultural reproduction are influenced by the appropriation of the new technologies, the impact of the new media on the relationship to and perception of the homeland and home, and the new aspects and conditions that appear in the political arena and in social networks and organizations. I provide an overview of the main characteristics of the subsections and the central discussion areas and illustrate the discussion areas with examples. Further, I include a listing of scholars who have conducted research in the various subsections and their field of research in Table 2.

The Family and the New Technologies

In research on digital diasporas, the migrant family, and the various configurations that appear in the intersection between new media and family forms constitute an extensively debated area. Notions such as transnational "e-families" (Benítez, 2012) and "care-giving at a distance" (Levitt, 2009) illustrate the new formations.

Table 2. Outline of Authors and Central Themes and Topics Discussed in Studies of Digital Diasporas.

Discussion Areas	Authors
THE FAMILY AND THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES	
The transnational family	Baldassar (2008, 2016a, 2016b), Baldassar, Nedelcu, Merla, & Wilding (2016), Benítez (2012), Brown (2016), Kaur & Shruti (2016), Levitt (2009), Madianou (2016a, 2016b), Nedelcu & Wyss (2016), Robertson, Wilding, & Gifford (2016), Schier (2016), Wilding (2006), K. Yoon (2016)
Gender	Kang (2012), Narayan & Purkayastha (2011), Platt et al., (2016), Vancea & Olivera (2013), Witteborn (2014)
Feminized migration	Cabanes & Acedera (2012), Chib et al. (2014), Fortunati, Pertierra, & Vincent (2013), Francisco (2015), Hoang & Yeoh (2011, 2012), Katz (2010), Madianou (2012), McKay (2010, 2012), Miller & Madianou (2011), Parreñas (2005), Peng & Wong (2013), Rosel & Pascual (2016), Tolstokorova (2010), Uy-Tioco (2007), T. I. Yoon et al. (2011)
Emerging Research Areas	Baldassar, Wilding, Boccagni, & Merla (2017), Horn & Schweppe (2017), Share, Williams, & Kerrins (2018)
IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND CULTURAL REPRODUCTION	
Identity construction and cosmopolitanism	Bhimji (2008), Christensen (2012), Colic-Peisker (2010), Denis & Paulos (2011), Y. Kim (2011), Nedelcu (2012)
Identity construction and ethnic identity	Denis & Paulos (2011), Mainsah (2014), Marotta (2011), Shi (2005)
Identity construction and social media	Bozdag (2014), Karakusheva (2016), Lorenzana (2016), Nessi & Bailey (2014), Serafinelli (2016)
Cultural Reproduction and identity	Elias & Lemish (2009), K. Kim et al. (2009), Leurs (2015), Lewis (2006), Li & Chen (2014), C. Lin (2006), J.-H. Lin., Peng, Kim, Kim, & LaRose (2012), Maira (2010), Mandaville (2003), McAuliffe (2007), Park et al. (2014), Poole (2002), Sandel (2014)
NOTIONS OF HOME, HOMELAND, AND PLACE	
The Political Arena, Social Networks, Organizations	
The political arena	Bernal (2006), Chopra (2006), Conversi (2012), Ding (2008), Enteen (2006), Hickerson (2013), Kissau (2012), Marat (2016), Ong & Cabañes (2011), Therwath (2012)
Online networks, online organizations	Bachrach (2014), Bustamante (2010), Chan (2010), Cid & Ogando (2010), Demmers (2002), Graziano (2012), G. Green (2016), Hanafi (2005), Lal (2014), Mallapragada (2014a), Nagel & Staeheli (2010), Oiarzabal (2012), Ribeiro de Oliveira (2014), Siapera, Veikou, & Si (2013), Turner (2008)
Work conditions, social support structures	Biao (2007), Chen & Choi (2011), Engbersen & Dekker (2014), Hiller & Franz (2004) Janta & Ladkin (2013), Láštiová (2014), Montgomery (2008), Oh (2016)

The Transnational Family and the Impact of ICTs

In studies of the transnational family, a number of scholars have asserted that ICTs and new media have a salient impact on the family and its various configurations. Madianou (2016b) suggested that transnational family members “do family” (Morgan, 1999) through daily actions mediated by ICTs, incorporating distant ties and connections. According to Kaur and Shruti (2016), the appropriation of new media in transnational families generates affective bonds that support the family feeling that reproduces the transnational family. Several scholars elaborated on the notion of “connected presence” (Licoppe, 2004). Wilding (2006) described how connected presence establishes a sense of proximity among physically distant family members, blurring the distinction between absence and presence.

Baldassar, Nedelcu, Merla, and Wilding, (2016) introduced the concept of “ICT-based copresence” to encompass the various expressions of ICT-mediated communication in transnational families. The concept denotes the different expressions of being together that appear at the intersection of new technologies and the forms of communication in transnational families. The new forms of copresence materialize in “polymedia environments” (Madianou & Miller, 2013). In the polymedia environments, relationships are maintained and strengthened, possibilities for exchange of emotional support are rendered, and intimacy may be sustained across time and space. The concept has been extended to include various forms of copresence. For example, Madianou (2016a) put forward the notion of “ambient copresence” to describe the continuous peripheral awareness of distant others inherent in the “always on” culture of constant connectivity. Through ambient copresence, it is possible to be peripherally, yet constantly, aware of the actions and daily rhythms of distant others. Baldassar (2016a) elaborated on diverse modalities of ICT-based copresence; active, passive, immediate, and intermediate forms. In care circulation in the transnational family, the family members adapt various modalities of copresence and engage different types of new media in different contexts and at different points in time, thus establishing increasingly dynamic and multifaceted relationships across distance.

Feminized Migration and Gender Questions

Gender issues and “feminized migration” (Madianou, 2012) constitutes another research area that has attracted interest from scholars on digital diasporas. Access to and use of ICTs are inflected by broader social categories such as class, gender, and education. The appropriation of new media can reify gender hierarchies, create gendered spaces, and reinforce gendered divides (see, e.g., Platt et al., 2016). For example, Narayan and Purkayastha’s (2011) study of Hindu student websites illustrated the impact of new media on gendered identity construction. On the websites, representations of Hinduism and strong-woman imagery can reaffirm and reinforce gender hierarchies. Witteborn (2014) highlighted another aspect of new media and gender, the role of emotion in gendering digital practices. In the institutionalized accommodations for asylum seekers in Germany, the traditional values of shame and the notion of the promiscuous woman structured digital practices and reproduced gendered orders of technology.

A number of scholars have investigated feminized migration and appropriation of new media. In general, feminized migration denotes the recent trend of women migrating to take up mainly welfare and care professions. According to Fortunati, Pertierra, and Vincent (2013), feminized migration is based on labor market requisitions, such as domestic work in families of

industrialized countries and the establishment of newly emerging economies in South East Asia. Further, the increasing intraregional migration in the Asian region leads to a feminization of immigration (T, I. Yoon, Kim, & Eom, 2011). The notion encapsulates a number of problem areas reflecting the social costs of the migration, for example, distant and mediated mothering, parenting across borders, the position of children and fathers left behind, and the impact on gender and conjugal relations.

Scholars have discussed various aspects of the social costs of feminized migration. Tolstokorova's (2010) study of new media and Ukrainian migration illustrated the point. In Ukraine, migration and work abroad is one of the few ways for women to provide for the immediate financial care of their children. With the inclusion of new media, the women assume the roles of both providers and distant caregivers, and their family obligations are expanded. However, their new status position does not entail their empowerment; gendered roles are perpetuated. Madianou (2012) put forward that the use of cell phones allows for an empowered experience of distant mothering among Filipina migrants in London. However, Rosel and Pascual (2016) highlighted the ambiguous situation encountered by Filipina mothers in Singapore. Their research found that these mothers' experiences were marked by paradoxes, but the mothers still regard it as the best response possible to the situation imposed by their transnational separation. Hoang and Yeoh (2012), in a study of Vietnamese migrant parents and their left-behind children that focused on the children's principal carers in Vietnam, stated that access to ICTs helped members of transnational families maintain contact. However, ICTs do not have the power to bridge separations across time and space; they do not create a shared emotional and social field for family members.

Cabanes and Acedera (2012), Hoang and Yeoh (2011), and Tolstokorova (2010) investigated the role and position of the left-behind fathers in the migrant families. According to Tolstokorova (2010), in a study of a Ukrainian family, the changed gender roles of the left-behind fathers are only temporary: The reality does not entail a real transformation of the institution of fatherhood in Ukraine. Cabanes and Acedera's (2012) study on left-behind fathers and children in the Filipino family illustrated how use of new media and the mobile phone might mitigate some of the effects of migration, even as it has the potential to complicate conjugal power relations.

A couple of studies on feminized migration have emphasized the left-behind children's perspectives and feelings. For example, Parreñas' (2005) study on young adults in the Philippines illustrated the children's experiences of communication with absent mothers through SMS and phone calls. Miller and Madianou's (2011) study of UK-based Filipina migrants and their left-behind children included ethnographic research on both mothers and left-behind children. The research results illustrated how, although the mothers generally felt empowered by the use of mobile phones in their mothering roles, the attitude of the left-behind children was more ambivalent.

Upcoming Research Areas

The intersection of aging, migration, and new media constitutes a rather neglected area in studies on digital diasporas. However, scholars have showed an increasing interest for the subject (see, e.g., Baldassar et al., 2017; Horn & Schweppe, 2017). Growing interest is focused on topics such as the implications of the generational gap, elderly people's ability to apprehend and embrace use of new media, and the potential of new media to uphold intergenerational relationships and

solidarity. For example, Share, Williams, and Kerrins (2018) illustrated how Skype functions as an important tool for supporting care and intergenerational solidarity. Skype is a key tool in displaying family practices, where family members are engaged in meaning-making practices of doing family.

Identity Construction and Cultural Reproduction

A number of the studies on digital diasporas elaborated the role and implications of new media in identity construction and cultural reproduction among migrants. For example, Denis and Paulos (2011) suggested that ethnic identity is constituted by the content that the ethnic minorities produce, represent, and consume on the Web. A group of scholars have engaged with new media and cosmopolitanism in identity construction (see, e.g., Bhimji, 2008; Christensen, 2012; Colic-Peisker, 2010; Y. Kim, 2011; Nedelcu, 2012). Further, scholars have taken Hall's (1996) concept of ethnic identity as starting point in discussions on identity construction and new media. Shi (2005) described identities as social constructions and illuminated the central role of ethnic media in identity formation. The ethnic media had a socializing function and created a sense of cultural coherence and unity. Mainsah (2014), in discussing Norwegian youth of African descent, illustrated how cultural identities build community ties and ways of belonging that are created at the intersection of online and offline spaces and local and global contexts. It is the ambivalent tension between difference and sameness and between rootedness and dislocation that articulates the heterogeneity of the diasporic experience and identity formation (Hall, 1994).

The implications of Web 2.0 and social media in identity construction have drawn the attention of scholars. Bozdag (2014) and Karakusheva (2016) illustrated how ethnic identities are constructed in the social interactions of everyday life and in the communication practices on social media and Web 2.0. According to Serafinelli (2016, p. 350), through the mediation of social media and the use of smart mobile devices, individuals' practices of identity construction are altered in maintenance of long-distance social relationships. This author found Italian migrants in the UK appropriating devices such as Facebook and photo sharing practices such as selfies as means for identity construction.

Religion plays an important role in identity construction and cultural reproduction in general. In studies on digital diasporas, for example, Lewis (2006) discussed British Muslims from South Asian backgrounds and illustrated how online religious expressions and online religious movements affect the authority positions of Islam and the ulama (community of Muslim scholars) in the group. McAuliffe's (2007) research showed how appropriation of new media influenced internal religious differentiation and attitudes toward discourses of national belonging among children of Iranian migrants. He identified two distinct long-distance imaginings of national belonging that mediated the diasporic context.

The role of new media in cultural integration processes in the diasporic contexts is illustrated in, for example, Elias and Lemish's (2009) study of teenage immigrants from the former Soviet Union to Israel. For the teenagers, the Internet played an important role in their cultural integration processes. The authors concluded that the virtual life of the young immigrants might be instrumental in shaping their evolving identity during the period of social and material disadvantage. The new technologies can sustain the teenagers in the difficulties stemming from the relocation and resettlement into a new and sometimes hostile environment.

New Media and the Notions of Home, Homeland, and Place

Generally, in the discussion on the diaspora, the notion of home and one's relationship to the homeland holds a central position. Members of diasporic groups are considered to be linked together by a common interest in their location of origin and a foundational identity. These components of being also are integrated into the concept of the transnational community, albeit in a more fluid way that integrates both local and translocal dimensions (Hiller & Franz, 2004). Several studies on digital diasporas included discussions on the notion of home, the homeland, and place and elaborated the new aspects of these conditions that appear at the intersection of migration and the new technologies. Rinnawi (2012) suggested that Satellite TV and ICTs function as mediators between migrants in the diaspora and their homelands, and new media might strengthen one's sense of belonging to the homeland. Collins (2009) illustrated the ambivalent experience of the impact of the new media. The new technologies can diminish the distance between the experience of "here" and "home," even though the interaction may be characterized by inclusion and exclusion and processes of surveillance and disciplining. Burrell and Anderson (2008) and Narayan et al. (2011) pointed out that the focus on home country versus host country in studies of new media and migration need to be extended to include multiple host countries and a global view.

Some scholars rendered the ICT-mediated relationship to the home in more complex terms, including aspects such as bodily and emotional experiences and perceptions of place. For example, Alinejad (2011) argued that diasporas rely on emotive and embodied ties to the diasporic home. Kang (2011) elaborated on the role of the body and bodily-based perceptions of space in migrants' Internet-mediated reproduction of the homeland. Kang included three key embodied elements of the spatial experiences of the homeland: the vicarious travel of the body, everyday spatiotemporal practices, and transnational bodily contact constructed through the use of Internet. Polson (2015) demonstrated how the experience of place is formed by relationships and online and offline communicative interactions, where communication practices have the potential to create a sense of belonging and attachment to a place.

Impact of New Media on the Political Arena, Social Networks, and Organizations

In the political arena, ICTs give way to new dynamics. They enhance migrants' possibilities for taking an active part in their home country's politics, engage in political activities that span borders and cultures (Kissau, 2012), and engage in social and political activism. Some examples on the topics that scholars have discussed include online representations of identity politics discourses (Chopra, 2006), online politics and the role of online forums in the spread of long-distance nationalism (Conversi, 2012; Enteen, 2006; Therwath, 2012), the impact of new media in transnational civic and political participation (Hickerson, 2013; Marat, 2016; Ong & Cabañes, 2011), and the construction of nationhood (Bernal, 2006). For example, Ding (2008) elaborated on how the increasing use of ICTs by the Chinese diaspora plays a vital role in Chinese politics and China's efforts at building a positive national image.

ICTs and new media change and transform social and political organizational forms. ICTs have created new spaces and forms of collective expression, identification, and belonging. Online diaspora networks, as well as groups and associations on social network sites such as Facebook, have turned into a means for community formation, interaction, information dissemination, and

social support. Hanafi (2005) and Nagel and Staeheli (2010) elaborated on the role of online networks for the Palestinian diaspora. The al-Awda network is devoted to securing the right of Palestinians to return to the land and homes that they lost during the establishment of the Israeli state (Nagel & Staeheli, 2010), while the PALESTA network, involving predominantly Palestinian professionals in the diaspora, focuses on harnessing the scientific and technological knowledge of expatriate professionals for the benefit of development efforts in Palestine (Hanafi, 2005). Oiarzabal's (2012) study of Basque diaspora association groups on Facebook illustrated how the appropriation of Facebook strengthened the group's communication strategies and information dissemination.

The new technologies influence and impact work conditions and social support structures for migrants. The recruitment processes integrate new forms and assets; for example, social media platforms and virtual support networks are integrated into job recruitment processes (Janta & Ladkin, 2013). Montgomery (2008) illustrated how the support structures among transnational professionals have changed. The previous ethnic immigrant enclaves of transnational professionals have become separated from concrete places and new communication tools have given way to other spaces of support: virtual enclaves. Further, the introduction of the new technologies have provided resources for building social capital and computer-mediated social support (Chen & Choi, 2011; Hiller & Franz, 2004). Oh's (2016) study of the "MissyUSA" site, an online community for Korean-American women, illustrates the case. In this group, social capital and social support structures are created by the members through transmission of information and through positive emotional reactions.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSIONS

The inclusion of new technologies as a focus in migration studies has opened new theoretical and conceptual discussion areas, as well as a renewed focus on established theoretical and conceptual discussions. For example, scholars have paid great attention to the appropriation of the new technologies in migrant groups and the notions of space and time, disembedding (Giddens, 1990), and deterritorializing (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983). Discussion areas such as the relationship between the online and the offline, virtual and real, and technology and the human have emerged. Scholars have investigated concepts such as virtual community, the online social space, and the diasporic public sphere, and have elaborated on the implications of new technologies on theoretical constructions such as cosmopolitanism and mediation. In this section, I expound on the discussion areas that have appeared. An overview of the scholars engaged in these areas of research is provided in Table 3.

Implications of the New Media on Time and Space

Notions of time, space, place, and locality occupy a central position in analyses of digital diasporas. Factors such as new forms of media, the increased flow of information and ideas, and social and cultural forms of expression that transcend national, cultural, and social borders have had a deep impact. The reliability and constraints of notions such as place, space, and time are transformed, leading to an "intensification and time-space-distanciation" (Giddens, 1990, p. 14) of social relations. In discussions of digital diasporas, Giddens' (1990, 1991) concepts of disembedding and

Table 3. Theoretical and Conceptual Discussions and Authors of Studies of Digital Diasporas.

Discussion Areas	Authors
TIME AND SPACE	
Disembedding	Benítez (2012), Fong et al. (2010)
Deterritorialization	Alinejad (2011), Marotta (2011), Nedelcu (2012), Polson (2015), Van Den Bos & Nell (2006)
BODY, TECHNOLOGY AND THE HUMAN	
Interactions	Adams & Ghose (2003), Alinejad (2011), Costa-Pinto (2014), Kang (2011), Longhurst (2013), Marotta (2011)
Ontology	Adams & Ghose (2003), Baldassar (2016a), Skop & Adams (2009), K. Yoon (2016)
THE CONCEPT OF VIRTUAL COMMUNITY	
	Ackah & Newman (2003), Adams & Ghose (2003), Diamandaki (2003), Hiller & Franz (2004), Kang (2011), Marat (2016), Mitra (2008), Shi (2005), Skop & Adams (2009)
THE SOCIAL SPACE AND ITS DIGITAL EXPRESSIONS	
	Bozdag (2014), Gillespie, Herbert, & Anderson (2010), Hepp (2009), Horst (2006), K. Kim et al. (2009), Mahler (2001), Mainsah (2014), Marotta (2011), Nedelcu (2012), Skop (2014)
THE DIASPORIC PUBLIC SPHERE	
	Benítez (2012), Bernal (2006), Cunningham (2001), Georgiou (2012a), Hsu (2013), Kissau (2012), Laguerre, 2010b, Nagel & Staeheli (2010), Ong (2003), Parham (2004), Shi (2005), Therwath (2012)
COSMOPOLITANISM	
	Bhimji (2008), Christensen (2012), Colic-Peisker (2010), Y. Kim (2011), Nedelcu (2012), Nessi & Bailey (2014)
MEDIATION	
	Benítez (2006), Hepp, Bozdag, & Suna (2013), Mallapragada (2010), Mandujano, (2016)

re-embedding have been introduced as a means to grasp the new features that have proliferated. According to Giddens (1990, p. 53), new technologies are disembedding: Time, space and social life are reorganized and social relations are lifted out from local contexts of interaction and restructured across indefinite spans of time–space. The presence and action of the “absent other,” the one who is “locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction” is taken into consideration (Giddens, 1990, p. 18). Fong, Cao, and Chan (2010) elaborated on Giddens’ (1990, 1991) ideas and suggested that transnational contacts represent re-embedding activities that help migrants reconnect with local structures and institutions in the home country despite their physical absence. According to Benítez (2006), media are re-embedding social mechanisms that connect diverse time–space social contexts and make possible mediated communication practices among multiple family, sociocultural, and political networks. Benítez’s (2006) study showed that the informants’ appropriation of the Internet led to new forms of mediated family reunification and the reorganization of sociocultural interactions over time and space.

A similar interest has appeared for the concepts of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, introduced by Deleuze and Guattari (1972/1983) to denote the distancing (Giddens, 1990) of cultural subjects and objects from a certain location in space and time. In studies on digital diasporas, it has been suggested that migrants negotiate their identities through deterritorialization

and reterritorialization processes (Alinejad, 2011). Moreover, socialization processes in lifestyles shaped by mobility, instant communication, and remote social relations increasingly take place in a deterritorialized context (Nedelcu, 2012). The appropriation of ICTs among migrants generates new patterns of socialization and identification. It renders possibilities for migrants to act at a distance in real time to form multiple belongings and develop deterritorialized identities (Alinejad, 2011; Nedelcu, 2012). Marotta (2011), discussing the notion of home, stated that culture has been deterritorialized and decoupled from place, leading to multiple allegiances to places. The notion of home becomes a diverse category.

The Body, Technology, and the Human

The nature and qualities of online interaction constitute a well-debated area. In the 1990s, concepts such as the “cyborg” (Haraway, 2000), the “disembodied self” (Rheingold, 2000), and “virtual bodies” (Slater, 1998) were introduced to capture the character of the interaction that took place via the screen. Contemporary studies on digital diasporas integrate discussions on the essence of the interactions that take place in online contexts and elaborate on dichotomies such as online and offline (Marotta, 2011), the virtual and the real (Costa-Pinto, 2014), and the notion of body in online activities (Adams & Ghose, 2003; Alinejad, 2011; Kang, 2011; Longhurst, 2013). Longhurst (2013) elaborated on the performative relationships between technologies, spaces, and bodies. According to her, people develop and maintain relational and emotional links through technological interfaces. Thus, both cyberspace and real space are experienced through the body, and bodies and spaces are entangled.

Another strain of discussion concerns the ontological status of the relationship between society and technology, human and machine. Some of the proponents in this discussion are theoreticians Haraway (2000) and Latour (1993). The main argument put forward is that society and technology, human and machine, should not be divided conceptually. Bodies are “incorporated” within the machines they use. Discussing digital diasporas, Adams and Ghose (2003) and Skop and Adams (2009) elaborated on this notion, stating that technology alone does not constitute a virtual environment in which people engage in cultural syncretism. Rather, the virtual environment is the product of human activities that create and share meaning in and through technologies. Technologies that extend or act on the body not only are given meanings by people, but they also give meanings to people. The argument is reflected in discussions on domestication (see, e.g., Silverstone, 1993), suggesting that technology use can be understood as a dynamic and dialectic process between the technology, the users, and specific contexts (K. Yoon, 2016). Baldassar (2016a) extended the topic in her discussions on polymedia and relationships, and introduced the concept of “vibrant matter” (see also Bennett, 2010) to explain the relationship between the human and technology. In a polymedia environment, the person becomes joined with technology in both a physical and metaphysical sense (Baldassar, 2016a, p. 158).

The Concept of Virtual Community

Scholars working on digital diasporas have paid great attention to the concept of “virtual community,” introduced by Rheingold (2000) to describe how, with online tools, individuals form online sociality and webs of personal relationships in cyberspace. Several scholars have discussed and debated the concept. Some scholars suggested that virtual communities build on existing

community structures (Hiller & Franz, 2004). Therefore, the virtual community could be perceived as an ideal placeless replacement of the geographically based community—an online space for cultural practices that come into existence when offline resources and spaces for communication are lacking (see Kang, 2011, and Marat, 2016, for discussions on this topic). Others described the virtual community as a new kind of community, disembodied and independent of space and time (Hiller & Franz, 2004). A sense of community emerged through common interests, shared system of beliefs, values and norms, and a collective sense of belonging (Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz, 2014). Benedict Anderson's (2006) concept of "imagined community" has been brought in to explain the features of the online community (Mitra, 2008; Shi, 2005). For example, Shi (2005) stated that virtual communities generate collective diasporic imaginations that highlight the shared aspects of individual identities in terms of common culture, geography, and history, thus binding discrete subjects into an imagined community. Adams and Ghose (2003) and Skop and Adams (2009) put forward a differing interpretation of the virtual community. They introduced the concept "bridgespace" to denote the various media flows maintained by the Indian diaspora in the United States. The bridgespace functions as a means of cultural preservation, maintenance of ethnic identity, and cosmopolitan lifestyles.

The Social Space and its Digital Expressions

Two well-established theoretical concepts—the social space and the public sphere—have resurfaced in discussions on digital diasporas. The concepts "social field" and "transnational field" were initially introduced in discussions on transnationalism by scholars Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) to describe the multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are exchanged, organized, and transformed in the transnational setting. Discussions on the relationship between new media and the transnational social field appeared in the early years of the 2000s (Mahler, 2001) and has been further elaborated in discussions on digital diasporas. For example, Horst (2006) discussed the use of the cell phone and its implication for everyday communications in the transnational social field. Scholars have suggested a variety of terms to describe the new configurations. They have, for example, suggested that the Internet constitutes an intermediary transnational social space: a liminal site (Nedelcu, 2012), diasporic "contact zones" (Gillespie, Herbert, & Andersson, 2010), and "diasporic resources" that establish "diasporic spaces" through new and social media (Mainsah, 2014). According to Bozdog (2014), the social space could be described as a "communication space" constructed through mediated or nonmediated communication practices. Further, he ascribed the media content a significant position in meaning construction and formation of identity, community and, culture in everyday life in the diaspora.

The Diasporic Public Sphere

The concept of public sphere (Habermas, 1991) has entered the discussion on digital diasporas, illustrated in concepts such as diasporic public sphere (Nagel & Staeheli, 2010) and transnational public sphere (Bernal, 2006). The creation of computer-mediated diasporic public spheres is facilitated by the decentralized nature, participatory, unregulated, and egalitarian qualities of online media (see, e.g., Benítez, 2012; Bernal, 2006; Kissau, 2012; Laguerre, 2010b; Nagel & Staeheli, 2010; Shi, 2005). Media production has become deprofessionalized and new ways of documenting,

publishing, presenting, and communicating ideas and information have emerged, turning media production into a public feature that is embedded in everyday life (Burrell & Anderson, 2008). In the diasporic public sphere, the boundaries between the public and the private are collapsed (McNair, 2008) and new opportunities for displaying and promoting dissenting voices and minority and subaltern views emerge (Therwath, 2012). Further, the diasporic public sphere might provide a political alternative to the control of centralized state media apparatuses (Georgiou, 2012a). As Hsu (2013) put it, digital media have enabled the creation of generative spaces for individuals to share personal and collective discontentment and opposition to the prevailing social conditions and dominant ideology. As Bernal (2006) indicated, the transnational public sphere is an emotion-laden and creative space where diasporas online may invent new forms of citizenship, community, and political practices.

The Concept of Cosmopolitanism in Studies of Digital Diasporas

In recent literature on digital diasporas, the concept of cosmopolitanism has resurged as an analytical tool. For example, Y. Kim (2011) suggested that cosmopolitanism represents a prime term of analysis in studies on migration and mobility. Globalization, greater frequency of travel, mobility, transnational media cultural flows, and the vision of a global, hybrid, and rootless culture has led to an intensification of cosmopolitan identifications (Christensen, 2012, Y. Kim, 2011). Generally, the concept denotes a variety of developments and phenomena (Christensen, 2012), such as a cultural phenomenon (Hannerz, 1992, 2005), a sociological discourse (Beck 2002, 2003), and a moral parameter (Appiah, 1997; Nussbaum, 1997). The cosmopolitan subject is frequently described as an elite category. For example, Hannerz (1992) put forward a distinction between cosmopolitans, locals, and transnationals. Nessi and Bailey (2014), following Calhoun (2002), described cosmopolitans as citizens of the world who have a lifestyle that allows them to be frequent travelers and easily entering and exiting polities and social relations around the world. According to Colic-Peisker (2010), the cosmopolitan subject is constituted by highly mobile elites. However, the elite view of the cosmopolitan subject has been challenged. Clifford (1997) put forward the notion of “discrepant cosmopolitanism,” critiquing notions of cosmopolitanism that are based in class or ethnocentric frameworks. Werbner (2006) discussed “vernacular cosmopolitanism,” a type of cosmopolitanism that also integrates local, rooted, and historically and spatially situated dimensions. As Y. Kim (2011) stated, following Robbins (1998), a wide variety of cosmopolitanisms may exist in various transnational contexts, such as European and nonEuropean forms, stronger and weaker forms, and thickly textured and thin forms.

Scholars have expounded on the appropriation of new media and social media and the construction of cosmopolitanism and a cosmopolitan identity. For example, Nedelcu (2012) stated that factors such as new media and communication imply a dialogical and reflexive condition. ICTs generate new ways of living together, new connected lifestyles, and new ways of acting transnationally that enhances a cosmopolitan mind-set. Christensen (2012) asserted a cosmopolitan identity formed in the intersection of online communicative practice and offline spatial formations. The importance of new media in the construction of a cosmopolitan identity is affirmed by the study by Nessi and Bailey (2014). They illustrated how elite migrants express a cosmopolitan outlook by gaining and managing their “cosmopolitan capital” in online contexts. Colic-Peisker (2010) suggested that subjects with high mobility combined with a strong professional identity are likely to adopt cosmopolitan attitudes. For TKWs, their globally recognized profession forms their principal

identification. Professional networks supported by Internet communication, open to anyone in the same professional class, regardless of ethnic and national boundaries and affiliations, functions as nodes for the construction of identity of belonging and a cosmopolitanism outlook.

The Value of the Concept of Mediation in Studies of Digital Diasporas

A theoretical area highlighted in discussions on digital diasporas is embodied in concepts such as mediation and mediatization. The concept of mediation generally denotes the relationship between media, society, culture, and peoples' daily life. Couldry and Hepp (2013) suggested that the concepts are used to capture the broad consequences of media for everyday life and its practical organization. Livingstone (2009, p. 4) referred to mediation as "the metaprocess by which everyday practices and social relations are increasingly shaped by mediating technologies and media organizations." Silverstone (1999, 2003) drew on the concept of mediation to describe the omnipresent and multidirectional nature of media's contribution to the "texture" of life, the dialectical interaction between media and one's broader life and culture. The concept has become increasingly theorized. For example, Couldry and Hepp (2013) suggested the key theoretical concept mediatization to denote the processes inherent in the proliferation of forms of media and media's embedding in everyday life.

In discussions of digital diasporas, scholars frequently use concepts such as mediation, re-mediation, and mediatization, even though the terms often remain vaguely defined and rarely investigated. Some scholars discussed explicitly the use of these concepts in their studies. For instance, Benítez (2006) and Mandujano (2016) turned to J. B. Thompson's (2005) interactional theory of mediation. Benítez (2006) illustrated how immigrants maintained contact with their home country through various forms of interaction: face-to-face interaction (i.e., copresence), mediated interaction, and quasimediated interaction (see also Thompson, 2005). Hepp, Bozdog, and Suna (2013) drew on the concept of mediatization and introduced the notion of mediatized migrants to denote how the articulation of a migrant's identity is deeply interwoven with and molded by various forms of media. Mallapragada (2010) introduced another notion of mediation in her analysis of Hindu temple websites and the textual and discursive practices used in the representations of the temple online. Following Bolter and Grusin (1999), she suggested that the concept re-mediation is useful in analyzing the processes through which older media forms—such as photographs of deities, Hindu calendar art, and the analogue sacred texts—are repurposed, refashioned, and re-mediated on the temple's sites, thereby creating a "desktop deity culture."

METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS

In research on digital diasporas, the theoretical and methodological discussions and debates have been framed in a broad interdisciplinary context. In this section, I look closer at the methodological approaches that researchers deployed in studies of digital diasporas. Ardévol and Gómez-Cruz (2014) distinguished three methodological approaches to studies of the Internet: virtual ethnography, connective approaches, and studies of the Internet in everyday practices. I find those methodological approaches useful in classifying the various approaches in the study of digital diasporas. I include as well a fourth category—digital humanities and big data research—that has emerged recently in this field.

The approaches suggested by Ardévol and Gómez-Cruz (2014) evolved in parallel with the various Internet development periods. Virtual ethnography, also known as ethnographies of cyberspace, appeared from the Internet beginnings to the late 1990s. With the expansion of the World Wide Web, connective studies of the relationship and interconnection between the online/offline spheres became common. The third approach, Internet in everyday practices, corresponds to the introduction of Web 2.0 and social media. The fourth category, methodologies developed in the digital humanities, is an emerging research area in studies of digital diasporas. It can briefly be described as big data research, where computational methods are used to investigate various aspects of the use of new media among migrant and diasporic groups. The categorization of these methodological approaches is tentative; the area is complex and often the approaches are used in an overlapping and complementary ways. I start this thematic section by positioning the discussions on the digital diaspora and method in the wider field of media and communication studies and media ethnography. Then, I turn to the suggested classification of methodological approaches in studies of digital diasporas. I give an overview of scholars working in the various methodological areas in Table 4.

Media and Communication Studies and Migration

Media and communication studies constitute a broad, diverse, and interdisciplinary complex, involving the humanities and the social sciences as well as portions of the natural sciences. Diminescu and Loveluck (2014) suggested that migration studies and media studies share common ground, and according to Ponzanesi and Leurs (2014), migration and the discourses on new media

Table 4. Overview over Authors and Methodological Approaches Applied in Studies of Digital Diasporas.

Methodological Approach	Author
ETHNIC MINORITY MEDIA STUDIES	Georgiou (2012b), Gillespie et al. (2010), Ogan & D'haenens (2012), Rinnawi (2012), Shi (2005), Yin (2015), T. I. Yoon et al. (2011)
SOCIAL SCIENCE METHODS	Fong et al. (2010), Kissau (2012), Oiarzabal (2012), Skop & Adams (2009)
MEDIA ETHNOGRAPHY	Baldassar (2008), Benítez (2006), Bernal (2006), Biao (2007), Bozdog (2014), Brown (2016), Colic-Peisker (2010), Harney (2013), Y, Kim (2011), Longhurst (2013), Madianou (2012), Maira (2010), Marat (2016), Miller & Madianou (2011), Mitchel (2008), Nagel & Staeheli (2010), Rinnawi (2012), Robertson et al. (2016), Schier (2016), Shi (2005), Tanikella (2009), Tripp & Herr-Stephenson (2009), Wilding (2006), Witteborn (2014)
VIRTUAL ETHNOGRAPHY	Adams & Ghose (2003), Andersson (2007), Chopra (2006), Joshi (2010), Mallapragada (2010, 2014b), Mitra (2008), Mitra & Gajjala (2008), Parker & Song (2007), Raman & Kasturi (2014), Scheifinger (2009, 2010), Siapera (2005)
CONNECTIVE APPROACHES	Burrell & Anderson (2008), Christensen (2012), Costa-Pinto (2014), Halilovich (2013), Marotta (2011), Mitra (2006), Polson (2011), Witteborn (2014, 2015), Yin (2015)
MEDIA PRACTICE	Alinejad (2011), Bork-Hüffer (2016), Kang (2011), Leurs (2014), Lorenzana (2016), Murthy (2010), Nessi & Bailey (2014), Nishitani (2014)
DIGITAL HUMANITIES	Diminescu & Loveluck (2014), Hsu (2013), Narayan & Purkayastha (2011), Narayan et al. (2011), NurMuhammad, Horst, Papoutsaki, & Dodson (2016), Plaza (2010), Purkayastha, (2009), Therwath (2012)

technologies, digital connectedness, and trans-medial practices are interconnected. According to Borkert et al. (2009), four major strands are discernible in studies of new media and digital diasporas: studies on the effect of media on cultural identities, audience studies, representation of diasporic minorities in the media, and diasporic ethnic minority media.

Researchers investigating digital diasporas have applied various approaches from the field of media and communication. For example, Rinnawi (2012), Shi (2005), and Yin (2015) discussed the effects of the use of ethnic media and online homeland media in migrant groups. Further, some scholars used social science methods, such as quantitative methods and statistical analysis, in their analyses of new media use in digital diasporas. Kissau's (2012) research illustrated the point: He relied on quantitative methods to determine the degree and characteristics of migrants' political online and offline activities.

Media Ethnography and Studies of Digital Diasporas

Ethnographic studies are a well-established research method in studies of communication, media, and the Internet. In studies on digital diasporas, scholars use the ethnographic approach in various ways, such as media ethnography, ethnographic interviews, and ethnographic case studies. In the media ethnographic approach, the focus is on understanding media as a cultural form, investigating active audiences by exploring genre readings, issues of race and gender, components of family living, and identity (Murphy, 1999). Benítez (2006), following Murphy and Kraidy (2003), stated that the aim of the media ethnographic approach is to comprehend how people are engaged in processes of media reception and cultural practices located in particular time–space contexts of interaction. Scholars should examine people's everyday relations with media texts from the intersections of different locales—home, school, workplace, and neighborhoods, among others. Witteborn (2014) relied on the method of ethnography of communication (Hymes, as cited in Witteborn, 2014) to investigate how “communicative practice created meaningful social life in situated locales” (p. 77). In her study, Witteborn (2014) made repeated participant and unstructured observations in various sites where people engaged with digital practices, as well as collected statements, and then analyzed where, when, and why people put forward a specific comment. In the analysis, she focused on the setting, the participants, and the goals and outcomes of the communicative acts and practice.

Some scholars apply the methods of ethnographic interviews and ethnographic case studies in their analyses. Shi (2005) deployed the method of ethnographic interviews in his research and stated that ethnographic interviews are one of the most common and powerful ways to grasp the meanings that people ascribe to their daily lives. The uniqueness of the method lies in its open-ended style that often allows the researcher to get unintended but valuable information or observation. Wilding (2006) suggested that an ethnographic case study is a valid methodological tool in the research of migration and new media. Specifically, Wilding (2006, p. 139) noted that it is in the ethnography of life as it is lived that researchers see the delicate balance of both utopian and dystopian tendencies in the impact of ICTs on people's everyday lives.

Virtual Ethnography: The Discourse of the Digital Diaspora

Virtual ethnography was introduced as a research method in the 1990s, influenced by for example Rheingold's (1993) discussion on cyberspace. According to Ardévol and Gómez-Cruz (2014), the

method implies that new social and cultural patterns flourished in cyberspace, giving birth to a brand new cyberculture to explore. In virtual ethnography, the focus is placed primarily on the online context and content-focused studies of the Web. The Web is seen as a collection of texts, thus the focus for the studies centers on web pages and their content, texts, and images and the studies are based in discursive or rhetorical analyses (Schneider & Foot, 2004). According to Kang (2011), the methodological approach has had a continuing influence, and it has been popular in recent empirical studies of diasporic Internet use.

A number of studies on digital diasporas have explored virtual worlds and their online shapes and forms. For example, Andersson (2007), Scheifinger (2009, 2010), and Mallapragada (2010, 2014b) explored websites and how they impact the migrant community, identity construction in migrant groups, and migrants' relationships to their homelands. Adams and Ghose (2003) and Joshi (2010) elaborated on Indian matrimonial websites, noting that the matrimonial sites target the diaspora population as well as groups in the home country.

Studies by Chopra (2006), Mitra (2008), and Siapera (2005) illustrated well the method of discursive analysis that is put forward in this approach. Siapera (2005) investigated virtual communities through analysis of the discourse presented on websites and in online forums. Chopra (2006) explored modes of representing collective identity in cyberspace through a study of websites and a close reading of selected virtual texts. Specifically, Chopra used a cultural studies framework: The websites selected for analysis were understood as discursive objects or texts located in economies of technology and culture. Mitra (2008), who analyzed blogs, noted that the Internet is composed of texts, images, and artifacts. Through the method of discursive analysis, Mitra demonstrated the possibility of understanding how the person who writes a blog produces a specific identity narrative.

Connective Approaches in Studies of Digital Diasporas

In the middle of the first decade of the 2000s, interest in virtual ethnography and exclusively online studies of the Internet decreased. Changes and developments in media forms and media usage, and the increasingly pervasive presence of Internet in everyday practices, led to a proliferation of studies focusing on the socialization process inherent in online participation. Scholars advocated that fieldwork should be undertaken both inside and outside the screen. In such research, the distinctions between the online and offline spheres would be bridged and the relationships between online and offline interactions could be investigated. As Ardévol and Gómez-Cruz (2014, p. 6) stated, a conceptual shift appeared in which the focus was put on identifying the productive social process of "siting" instead of identifying "sites" as pre-existing places for doing fieldwork. The new approach led to an unbinding of ethnographic research practices from location, whether physical or virtual.

Researchers of digital diasporas have used the connective approach to interpret the distinctions and interconnections between the online and offline spheres, the virtual and physical spaces. Concepts such as "cybernetic space" (Mitra, 2006) and "digital heterotopias" Witteborn (2014) illustrated the specific nature of the synthesis of real spaces and virtual spaces. Costa-Pinto (2014) emphasized the symbiosis within the real and the virtual in the migration experience. Migrants conduct their daily lives in real and virtual dimensions. From this perspective, migration can mean a change in physical place, though not necessarily in cyberspace.

The methodologies used in connective approaches are both complex and diverse in strains and approaches. Christensen (2012) and Burrell and Anderson (2008) combined online and offline methodological approaches to bridge the distinction between the real and the virtual. For example, Burrell and Anderson (2008) situated the field site in the context of everyday life, combining investigations in cyberspace—that is, in discussion forums and websites—with fieldwork and participant observation in the physical spaces frequented by the group. Further, they integrated informal in-home interviews in the study. Halilovich (2013) rejected a classical ethnography of fixed places and cultures and combined conventional and digital ethnography in his study. He interacted with the informants through mobile phones and in various social media as well as in physical locations. According to Halilovich (2013), the informants' social networks, life stories, and experiences were performed and sustained both in real space and in cyberspace. The distinction between the real and imagined was transcended.

The Methodology of Media Practice

Media practice constitutes a third methodological approach in studies of digital diasporas. The proliferation of Web 2.0 and social media led to shifts and new patterns in communicative forms. Social media promote communicative interactivity, user-generated content, and creativity (Blank & Reisdorf, 2012; Coleman, 2010; Oiarzabal, 2012). As Oiarzabal (2012) stated, implicit in social media is the assumption that people want to share information: It allows users to provide content on the Web and to share it in an unprecedented manner. The range of practices related to or oriented toward the media has expanded (Couldry, 2004) and the use of multiple media has become a regular feature of everyday life—embedded in practices of sociality, identity construction, and cultural production (Ardévol & Gómez-Cruz, 2014).

The approaches put forward in this category reflect the proliferation of new forms of media and the transformations in communicative forms. Deuze (2006, p. 66) used the term “bricolage” to describe the highly personalized, continuous, and more or less autonomous assembly, disassembly, and reassembly of mediated reality. Murthy's (2010) study illustrated the case. He explored how the creation of progressive virtual spaces is facilitated by music websites, discussion forums, social networking sites, and IP-based technologies. Factors such as viral spreads and flows between transnational spaces can build up progressive energies that affirm and make identities dynamic. In his methodological approach, Murthy (2010) aspired to be absorbed into the sphere of virtuality and reality. Ethnographic research (i.e., participant observation and interviewing) was conducted both online and offline, and he took part in Facebook and MySpace pages, discussion groups, and blogs. Further he conducted virtual interviews by e-mail, Twitter, and Facebook messages.

A group of scholars emphasized the importance of integrating factors such as embodiment, emotions, and sensory impressions in the methodological approaches employed in studies of digital diasporas. For example, Alinejad (2011) elaborated on the notion of “transnational embodiment” and underscored the importance of the embodied experience in transnational diaspora identifications, whereas Bork-Hüffer (2016) put forward the notion of “place perception” to illustrate how digital media affects attachments to and sensuous experiences of a place.

Nessi and Bailey's (2014) study illustrated methods used in research on social networking sites (SNSs). These authors combined qualitative, textual, and ethnographic methods in their study of elite migrants and SNS use. They interacted in Facebook communities and groups, created online profiles, and observed and established relationships with members in the groups and on the

pages. They analyzed the informants' online profiles and the choices the informants made when they constructed their own profiles. Further, they examined the informants' membership in Facebook groups and the content that the informants uploaded in the various forums. They complemented the study with online questionnaires and online and offline in-depth interviews.

Nishitani (2014) elaborated on the notion of media flows (see also Couldry, 2008) in her analysis. In her research group, family relations were expressed as diasporic dramas, that is, communication flows that are seamless with the everyday lives, but also disrupted and asymmetrical. Communication technologies played a significant role in maintaining multidirectional ties among the informants. However, ICTs were only one of various means the informants used to connect with others. Messages and events that started with online interaction were extended through phone calls and discussed in face-to-face conversations. Methodologically, Nishitani followed the communication flows and media events across the various media through participant observation of the daughters' and mothers' everyday lives. The aim was to capture the overall dynamics of the communication flows and how they were harmoniously kept or disrupted.

Digital Humanities as Research Method in Studies on Digital Diasporas

Digital humanities have entered into the discussions on digital diasporas as an emerging research methodology (see, e.g., Ponzanesi & Leurs, 2014). The concept of digital humanities is broad and, so far, vaguely defined. In general, it denotes the combining of methodologies from traditional humanities disciplines with methods from computing and digital technology. Digital humanities as a methodological approach renders the possibility for researchers to access huge digital databases with the goal of archiving information, visualizing networks, designing cartographies, and plucking, systematizing, and creating typologies for user-generated content produced in social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Wikipedia, and Flickr (Ponzanesi & Leurs, 2014).

The digital humanities method employs computational methods and a variety of data-mining techniques designed to extract useful information from Web data (Hsu, 2013). Hyperlink analysis and content analysis are the main methods used in research of digital diasporas. Hyperlink analysis takes into account the interactions between and among websites: the number of incoming and outgoing links, the "missing" links, and the various strategies of promotion and discretion used in the linking practices (Therwath, 2012). Hyperlink analysis is, at its core, a form of network analysis. It provides a means of identifying the constitutive elements and boundaries within a network as it exists online (Carpenter & Jose, 2012). Quantitative content analysis is used for analysis of textual big data produced by new media and social media. In content analysis, researchers quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of the media content, as well as make inferences about the messages within the texts, the authors, the audience, and the culture and time of which these are a part.

A couple of studies on digital diasporas integrate methods developed in the digital humanities. For example, NurMuhammad, Horst, Papoutsaki, and Dodson (2016) applied content analysis in their study of Facebook usage among the Uyghur diaspora. Frequently, multiple approaches, such as hyperlink analysis and content analysis, are combined within the same research project. Hsu (2013) combined methods of conventional and computational ethnography with tools from the digital humanities to map the digital social terrain of the Kominas' virtual community. The digital social terrain comprised multiple online and offline sites. Moreover, Hsu (2013) introduced a

holistic approach to the study of the Internet. To illustrate how digital media are embedded in physically embodied social life, he performed field research and participant observation in both online and offline environments. Digital humanities methods—such as Web scraping, geospatial visualization, and mapping technologies—were used to map the transnational contours of the digital social terrain. The use of digital humanities methods uncovered new visual and geo-spatial patterns and visualized and contextualized the geographical coverage and the dynamics of social interactions across various geographical boundaries.

Diminescu and Loveluck's (2014) project, the e-Diasporas Atlas, was a study of 30 diasporas on the Web that compiled a corpus of approximately 8,000 migrant websites. The project elaborated on how collective identity formation of migrant groups is mediated by the Web. The presence of migrant collectives and diasporic communities on the Web is illustrated through the traces left by hyperlinks on the Web. The researchers introduced the notions of digital reason and graphic reason to define levels of analysis. The digital reason deals with the structural dimensions of diasporic networks, the position of websites within the network, and the meaning construction provided by the linking of these sites. According to Diminescu and Loveluck, linking constitutes a communicative strategy where actors try to enhance their visibility through associational effects, that is, through linking with certain websites and avoiding any association with other websites. The visualization of the general topology of the networks provided the authors new insights into the characteristics of migrant populations, such as the degree of cohesion and the bridging role played by certain actors. The notion of graphic reason included analysis of the content on display on the linked websites, including the associated discourses and representations. Websites store traces of information and user traffic and thus function as repositories, and at times mirrors, of various forms of media. Websites display the distinctive elements of the diasporic group through the texts, pictures, and sounds of their traditions that compose the singular but shared experiences towards which diasporas look back.

Therwath (2012) elaborated on the use of link analysis as a method to assess variations in discursive strategies of online nationalism and long-distance nationalism. She performed an analysis of the morphology of a corpus of websites to determine the influence of ethno-religious political movements and ideologies. The in-depth study of website administrators and of members of social networks rendered a sociology of the online activists. Further, she analyzed the resonance of the ideology by content-analysis techniques.

CONCLUSIONS

This narrative literature review provides an overview of the research corpus in the expanding field of studies on digital diasporas: the field of migration, transnationalism, mobility and diaspora on the one hand, and the field of ICTs, new media, social media and Web 2.0, on the other. My aim in the article was to outline the status of the research field to delimit the main characteristics of the field and to identify the ongoing research in the area. As I stated in the introductory sections of the article, I drew a line for literature searches in 2016 and the article was submitted for publication in autumn 2018. I am well aware that the research field has developed during the last two years. However, a gap in the recent literature is a natural consequence of any type of scoping study to allow time for analysis and publication.

The first studies of migration and ICTs appeared in the end of the 1990s, and the field has expanded rapidly. Initially, the research agenda in study of digital diasporas was characterized by the frequency of new media use by migrant and diasporic groups. Questions regarding the digital divide, access to the new technologies, and digital literacy were explored. A number of studies focused on, for example, the role of new media in the constitution of online diasporic communities and virtual communities. The research focus evolved from establishing the frequency and the nature of new media use by migrants to an interest in questions on how the use of the new media affects migration and how it impacts migrants and diasporic communities. Various aspects were explored, including factors regarding the impact on family constellations and relationships, how the use of the new technologies influenced and formed migrants construction of identity, ethnic belonging and community cohesion, whether or not the use of the new technologies enabled and strengthened the relationship to the home and the home country, and how the use of new media impacted on migrants political engagement, expressed in, for example, participation in home-country politics and long-distance nationalism. The later research has been characterized by explorations of appropriation and implications of the increasingly specialized and refined technologies of communication. The studies in this vein reflect and deepen previous discussion areas, such as the family, identity construction, the political arena, among other, thus refining and elaborating analyses in the digital diasporic field. Further, research approaches have expanded, integrating new research categories. For example, highly skilled mobility has become an established research focus, the appropriation of the new technologies in displaced groups has received attention from scholars, and the interest in new media in general mobility studies, such as by tourists and travelling people, is increasing.

Research on digital diasporas is closely related to the proliferation of new technologies and new media forms. The relationship between the research area and new technologies is accentuated in the field of methodology. The research methodologies implemented in studies on digital diasporas correlate with the introduction of new media types and communication practices. In virtual ethnography, introduced in the late 1990s, the focus was put on the online context and content-focused studies of the Web, for example, in discursive analyses of web pages. With the expansion of the Internet, the emphasis on virtual ethnography and exclusively online studies of the Internet declined. Researchers came to acknowledge that the distinction between the online and offline spheres should be bridged. Further, the development of Web 2.0 and the proliferation of social media introduced a methodological focus on media practices. The use of multiple media resources had become a regular feature of the everyday, embedded in the practices of daily life. In studies of digital diasporas, the media practice approach was used to examine the implications of the proliferating technological field and increasing number of media forms for migrant groups. The discussions focused on topics such as the appropriation and impact of polymedia, smartphones, Skype and real time video. It appeared a number of studies that explored, for example, how family relations are affected by communication in polymedia environments and how communication through technological assets such as Skype and real time video affect the nature of the relationships.

The research field of the digital diaspora has matured and increasingly takes the shape of an established research area within the mainstream academic discourse. The number of conferences and workshops that include panels on the topic have increased, as have the frequency of research groups focusing on the topic. One example is the Mig@Net project,

which included scholars from eight European universities and was funded by EU's Seventh Framework Program. The project researched migrants and transnational digital networks.

Yet, much still remains to be done in the field. The literature in the field is mainly dominated by a wide array of empirical studies and case studies on ICTs and migrant groups. Certainly, the research topics have benefited from the approaches of a diversity of academic fields. However, from my point of view the research field would benefit from a clearer positioning of research on digital diasporas in the wider academic context, delimiting the core areas in the field and defining the boundaries towards other subject areas. Further, a stronger integration and consolidation of the various academic subjects involved in the research area would be helpful in identifying the central fields and key issues that are of significance in advancing the understanding, knowledge, and research agenda in the field of digital diasporas.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND APPLICATION

Through the narrative literature review method, I have provided in this article an overview of the growing literature in the rapidly expanding research area of migration and new media, specifically in regard to the primary themes and topics of research interest, the theoretical and conceptual issues under investigation, and the methodological approaches to research in this field. This article contributes to current and future research in several ways, most specifically in providing a comprehensive look at the field from the 2000 until 2016. Additionally, this article identifies trajectories of interest and knowledge that can offer future researchers ideas on where to delve more deeply or to open new streams of investigation regarding migrants (of all kinds) using diverse media in their everyday lives. From an application perspective, my analysis and compilation of the field's research provides a resource guide for persons and organizations working with migrants. In short, this article has the potential to function as an information source for academics, practitioners, and those who are new to the field and might provide a guide for future research.

ENDNOTES

1. The research field covers literature from the year 2000 up to 2016 and includes 210 posts (articles, book chapters, monographs).
2. My aim has been to include all relevant literature in the field. However, I am well aware of the limitations in this task. If, however, a source is missing, it results from a human oversight rather than an intentional omission.

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