



## **Introduction: migrations and diasporas - making their world elsewhere**

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# Introduction

## Migrations and Diasporas: Making Their World Elsewhere

*Leopoldina Fortunati, Raul Pertierra and Jane Vincent*

The appropriation of the new media by migrants has changed the way in which today people migrate, move, negotiate their personal and national identity and make strategies to deal with new cultures. Central among the main causes of the diffusion, adoption and domestication of ICTs by migrants are the globalization and the development of the broadband society. Their mutual ontology is proving to become one of the leading forces for political, cultural and economic transformation in the contemporary world, and in this chapter the topics that expand upon and explore this debate are set out in a series of themed discussions concluding with an overview of the contents of the five sections of the book.

In this book the various chapters investigate how, and with which social effects, information and communication technologies are used by specific social groups who are migrants and for this reason are considered to be strangers in a host society. We use the term migrants in a general meaning, although the politics of migrations distinguishes between emigrants who are generally pushed by war or starvation, immigrants who are instead pulled by the will to find a job or by freedom, and emigres who are those that were obliged to emigrate because their land was occupied (McLean 1996, 321). This volume looks in particular at how the practices and the trajectories of use of the technology influence the important phenomenon of migrations and diasporas, which could be seen as the emblem of the late modernity. The multifaceted role that these technologies perform in the dislocation of consistent groups of people is explored here. We question how the technologies allow migrants to remain in contact with their communities of origin, to construct or enhance the relational sphere with local communities, to discuss their national identity, the identity of native communities and of the global diaspora they encounter. We further explore how these technologies might be used to meet in the “virtual common world” migrants of other ethnic groups and/or nationalities with whom migrants share the identity of “strangers” and from whom it is often possible to have information about job possibilities and more. Paradoxically, these new technologies of communication exacerbate but also attenuate the experiences of solitude and social exclusion or deprivation both among migrants and those who remain behind.

### **FROM INTEGRATION TO CO-CONSTRUCTION**

The book analyzes the different ways in which migrants, together with natives, contribute to co-construct contemporary societies and cultures by drawing on diverse traditions. In turn, it explores the different ways in which contemporary societies contribute to co-construct migrations and to being native in their own country of residence. These dynamics between natives and migrants and their mutual coming together are still poorly understood, partly because the social sciences have failed to develop adequate theoretical models for understanding migration and producing communitarian policies capable of overcoming different national paradigms (Heckmann and Schnapper 2003). For this reason, we prefer to under-use the term “integration” because of its heavy and often assumed description of the

cultural adaptation process of migrants in a taken-for-granted community of practices of the host society. The host society, as well as migrants, is considered as a kind of fixed cultural reality which is not subject to any internal or external process of change and with which “the other” has to come to terms. Although widespread, the term integration does not reach a large consensus: sometimes it is connected to desegregation, other times to the attempt of bringing minorities’ cultures into the mainstream of cultures and their social structures, including rights and services. Our stance in this book is that one should talk of co-construction, which starts from the presupposition that each society is a dynamic system which meets and maybe clashes with other cultures, but in so doing enriches itself and consequently changes. The co-construction is a process in which locals and migrants give life to a different society in which both cultures are considered in their interaction and where both cultures have the concrete possibility to learn, reflect on and modify particular aspects of their everyday life. This concept develops the term “cultural co-traditions” advanced by Ferrarotti (1999, 158), in which the acceptance and coexistence of different cultures in a society is seen as the only way out of the problems posed by migrations. In particular, our glimpse is on the socio-technical systems that migrants and natives co-construct inside contemporary societies.

According to Scott and Marshall (2005, 155–156), traditional social studies on migrations and diasporas considered issues such as unidirectional flows, uprooting of migrants from their societies and cultures of origin and assimilation via the melting pot into the new host culture. These two scholars assert that contrary to this view, post-modern social studies usually focus on the improvements in transport and communications which have made it possible for migrants to implement their own distinctive identities, lifestyles and economic ties. This second wave of studies, of course, also reconsiders the question of modern nation-states by replacing the rigid territorial nationalism with the notion of shifting and contested boundaries, creating new terms such as “imagined communities” (Anderson 1983) and “global ethnospaces” (Appadurai 1996) to describe transnational influences. It is evident that there is a tension and even a counter-position between these two approaches: traditional sociologists of migrations—continue Scott and Marshall—criticize postmodern scholars for the creation of abstruse theoretical terminology, their “apparent disregard for numbers and generalizations, and a tendency to ignore earlier sociological studies of migration (especially where these document complex structures of opportunity and migrants networks in ways which prefigure the new diaspora studies themselves)” (Scott and Marshall 2005, 155). Scott and Marshall are instead convinced that the new wave of studies on migration and diaspora is able to detail “the complexity, diversity, and fluidity of migrant identities and experiences in a more realistic way than did the older mechanistic theories and models of international migration” (2005, 155).

In our case, the expression “migrants in late modernity” aims to underline the perspective that sees migrants playing a more or less powerful role in the co-construction of contemporary societies. However, our approach is not focused on structural economic and political influences upon or on the part of migrants. Instead, we aim to contribute to the understanding of some of the relevant social problems that current societies are faced with, such as identity, social cohesion and structure of social stratification, by examining these topics from the perspective of ICT use by migrants. The migrants in fact do so by experiencing and developing the information and communication technologies, that is, by domesticating them in a way that is peculiar to their needs, both the means of information and communication they use and the communicative act (Miller and Horst 2006; Donner 2008). This emphasis is both methodological as well as substantive. The contributions of migrants as well as the growing significance of media are recognized. Thus in this book we focus on the communicative,

linguistic, emotional and technological dimensions experienced by migrants in their relationship with the new (and the old) media. However, this approach is not completely new but has an old lineage.

A century ago, Sombart argued (1902/1927) that migrants historically gave a great impulse to technological innovations. Some leading examples are Einstein, Fermi, Marconi, Von Neumann, Wittgenstein and Godel, who were all migrants. Far from hostile circumstances in their country of origin, they developed their creativity and imagination in a new host country. Migrants' contribution applies as much to the Arts as to the Sciences. African musicians, Jewish refugees, Soviet dissidents and Asian intellectuals have not limited themselves to "integrating" in the host culture and society but they have enriched and reoriented many contemporary societies and cultures. An example of the reorientation of the cultural identity of a country is that provided by Gerard Goggin (2008): Australia. This country, because of the growing migration from Japan and China, has reoriented its identity towards the Asia Pacific instead of towards the old Europe and in particular towards the U.K.

## **GLOBAL TRENDS OF MIGRATIONS**

There are four elements which in a certain sense characterize contemporary migrations:

1. Their dimensions
2. A new gender balance among migrants
3. The fact that today migrants can count on the availability of ICTs as powerful tools to mediate their trajectory of life
4. The parallel development of other figures of contemporary mobility such as tourists, travellers, commuters and so on

In regard to the first element, the world has never registered so high a number of migrants. It is as if humankind decided to put itself on the move. As Simmel (1998, 568) had already noticed, the extraordinary increase of the need for the differences in the modern individual brings both the differentiation of the personal and social existences and the need for mobility. According to William Lacy Swing (responsible for the International Organization for Migration)(1), almost a billion of the people in the world are migrants: 214 million have migrated abroad and 700 million inside their country.(2) The account of migrations today is changing the profile of humankind and popularizes an experience which in the past has involved only some sections of worldwide population. As Daniel Miller writes in the Preface (this volume), "This is not a book about a special case, it is a book about ordinary life." Of course the motivations that are behind these impressive migrations are numerous: wars, starvation, political persecutions, lack of a job, poverty and so on.

As to the second element, differently from the past women today account for half of the global migrants. This important change in migrants' gender resonates with the increase of feminine power at an international level and has of course transformed both women's conditions of life and the social morphology of the territories from which these women migrated (see Heather Horst's chapter in this volume and Dustmann 2005a, 2005b, 2008). Traditionally women have always been more sedentary than men because of their family roles, although a certain number of women have experienced various types of travel and a high number at least a honeymoon (Corsi 1999). There have always been those who remained at home or who left to follow after the men of the family after they were well established in the new country and could call their wives and children to join them. Now, in many cases, it is the women who constitute the first wave of migrants (Pingol 2001) because the labor market specifically requires their labor force, as in the case of caregivers, or they migrate together with the men: this is in tune also with the increasing numbers of women who travel or do tourism alone (Silvestre and Valerio 1999).

Among other things the demands of housework in families of industrialized countries whose women are in the workforce, coupled with the reduction of social services, have created the unprecedented need for a feminine migration (Hochschild and Ehrenreich 2003). Newly emerging economies such as Hong Kong, Singapore and the Middle East have added significantly to this need for female migration. What are the consequences for families in both receiving and offering feminine migrant labour? What specific empowering processes for women occur, what redesignation of their gender identity and narratives and what new communicational practices does it generate? Does this strong presence of women among migrants have specific effects on the use of ICTs? If so, what are they? The Philippines, for example, has one of the highest rates of worker-migrants (Pertierra 2006), the majority being women, and it is worthy of note that recently an online counselling service has become available for the families of migrants in order to alleviate the problems of distant parenting. This change is contradictory because it has created many problems in the life of these women and in the families left behind, but at the same time migration has been an empowering experience for women, including the transfer of information and know-how and the promotion of entrepreneurship they might apply when and if they go back at home. Women's migration is important also for the families they leave behind, which may increase their income through "social remittances" and the possibility to access education and health services.

In respect to the third element, the broad availability of ICTs is also a distinctive characteristic of the current migrations. In fact migrants demonstrate a use of ICTs, such as Web 2.0, mobile phone and satellite television, which is often stronger than that of natives. Migrants can use the new media for mitigating the trauma of separation, being more able to keep in touch among themselves and with those left in their country of origin, but also for handling their life more easily in the new communities. Migrations are a condition for understanding the space and for making sense of it, but the availability of ICTs transforms the perception of physical distance and social isolation as well as the elaboration of the sense of belonging. Migrants are at the intersection of a "bonding" and a "bridging" use of ICTs, to borrow Putnam's expression (2000). However, they can also use the new media to restrict themselves within their own culture, thus paying less attention to learning a new language and culture.

Finally, as to the fourth point, migrants are different today because their condition of life is in tune with the high level of mobility that host societies have developed. A large number of their citizens are tourists, travellers and commuters. They directly know how one feels when he/she is a "stranger".

Nowadays locals and migrants are individuals who both have experienced different degrees of mobility. Modern migration and other contemporary displacements such as refugees and human trafficking, but also commuting, tourism and traveling, despite their significant differences, can be seen as variations of an old human predisposition and practice (Urry 1990). At the same time, each of these social phenomena resonates with the others and intertwines reciprocally. The world is no longer unknown as before: tourists, travellers and commuters—in addition to the media—create collective knowledge, information and experience at the social level, on which also migrants can, in some ways, build upon. The sense of a global world that these new possibilities of communication and mobility generate serves to mitigate and transform the impact of migration on existing social structures. Also, the classical "chain" of migrants now acquires a more sophisticated dimension of virtual and real networks with a variety of forms. These considerations also show the necessity to historicize the migration phenomenon. Today migrations are different from the past and if we want to explore them we should contextualize them in the late modernity that is in a world shaped by a new level of

agency and power by multitudes and a new level of command and domination by power elites on societies. Our aim in this collection is to precisely examine this human practice in the context of contemporary societies and post-modern media.

In a global age, all of us, including migrants, participate in multiple sociocultural worlds and contexts. Enjoying different cultures and lifestyles has become emblematic of the post-modern condition. For migrants, their adapted and original homes constitute part of a globalized homeland. They watch local television as well as overseas channels featuring their places of origin and share national concerns while maintaining their ethnic interests. These antinomies that characterize migrants' lives are often not lived in a dramatic way, but rather they are the acquired new threads with which they weave a richer life. Also, natives in the new global urban environments deal with different cultures in various ways, which go from enthusiastic appreciation to indifference and to hostility. However, migrations are not a monolithic phenomenon: there are migrants who, as we said, enthusiastically adhere to the lifestyle, social values, daily routines and identity of the host country because they are attracted and fascinated by it; there are others who do not like the host culture but who are obliged to accept and adopt it because this country gives to them the opportunity to work, to have an income, to have more civil rights and so on; others try to negotiate their own culture with that of the host country, producing a sort of cultural hybridization; and finally others who devalue the culture of the hosting country and pass their life criticizing and stressing the limits of the new way of life they are trying out.

### **A Reflection on Diasporas**

A large part of studies on diasporas, and also some included in this volume, focuses on the social networks built by the migrants belonging to the same culture. In this concern, a supplementary sociological reflection is useful in order to understand diasporas as social groups and the reasons of their peculiar logic. We turn again now to Simmel (1998, 568–570) to help us in understanding this point. Although, as reported above, contemporary societies generally satisfy their increasing need for differences through the development both of social and personal differentiation and of mobility, in some cases differentiation and mobility diverge. This happens when (following Simmel) stable societies differentiate internally, while migrant groups become uniform. Those who migrate depend mostly upon their fellow migrants and have more common interests with them in comparison with sedentary groups in the host society. These basic interests become stronger than the individual multiplicities and possible contrasts. For Simmel, migrating implies individualization and isolation as it removes from individuals the support of their hometown. Instead, it obliges individuals to rely exclusively on themselves, and in so doing it pushes them into a tight grouping which makes the “normal” societal differences less important.

### **Myths, Metaphors, Symbols and Emotions Connected to Migrations**

In the social representations of migrations, myths and metaphors play an important role. Central to this are the myths of Eden or of ancestral origins as well as that of the holy land. The classical world has elaborated the myth of traveling from the reign of the living to that of the dead such as in the epopee of Gilgamesh, the myth of Orpheus who goes down into Hades and snatches Eurydice out of death's hands, the wonders of travel lived by Odysseus and Enea and Dante's travel into hell, purgatory and heaven in the Divine Comedy (Gasparini 2000, 38). Asia too has similar stories of heroes overcoming great odds such as the Monkey God transmitting Buddhist culture across the Himalayas to China, Korea and Japan. These myths serve to weave the imagination needed to leave behind one's birthplace with its particular protective energy (the

genius loci) and often resulting in a harmonious (integrated) life-mode. Memories of one's homeland generate the symbolic patrimony that nourishes nostalgia, which is probably one of the most important moods migrants experience in their new country. These sojourns in foreign lands often combine great sacrifices as well as delivering unexpected rewards. This theme of transhumance vs. permanent settlements has found different expressions throughout human history from the wanderings of pastoralists to the great cities of the old world. A powerful metaphor in this regard is one that relates migration to the displacement in space with the progression of time for human beings. Each journey, in fact, is considered a paradigm of life or a metaphor of the human condition (Widman 1999). The departure is equalized to birth, the travel through life and the arrival at death. Taken together these mythological and metaphorical aspects of migrations are not only coupled with emotions like nostalgia but also with hope and curiosity, which are powerful forces that motivate people to travel around the world. The Metamorphoses of Migrants' Identity Migration is a basic phenomenon of the whole human history, but it is also a social process, which involves spatial dynamics and is characterized by a temporal structure. In the new country migrants sometimes become sedentary while at other times

they continue to be mobile in their new territory. Migrants generally do not remain migrants all their life, and may well acquire a new citizenship from the host country. Furthermore, they may become fathers and mothers of children who are considered native, being born in the host country. So being a migrant is not a dimension which is automatically inherited as such by migrants' children, who are often at the intersection of two different cultures and have to mediate not only for themselves but also for their parents. It is a tension *en plus* that migrant children and adolescents have to cope with in

addition to the tensions typical of their age group (see Lelia Green and Nahid Kabir's chapter in this volume). The multifarious dimension of migration becomes still more complex in the light of racial and ethnic group intermarriages. In several countries the marriage with a native citizen closes down a story of migration, because it is the means to obtain citizenship of the host country. Being a migrant is a transitory status and thus it creates problems of conceptualization and definition of the migrant by the various Censuses that attempt to record their presence (see Alice Robbin's chapter in this volume). Both old and new media are the main places where these tensions, these uncertainties of conceptualization and the related debates are expressed.

## **The Present-Absent Migrant**

If we look now at what happens in the host society, we find a new general trend on the part of migrants to strengthen their self-identification. Picking up on some points from the general debate on migrations which form the background of our discourse, and which might show how much the contemporary communities of migrants are different from the past, it is sufficient to say that the typical condition of presence-absence which is experienced by people in using ICTs specifically involves migrants. Through their use of ICTs migrants are in fact absent, but somehow also present in many communities of origin—communities which started by considering migrants as part of their everyday life. This is made possible particularly because migrants are able to be in contact with their home village via the mobile phone (Nyaga Mbatia et al., n.d.). For the community of a village in Africa or in Asia, migrants are no longer people completely lost in the course of the daily routine but, for example, they are counted as if they were somehow present in the village. This "counting" as being part of the everyday life of the migrant's home village also means that new political attention is put on migrants by the country

of origin; they are not seen anymore as a loss, but as an economic and political richness (as explored by Polina Stoyanova and Lilia Raycheva in their chapter in this volume).

### **We Are All Migrants in the Virtual Space**

The negotiation between natives and immigrants regarding space is happening not only in the physical space of towns and villages but also in the virtual space designed by online communities. Online, migrants' communities share with any other communities the space at the same level of power: this is in the sense that all of us—native and migrants—migrated in the virtual space, as Castronova states in his last volume (2008). The Internet equalizes natives and migrants in offering to both the same experience of virtual migration. Thus the Internet too has contributed to make the slogan “we are all migrants” realistic, because all of us in the last twenty years - natives and migrants (in a literal sense, different from that used by Prensky 2001)—have experienced at least the kind of migration that embodies the experience of our virtual displacement in the Web. For migrants, the migration in the virtual space assumes the dimension of a strengthening

of a dimension already experienced in the real world and repeated also in the virtual one. This role of the Internet as a powerful tool of diffusion of the migration experience makes it increasingly necessary to conceptualize further the new and the old media used by migrants and natives as socio-technical systems and socio-cultural environments - which both use in their daily life.

### **Migrants Face Communication Issues**

How and when do migrants feel the need, the desire or the obligation to communicate with the purpose of managing their relational sphere? What situations create these needs, desires or obligations for communication and information? Which difficulties do migrants experience in communicating with their dearly loved ones at home, while maybe they are forgetting their mother tongue or experiencing the impossibility to explain their new life, not knowing where to start from? Migrants in fact often experience anomie in their communicative relationships with those at home as well as with the host community and groups, because they no longer share the flow and ritual of daily life with their interlocutors. What difficulties do migrants experience when they have to contract their rights in situations in which they are not able to master even the technology of language—neither orally nor, especially, written? Which sense of impotence do they feel for this communicative barrier, given that communication is the first field in which we negotiate our identity and the elaboration of reality? However, to express themselves and to keep alive the relationship with their homeland, migrants today can more often rely on a higher level of education and on more easily accessible and sophisticated means of information and communication than in the past.

### **Migrants, ICTs and Volatile Memory**

An example of this topic is the use of online newspapers, which give the opportunity for migrants to be informed about events in their villages and towns of origin. Their forums, blogs, Web sites and social networks contribute to create online communities based on the sharing and reinventing of a common national identity and culture (see Heike Monika Greschke's chapter in this volume). Virtual communities in cyberspace allow for old and new identities to merge and coalesce. Cable networks and global entertainment ensure that traditional as well as contemporary narratives of the self and storytelling are readily represented and performed. Landlines, mobile phones and voice over the Internet allow for different types of electronic communication, enabling distinct identities and intimacies (Baldassar 2007). Mediated communication (Fortunati 2005) and electronic emotion (Vincent and Fortunati



2009) are now primary supports of social relationship and contribute to the creation of social structure. Long distance relationships are now a common feature of life and most people have adopted appropriate strategies for dealing with absent others. Telecommunication, which is also tele-absence as Manovich stresses (2001), is often immediate and oral and does not automatically leave any memories or traces (despite the presence of recording devices). In the past, many migrant families were able to keep track of their history through family letters and other correspondence. In the current broadband societies the preservation of memory becomes more difficult. They are the products of a life on the run, where activities are now recorded as they take place (e.g. Twitter), but are not considered worthy to become part of a lasting personal and social memory. Whether this kind of electronic communication can reconstruct identity narratives and family histories is as yet uncertain. Everything is volatile, as one of our informants said, and nothing remains recorded (3). Perhaps this is a consequence of post-bourgeois life where, as suggested in the works of Marx and Engels, everything solid melts into air. Ironically, postmodern life has reverted to a form of pre-literate orality or to electronic forms of writings which are constantly deleted (Green 2009). This preference for the ephemeral, momentary and immediate fits into contemporary cultures with their excess of meaning but lack of sense. As a response to this surplus of meaning, the original homeland is often romanticized as providing a more secure anchorage in a former life.

### **Mediated Migrations, Communicative Environment and Polymedia**

The new media, and in particular the Internet, also offer written and desynchronized forms of communication: instant messages, chats, e-mails and social networks. In addition to memory volatility, many of these written communications might resemble oral exchanges rather than literary texts. Initially, people feared the loss of literary skills in these new forms of communication (new spellings, abbreviations, acronyms) but soon realized that they constitute new ways of expression appropriate to the medium of communication (Baron 2008). The new media however are important communicative environments because they have their own particular transformative potential and so they contribute, along with the old media, to co-construct a different ecosystem of migrations. In 1998 Fortunati introduced the concept of “communicative environment” to designate the place where body-to-body forms of communicative sociability coexist and interplay with the use of a more or less large spectrum of media. In 2011 Madianau and Miller proposed the notion of Polymedia to express the broad range of media which are at the disposal of individuals nowadays. Media preference by migrants and natives is highly informative. What communication technologies do migrants, their families and friends use, prefer or experience: the old, the new or a combination of the two? Does the opportunity provided by broadband technology enhance the communication and information process or does it simply inundate and overwhelm its users?

### **Material and Immaterial Labor is Moving**

The present stage of globalization involves poor people, elites, refugees, traffickers, intellectuals, students, researchers and managers. So now the social stratification of migrations reflects more that of the society of origin. Workers now are accompanied by students, professors, researchers, managers, consultants, functionaries, travelers. It is very likely that the uses of ICTs differ for each category and one needs to know more about these differences. With the alleged weakening of national identity in the context of globalization, to what extent do migrants still form their original communities or are they more willing to adopt new mentalities and forms of living in the host countries? In addition to the diffusion of ICTs, powerful social processes such as individualization with the consequent effect of the weakening of families' relationships and the transformation of family roles generate new

imperatives for migrants. Another consequence is the current trend of self-identification by migrants negotiated on the basis of the behaviors of their communities in their countries of origin. The repression of Uyghurs (who are Muslims) in China in July 2009 immediately unleashed many tensions, for example, in Algiers between the local community (which is Muslim) and the Chinese one.(4)

## **Migrations and Generations**

Last but by no means least, generation plays a particular role in recent migrations. A large part of the literature on migrations focuses on first generation migrants (see the chapter of Clifton Evers and Gerard Goggin in this volume). But second generation migrants also deserve the same attention, as shown in the chapter of Green and Kabir in this volume. Some concepts which might frame the theoretical background of the studies on this topic come again from classics. It must be acknowledged that migrations studies generally use one particular notion of generation—the genealogical one—because this has a high information value, particularly when the individual of reference undergoes a traumatic change as it is in the case of migrants (Fortunati 2011, 202). In fact, the second generation of migrants creates serious problems for the uniformity of migrants' groups, of which we talked above, essentially for three reasons: first, new generations are not repositories of societal norms but are subjects that challenge existing societal norms and values and bring social effervescence (Mannheim 1952); second, the need of refusing parental authority and of identifying with one's own peers (that is, the need to identify themselves as children and as young) is stronger than the need to identify as migrant; third, the language they speak is generally that of the host society and by speaking this language they also pick up the culture. Only the study of the complex interplay of migrations and generations allows us to understand why the second generation of migrants shows a much higher degree of dynamic dealing with the host culture.

## **OVERVIEW OF THIS VOLUME**

This book covers five theoretical and empirical areas of research: 1) conceptual tools to analyze migrations; 2) migration as a factor of gender and generation transformative processes; 3) new media as a lens to look at migrations and diasporas in a new way; 4) religion, mobility and social policies as shaped by migrations; 5) a case study: China and its internal migrations and diasporas as well as expatriates in China. Using the concept of migrants as e-actors (digital subjects) (Fortunati et al. 2010), this book is meant to conceptualize the complex and crucial role migrants play in the information society and the enormous potentialities they represent for the development of a knowledge society.

The first selection of chapters “Conceptual tools to analyze migrations” discusses how migrants are concerned in their everyday life with different notions, models, approaches and languages and explores them with three specific case studies from Italy, the U.K. and U.S. The authors debate and challenge different ways to define and conceptualize migrations, different strategies and methodologies to investigate this phenomenon at the social level and finally, different approaches and perspectives to analyse the first technology that migrants have to domesticate—their language. In other words the chapters in this section deal with the development and promotion of an anthropocentric perspective in the dealing of migrants with the old and the new media. The fascinating and passionate reasons of the intercultural perspective are discussed and expanded by Giuseppe Mantovani, who argues for the importance of this approach for migration studies. The interplay between elements such race, ethnicity and culture is one of the fundamental concerns of cultural theory. Second, the socio-linguistic problem of the migration of languages, with special emphasis on English,

which has become in the course of time Englishes, is illustrated by Maria Bortoluzzi. Finally, Alice Robbin discusses the way in which the debate, recently reported by media, has framed new categories such as “multiracial”. In the cartography of races and ethnicities, the category multiracial is analyzed as a specific case study, strengthened recently by the election of President Obama. This section emphasizes the role of the migrant as e-actor and the way that this symbiosis of humans and their electronic interface with ICTs characterizes migrants’ participation in 21st century broadband society. The increasingly high penetration of broadband conveys inevitable tensions between migrants and natives which are explored within these chapters with the emphasis being on the push from the user rather than the pull from the technology.

The second section, entitled “Gender and generation intertwining with migrations”, deals with how migrations often carry out significant and rapid changes in the way people construct their gender narratives and interact with the social construction of femininity and masculinity in the host countries through the old and the new media. Three specific case studies, one from Jamaica and two from Australia, are examined. Heather Horst discusses this point from the particular perspective of how Jamaican transnational communication is characterized by a gendered dynamics. The following chapter written by Clifton Evers and Gerard Goggin reconstructs how mobile communication plays an important role in the negotiation of new cultural dynamics by young men living in suburbs in inner and outer Sydney. Migration often redesigns the structure of power, the roles played inside the family, as well as the way in which parents have to redefine the educational and caring processes of the new generations. To conclude this section, Lelia Green and Nahid Kabir illustrate their research project on a group of adolescents in Australia with a double national identity. These subjects show how their respondents negotiate their diasporic identity at the same time as they struggle for their own personal autonomy distinct from family and community.

The third section “Looking at the migrations and diasporas through the lens of the new media” looks specifically at why the emergence of new forms of agency, subjectivity and mediated communication are an important aspect of developing broadband societies. Their role in social interaction in public and private spaces is increasingly important for the users of all types of ICTs, but most particularly the mobile phone. These three chapters examine the complexity of the weave of communication in everyday life in the context of digitally mediated technologies with three case studies from Philippines, Paraguay and Bulgaria. Raul Pertierra opens this section with his chapter on the Filipino diasporas, stressing how the mobile phone, the Internet and Web 2.0 are used by Filipino migrants to maintain and reproduce original relationships but also to acquire new communicative and social dimensions and possibilities both abroad and at home. The following chapter by Heike Monika Greschke analyses how the Internet allows migrants to maintain links between sites of being and sites of belonging and to reshape fundamental notions such as homeland and the sense of proximity and togetherness. This section concludes with the chapter of Polina Stoyanova and Lilia Raycheva, who discuss important issues of the Bulgarian Diasporas by analyzing the diaspora of the Bulgarian media. In this chapter the authors investigate and evaluate the role of the information and communication technologies for social inclusion within the local media consumer community, as well as for the process of national “integration”. New psychological, emotional and affective dimensions are produced by migrants in virtual communities or as audiences, who might have the possibility to continue to speak their own language if, as in the Bulgarian case, media have

also experienced a kind of diasporic process in order to be near and to support Bulgarian migrants all around the world.

In the fourth section “Religion, mobility and social policies: How migrants’ use of the new media is shaping society” the discourse is focused on how migrants’ use of ICTs influences social phenomena such as religion, identity, social mobility and social policies. Migrants deal with agency, subjectivity and identity as a result of the new mediated interpersonal communication in the broadband society. These new identities and subjectivities play significant roles for the reorganization of social practices, forms of ritualization and structures with case studies from Congo and five European countries: France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom. The way migrants manage their electronic identities and access ICTs in public and private spaces is crucial for the transformations of their everyday life, signified by different practices, routines and meanings also at a religious level as explored by David Garbin and Manuel A. Vasquez in their chapter. This section maps the emerging research fields relevant for understanding uses and relationships with ICTs (e.g. cognitive complexity, group decision making, ethical aspects, etc.). It also explores to what extent migrants are mobile in the new countries with the purpose of verifying whether the relationship between migrants and mobility is invariant or episodic as in the chapter by Andreas Hepp, Cigdem Bozdog and Laura Suna. In the last chapter of this section Stefano Kluzer and Cristiano Codagnone discuss why nowhere in Europe can there be found clear policies and/or strategies that address ICT opportunities for immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Finally, the fifth section illustrates a powerful case study: “China and its internal migrations, diasporas and expatriates”. The economic revival in China is best represented by its employment of the new media such as the Internet, blogging and mobile phones. In China, by the middle of 2010,<sup>5</sup> there were 420 million Internet connections and in September of the same year there were 833.3 million mobile phones.<sup>(6)</sup> The consequence of this high volume of users is that the numbers of Chinese who use the mobile phone and who go online are both higher than their American counterparts. Several types of migrations are studied with regards to China with the purpose of understanding how the use of the new media serves to construct the contemporary Chinese identity. They comprise internal migrants moving from the inner regions of China to the coastal regions of the south; Chinese migrants moving to Australia and Italy and expatriates from several countries now living in China. This leads to differing dynamics of identity and tactics of co-construction of a new culture. China is emerging as among the most important of the research propositions in this volume, not just because of its massive population but also for the new cartographies of ICT uses. This section uses ICTs as the focus for the exploration of the social processes of negotiation that currently take place both inside internal migrations in and from China as well as migrations to China. Pui-lam Law as well as Chung-tai Cheng depict how Chinese migrants arriving from internal regions to the towns of the industrialized coasts take advantage of the mobile phone to negotiate a more acceptable life. They also observe that this use in several cases can easily transform itself from a moment of relaxation to relieve the stresses of long hours of work in heavy alienation and in lengthening the working day. Tom Denison and Graeme Johanson, on the other hand, have conducted research on Chinese diasporas, in particular migrants in two different settings, Prato, Italy and Melbourne, Australia, that investigates the role of ICTs in contributing to social cohesion and in maintaining social networks. Finally, David Herold focuses on expatriates in China as he investigates their opinions and attitudes reported in many blogs. Herold tells us that there are 150,000 foreigners legally working in China (frequent business travelers,

students, spouses, etc.) whose influence on the opinions of, e.g., foreign journalists publishing news stories in European and American media outlets, is not negligible.

## NOTES

1. <http://www.iom.int/jahia/jsp/index.jsp> (accessed April 20, 2011); United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2009). Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2008 Revision (United Nations database, POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2008) <http://esa.un.org/migration/p2k0data.asp> (accessed April 20, 2011).
2. Among them, 20 to 30 million are unauthorized, almost 16 million are refugees.
3. This concept was elaborated by a woman living in Madrid interviewed by Leopoldina Fortunati three years ago. She belonged to an Italian family that emigrated to Argentina at the beginning of the 20th century and she was mother of a daughter living in Africa. In the interview she compared the different effects that analogical and digital cultures had produced in her family.
4. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July\\_2009\\_%C3%9Cr%C3%BCmqi\\_riots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_2009_%C3%9Cr%C3%BCmqi_riots)
5. <http://research.cnnic.cn/html/1279173730d2350.html>
6. <http://www.miit.gov.cn/n11293472/n11293832/n11294132/n12858447/13451760.html>

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