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Communication and Media

Media, Migration, and Nationalism: Introduction to the Special Collection

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This introduction contextualizes thirteen papers included in the *Global Perspectives* Media and Communication special collection examining the interrelationships between media, migration, and nationalism. This collaborative project was initiated during the *Media, Migration and the Rise of Nationalism* seminar held in Tokyo in 2018. The seminar was organized around the themes of cosmopolitanism, migration control, transnationalism, and contact zones. This selection covers and brings together long-standing and unresolved debates, which will allow media and migration researchers to engage in a multiperspectival reconsideration of how politics, mobility, and mediation intersect and co-shape each other. In this article, we first position ourselves in relevant debates by charting implications and shared characteristics underlying the recent economic crisis, climate crisis, refugee crisis, and COVID-19 crisis.

Section 1 of the article focuses on cosmopolitanism. This thorny scholarly debate is captured by the artist Takashi Tanihata in the works *A Letter That Isn't Read I and II*. As we discuss, the artworks depict an endless loop of (mis)communicating goats, which represent the possibilities and implications of mediated solidarity and polarization. The special collection features three articles that further nuance the heated debates on the politics of representation and mediation in relation to cosmopolitanism.

Section 2 of this article is thematized with a painting by the artist XX titled *The Scents on the Borders*, which depicts perfume bottles and their scents encountering each other. The work, as we argue, refers to the complex, evolving relationships between border-crossing subjects and technologies of migration management and control. A latest development shows how tech-driven surveillance experiments tap into sensing technologies including those related to the sense of smell to secure borders. The section consists of four articles that demonstrate how the politics of material and symbolic bordering proliferates outside and inside nation-state boundaries.

Section 3 takes inspiration from an artwork titled *The Vision (Reportage)*, by Motoi Hirata, which features a violet sea snail as a motif to represent migrants and diaspora groups in terms of transnational connectivity. The section includes three articles that analyze the workings and lived experiences of connectivity and transnationalism across nation-state borders.

In section 4 of this article, we take cues from Satsuki Hinokimoto's abstract painting *The Spread* and link its deployment of isolated and interacting colored concentric circles to the evocative scholarly concept of the cultural contact zone. This section of the issue consists of three articles that focus on migrant encounters with difference and the politics of integration in various urban settings across the world.

Finally, in our conclusion, we advocate for media and migration researchers to take up the critical concept of intersectionality to better acknowledge the internal heterogeneity of migrant communities alongside the similarities and differences among migrant communities in tandem with various interacting axes of agential identification and structural forms of oppression.

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MEDIA, MIGRATION, AND NATIONALISM

> We are faced with a crisis of humanity, and the only exit from this crisis is to recognize our growing interdependence as a species and to find new ways to live together in solidarity and cooperation, amidst strangers who may hold opinions and preferences different from our own.
> —Zygmunt Bauman (2016)

This special collection of *Global Perspectives* conceptualizes and empirically traces contemporary interrelationships between media, migration, and nationalism, seeking to contribute to the "global turn" in media and communication (Kapchan 2012) and taking cues from feminist theorist Donna Haraway's (2016) provocation to "stay with the trouble." In particular, the focus is on how nationalism, through various mediations of migration, impacts power relations by co-shaping processes of inclusion and exclusion.

A global perspective is important to shed light on how migrants and migration, through mediation, are invoked in recent wide-ranging worldwide situations. As Arjun Appadurai has acutely observed, "migrants, especially refugees, in the contemporary globalized world are inevitably second-class citizens because their stories do not fit the narrative requirements of modern nation-states" (2019, 558). Particularly under the heading of apocalypse and crises, migrant subjects are discursively framed as threats or burdens to nation-states in dire attempts to grasp, make tangible, or deny failures and/or limitations of systematic planetary conditions. Simultaneously, supported by media formations including targeted social media campaigning, we see a resurgence of nationalisms—for example, in the election of populist, protectionist, racist, and sexist presidents in the United States, Brazil, and Russia as well as in the Brexit vote and procedures. These have led to accompanying mediated forms of everyday othering, bordering, walling, and fortification of nation-states. The push for (increasingly digitized) border control through sensors and surveillance relates to what Wendy Brown defines as the epidemic of building walls to keep out unwanted enemies, outsiders, and strangers (Brown 2008). The epidemic of building walls noted in 2009 is still visible now, for example, in the recent proliferation of digital tools such as the biometric digital databases (Madianou 2019) and also in the increase in the number of refugee detention centers in the zones peripheral to the Global North and the global rebuilding of physical walls (for example, the US-Mexico border, the Israeli-built wall through the West Bank, Saudi Arabia's wall along its border with Yemen, or the triple-layer walls around Spanish enclaves in Morocco, to mention but a few).

In the last two decades, for example, we saw how many blamed the global financial crisis—which itself exposed the limitations of unbridled free-market capitalism—on labor migrants. In public perceptions, migrant workers became the "scapegoats" of the 2007–8 financial crisis (Vogt Isaksen 2019, 1). The global climate crisis—which demonstrates planetary limits to human exploitation of fossil fuels and natural resources—is rendered as a security risk: global warming, resulting in diminishing crop returns and rising seas, could spur an unprecedented flow of climate refugees. "Climate-induced migrants" are racialized as threats to climate-secure countries in the Global North (Telford 2018). "The restrictive, unjust possibilities they suggest for future climate security politics" demand thorough scrutiny (ibid, 268). Many forced displacements resulting from conflicts including Syrians fleeing the ongoing Syrian civil war, Rohingya fleeing violence and marginalization in Myanmar, or Venezuelans fleeing authoritarianism become mediated as crises when they reach other countries or continents. The colonial and imperial legacies of these conflicts are commonly left unaddressed. Instead, the massive, faceless flow of refugees is perceived to threaten our way of life, demanding exceptional responses that result in othering, discrimination, stringent border policies, and suspensions of human rights (e.g. Bauman 2016).

Finally, while putting the finishing touches on this special collection, we are facing increasingly stringent measures as we are living through the mediatized spectacle of the global COVID-19 pandemic. This could have been a chance for a cosmopolitan moment of solidarity, making us realize "we're all in the same boat now" (Zizek 2020, 5). However, migrant populations are feared and have become the subject of fierce scrutiny (IOM 2020). As the number of infections grows, fake news, misinformation, anti-Chinese sentiments, and racism grow too (Shimizu 2020). *Courrier Picard*, a regional French newspaper, included the headline "Yellow Alert" ("Alerte Jaune") in capital letters on its front page, and the hashtag #ChineseDon'tComeToJapan became a trending topic on Japanese Twitter, tagging Chinese people as "dirty" and even as "bioterrorists" (Rich 2020). "Maskophobia" is a motive behind widespread racist verbal abuse and physical attacks against Chinese workers, students, and expatriates in the West (Weale 2020). The so-called "refugee crisis" spurred digital governmentality and digital humanitarianism and parallel data hunger and technological solutionism (Madianou 2019). However, this push seems to have subsided with the new crisis, as migrants have become invisible in COVID-19 counting (Milan, Pelizza, and Lausberg 2020).

Emergent "post-corona theory" offers tools to reflect on historical lineages of health-related injustices, to discuss their possible repercussions and to pursue alternative imaginaries. For Arundhati Roy, crisis situations like the COVID-19 pandemic also can be understood as a "portal," as a gateway between one world and the next: "We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world" (2020, np). Indeed, as Wendy Brown notes, the pandemic has resurfaced health care as indispensable and "the perfidy and plunder of most other capitalist extraction and production as largely superfluous. It has elevated the value of the underpaid, undervalued, and disproportionately nonwhite and female medical workers," but it has also led to increased global withdrawal to bounded nations (2020 np). This withdrawal is strengthened by competitive power games emerging between countries in their individual battles against COVID-19, which have been interpreted as forms of "biopolitical nationalism" (de Kloet, Lin, and Chow 2020, 1).

A global perspective on media, migration, and nationalism demands that we be critical of what the crisis is and is not doing across geopolitical and situated manifestations. Notwithstanding the unchanged interconnectedness of global capitalism, media, technologies, and networks, these global crises have variously resulted in populist deglobalization stances, action, and rhetoric, resulting in nationalism, parochialism, and isolationism. Perhaps a sign of its expiry date, or of its full-blown return on the stage, in contemporary forms of mediated nationalism, migrants are seen as the faces representing the faceless enemies of capitalism, global warming, war, and health security risks. Besides nationality and migration status, these forms of me-

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diation often reinstate inequalities along intersecting lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, religion, and embodiment. These dynamics show that "nationalism provides often for an easy and dangerous resource" (Bieber 2018, 537). However, we should not be blinded by assuming that nationalisms are exceptional trends, with rising forms of nationalism tied to isolated geopolitical moments; rather, nationalism is and remains "endemic to the global social system" (ibid).

At the grassroots level, the various crisis situations have also led to many localized and community-level responses and interventions. These take hybridized forms of care, solidarity, activism, arts, and protest. In Europe, for example, the volunteer-led activist project WatchTheMed Alarm Phone (watchthemed.net) was set up in autumn 2014, offering a hotline for irregularized migrants in distress crossing the Mediterranean. Details and geolocation information of incoming calls are shared with relevant authorities. Through social-media coverage, Alarm Phone documents and scrutinizes incidents of "pushing-back" ships or "leaving-to-die" boats in distress (Stierl 2015). In North America, with his installation *Kikito* (2017), consisting of a twenty-meter-plus photo of a toddler peeking across the Mexico–United States border, the French street artist JR called "audiences to critique the colonial logics that uphold borders as essential elements of government, citizenship, and international relations" (Morrissey 2019, 1). In his 2014 overview of East and Southeast Asia, Yavor A. Kostadinov describes how the migrant rights movement involved a variety of grassroots, nonprofit organizations and local unions in the four Asian Tigers (Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, and Singapore) (Kostadinov 2016, 115). For example, the nonprofit Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, whose origins can be traced back to Japan in the 1990s, has been using Facebook to disseminate information in order "to realize a society that ensures the rights and dignity of migrants and people with multicultural backgrounds" (SMJ 2019). In the Pacific, Behrouz Boochani offered a poetic first-person account of his experiences being held in Australia's offshore detention center Manus Island. His award-winning book *No Friends but the Mountains*, typed out on a mobile phone and shared via WhatsApp, offers a portrait of life in detention, including emotional and psychological pressures, starvation, and insomnia, among others, through his unique self-composed discourse:

> The government have constructed this system and they create terms to establish and reinforce their power… I avoid using their language as much as I can… through literature I can do whatever I like. I create my own discourse and do not succumb to the language of oppressive power. I create my own language for critically analysing the phenomenon of Manus Prison. (Boochani 2018, 266)

For Boochani, "critical analyses" can be expressed through "theatrical ways": "performance is a part of philosophy and advocacy. We act out our ruminations, we embody our thinking… argument is narrative… theory is drama" (Boochani 2018, 25).

In our media-rich environments, both anti- and promigrant actions have in common their active construction of the nation and nationalism through the performative mediation of narratives, networks, systems, data, and algorithms. This dialogic performative process can be understood by drawing on longer lineages of critical theories on nationalism and the media.

DOING AND UNDOING NATIONALISMS THROUGH PERFORMATIVE MEDIATION

The borderless distribution of capital, information, and communication and the flows of migrants across borders challenge traditional understandings of the unity of territory, nation, and citizenship. Asian scholars demonstrate that the process of invisible bordering has a long history, emphasizing that distinguishing between population groups has been a convoluted process. For example, after the end of the Second World War, the Japanese government suppressed the influx of Korean migrants by drawing new semantic and biometric boundaries between Japaneseness and Koreanness (Park 2016). The question emerges: how do people from various racial, gender, and national backgrounds variously experience such apparently autonomous, digitally enhanced border machines (Nishida and Nishida 2007)? Across the world, nationalistic movements cut and paste strategically from historical sources to attract a following, benefiting from the workings of filter bubbles (Pariser 2011). Therefore, dynamics of contemporary media and migration can be understood only in light of historical awareness. In addition, social media has changed the world, but people across the world have also changed social media (Costa et al. 2016). Migrants asserting themselves in a networked society hold the potential to reshuffle the coordinates of time and space through transnational communication (Diminescu 2020). Digital diaspora formation enables migrants to maintain a sense of belonging to their home country. This is in line with how media use may foster "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983). Also, from below, diaspora members in their struggle for community recognition or autonomy may actively perform and do "nation" (Vico 2018, 26; see also Ranganathan 2002; Oiarzabal 2013). Importantly, Avtar Brah highlighted that mobile subjects' imagined communities can transcend nation-state borders but continue to reflect often established lines of structural inequalities and borders. Referring to migrants' "homing desire" instead of their "homeland," Brah (Brah 1996, 201) underlines how migrant aspirations (Appadurai 2019, 7) may challenge oppressive constellations of media, migration, and nationalism. Lukasz Szulc, in his overview of the literature on media and nationalism, critically finds that while "traditional media have been recognized as key for the construction of nations and spread of nationalisms, the Internet tends to be perceived as the key agent of globalization" (Szulc 2017, 67). Such mutually exclusive understandings of media and nationalism will be critically reassessed in the articles included in this issue.

This special collection consisting of thirteen articles was initiated during the *Media, Migration and the Rise of Nationalism* joint seminar held in 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo (September 19–22, 2018). The seminar was structured to address media, migration, and nationalism by focusing on the themes of (1) cosmopolitanism and polarization; (2) migration management and border control; (3) diaspora, transnationalism, and networks; and (4) cities and social media as contact zones. Below, we also take these four themes as an entry point to introduce the reader to relevant historical and unfolding scholarly debates. We sought to build bridges beyond academia, and four artists joined our seminar: Takashi Tanihata, XX, Motoi Hirata, and Satsuki Hinokimoto. XX is the anonymized pseudonym of an artist who was happy to include her artwork in this English-language online journal, which can be easily accessed from all over the world through the internet. However, fearing possible repercussions of exposure, XX requested that her name and roots not be made public.

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Figure 1. Takashi Tanihata, *A Letter That Isn't Read I*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 65.2 × 80.3 cm.

Courtesy of the artist. First exhibited at 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo, September 2018.

The artists provided their visual impressions of the seminar themes. Below, in each section, we take the works of the four artists and their figurative and poetic reflections as an entry point to outline relevant debates and thematically introduce the papers included in this special collection.

1. *A LETTER THAT ISN'T READ*: MEDIA, COSMOPOLITANISM, AND POLARIZATION

To capture the dynamics of mediated cosmopolitanism and polarization, Takashi Tanihata (see figures 1 and 2) turned to the famous Japanese nursery rhyme "Goat Mail" for inspiration. The lyrics of this rhyme were written by Michio Mado, an outstanding Japanese poet who was awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 1994. According to Tanihata:

> This song has the structure of an endless loop of (mis)communication: A black goat eats a letter from a white goat before reading it so the black goat sends a letter to the white goat to ask about its contents. However, the white goat also eats the letter from the black goat before reading the letter. So the white goat also sends a letter to the black goat to ask the same. Thus, these two paintings revolve around the question "how can black and white goats express their opinions to each other?"

How can dialogue exist when speakers are not inclined to engage with each other's perspectives? Tanihata also seeks to refer to how in polarization, two opposing poles come into being only through relationality:

> Poles are generated by other ones. The relation between one pole and another in this process resembles the workings of "valeur" in arts. Valeur refers to the relative values of each color in a painting. Based on this resemblance, I tried to express polarization in my color use.

Migration plays a profound role in how media are used as sites of connection and polarization. Digital responses to the COVID-19 pandemic can serve as an illustration. In the introduction, we noted examples of initial discrimination, racism, and hatred against China and Chinese migrants. However, media polarization between communities is also emerging in less tacit, invisible ways. Combining her expertise on media, the city, and migration, Myria Georgiou discusses how mobilization, activism, and solidarity, while overwhelming, have also shown a distinct pattern: "the digital response to COVID-19 has been effective precisely because it builds on what we are so used to: commu-

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Figure 2. Takashi Tanihata, *A Letter That Isn't Read II*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 65.2 × 80.3 cm.

Courtesy of the artist. First exhibited at 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo, September 2018.

nicating, organising and connecting with people we know, or with those our friends know, on social media." She adds, "the more visible that hyperlocal solidarity becomes, the less visible that solidarity towards those beyond the proximate and the familiar seems to be"(2013 np). Solidarity and engagement with experiences and situations of the distant others at the margins beyond the nation are almost absent: experiences of refugees across the world living in camps in dire circumstances slip off the radar. The algorithmic workings of social media platforms allow people to connect on the basis of shared preferences, practices, and location. This, in turn, risks resulting in homogeneous echo chambers and filter bubbles. Users aiming to sustain digital cosmopolitanism are compelled to go against the grain of technologies. In this special collection, Ponzanesi, Parikka, and Etem unravel the relational complexities between cosmopolitanism and polarization further.

The postcolonial and feminist media theorist Sandra Ponzanesi, in her article "Digital Cosmopolitanism: Notes from the Underground," interrogates the desirability and explanatory potential of the thorny concept of cosmopolitanism (2020, this special collection) in the context of media and migration. She builds on the established definition of cosmopolitanism as an open disposition toward the other, but firmly rejects cosmopolitanism as a privileged, liberal, universalist ideal. Instead, she recovers cosmopolitanism as a critical analytic tool by combining a postcolonial and anticolonial framework with a situated focus on the encounter between migration and near ubiquitous forms of digital connectivity. Her reconsideration of cosmopolitanism as a lived multiplicity is developed "from the point of view of migrants and refugees who are not choosing cosmopolitanism as a badge of honor but who engage practically and concretely in cosmopolitan practices on an everyday basis" (2020, this special collection). This way, she attends to the relational workings of multiple cosmopolitanisms. Digital cosmopolitanism runs the risk of potentially reproducing power asymmetries through the myriad operating of "data-" and "techno-colonialism" (Madianou 2014; Couldry and Mejias 2019), biometric sorting, surveillance, and discrimination. Simultaneously, in affirmatively recognizing digital voices from below, digital cosmopolitanism as a banal, quotidian practice offers important means for transnational and intercultural belonging.

Tuija Parikka, a media, gender, and globalization scholar, further investigates digital cosmopolitanism in her article "Intimacy and Rivalry: Becoming a 'Self' in the Virtual Reality of Migration" (2020, this special collection). Through a virtual cartography of *The Displaced* (2015) and the *Fight for Falluja* (2016), she offers an innovative reading of virtual

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reality (VR) in relation to intimacy to reconsider the implications of contemporary humanitarian discourse. VR technologies function as "bodily immersion through movement not only by inviting such movement by aural, textual, and other elements but also by liberating us from subjecting the physicality of our moving bodies to our own visual registry" (2020, this special collection). Following the discourse surrounding VR installations that seek to humanize refugees and trigger empathy with them, Parikka hypothesizes, these technologies might offer the potential to establish new affective relationships between the self and the other: "The virtual can potentially facilitate a profoundly transformative becoming of a 'self' by means of a withdrawal from the 'real.'" Parikka indeed confirms that VR offers a medium for the expression of experiences and intensities through a combination of discourse, affect, and corporeality that "cannot really be talked about" otherwise. However, while virtual intimacies are established as viewers have corporeal affective experiences in engaging with migrant and refugee VR, through rivalry these experiences are uncoupled from "an articulation of what is desirable" in terms of politics. Thus, the technologization risks furthering a hegemonic humanitarian communication based on narcissism and pity rather than a politics of social justice (Ong 2019).

Staying with humanitarian communication, Jülide Etem—a media and public diplomacy scholar and filmmaker—shifts the attention from the cosmopolitan potential of intimacy to representation in her article "Representations of Syrian Refugees in UNICEF's Media Projects: New Vulnerabilities in Digital Humanitarian Communication" (2020, this special collection). The politics of representation has strong implications for media, migration, and nationalism, with regard to questions of framing, voice, ideology, authority, and authorship. Etem focuses on how configurations of race, in particular whiteness, shape the representation of refugee experiences in nonfiction digital humanitarian communication. She concludes that the power asymmetries that result from humanitarian organizations' representations of refugee experiences should be critically addressed by the makers. Importantly, she underlines that she is critiquing not the larger missions of the UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) and UNICEF (the United Nations Children's Fund) but their communicative practices. In line with social justice, community media, and migrants' rights agendas, established ethical principles of feminist ethnographic filmmaking to share authority can result in more collaborative, responsible, reflective, and reflexive accounts.

2. *THE SCENTS ON THE BORDERS*: THE POLITICS OF MIGRATION MANAGEMENT AND BORDER CONTROL

XX captured the theme of the politics of migration management and control in her oil painting *The Scents on the Borders*. XX's reflective narrative shows that she is the embodiment of a border-crossing subject, negotiating processes of inclusion and exclusion resulting from mediations of her migratory biography, identity, and appearance.

> I am "a hāfu (mixed Japanese and another race/nationality)" and have grown up in Japan. If I ask myself a question "Am I a pure Japanese?," I feel uncomfortable and have no choice but to answer "I am a hāfu born in Japan" although I have been familiar with Japanese culture and language, and most of my friends are Japanese.... I have a strange feeling about borders being drawn and being categorized by others.... Where are the borders? And how does anyone distinguish me from others? ... I made my artwork not as an observer but a person involved in these questions and decided its theme as "I am just me."
>
> I selected perfume for the motif of my artwork. Every perfume is made by mixing with several essences of the scent, therefore I thought it can be a good example of me and my situation. That is, as with perfume, I am... composed of several indissoluble parts... I think the scent and smell can be regarded as a symbol of the "eroding of the other"... the sense of smell is the most uncontrollable sensory organ, and therefore it draws instinctive borders which divide... In my artwork, the scent spills out from the central bottle onto the other bottles. Even if someone draws the border on the basis of my scent and categorizes it as something different from him/herself, it is just me.

As we mentioned in the introduction, the artist requested that her name and roots not be made public. This move reflects the fact that migrants' biographies and sense of belonging remain sensitive and charged topics in ethnonationalist countries as well as in the diaspora. Bearing in mind that XX shared with us that she would be hesitant to disclose her name and roots either in English or in Japanese, her request illustrates how "both the Japanese government and people inside and outside Japan hesitate to accept the discourse of immigration," a hesitation that for Gracia Liu-Farrer "has to do with Japan's ethno-nationalist self-identity and the widespread myth surrounding its monoethnic nationhood" (2020, 4).

Scents, for the artist, refer to border making and sociable forms of border crossing. She represents herself as "the other," and she invades "us," referring to mainstream Japaneseness. Sensory border crossing can be interpreted in line with the philosopher Immanuel Kant's writings on the workings of smell: "others are forced to share the pleasure of it, whether they want to or not" (Kant 2006, 50). Figuratively speaking, the scent, visualized as fine yellow flecks, crosses not only borders between the central bottle and the others but also those between it and the viewers. For Kant, "smell is contrary to freedom and less sociable than taste, where among many dishes or bottles a guest can choose one according to his liking, without others being forced to share the pleasure of it" (Kant 2006, 70).

Beyond the textured sensory experiences of migrants as border subjects so beautifully conveyed by the artist, contemporary technological advances in bordering show that the senses are increasingly weaponized as part of a broader surveillance apparatus. As part of the militarization of borders, consider, for example, the recent experimental project SNIFFER, which seeks to complement the odor-detecting skills of dogs through "mechanical dogs" or biosensor devices:

> The SNIFFER project is based on state-of-the-art technologies centred on a new generation of olfactory biosensors. The SNIFFER devices to be developed combine in a one-stop shop sampling, pre-concentration and pre-treatment with bio-mimicry, synthetic diamond sensor technology and multi-parametric training software (Cordis 2019).

The SNIFFER project—alongside other forms of artificial intelligence, algorithmic decision-making, biometric registration, and blockchain processing—reflects the wide proliferation of tech-driven migration control and management innovations happening across the world, where refugee bodies become laboratories for experimentation.

Under the heading of the politics of migration management and control, the articles in this section scrutinize the increased digitization of migrant subjects and borders. The digital border is a dynamic "assemblage of mediations that articulates digital and other technologies with symbolic re-

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Figure 3. XX, *The Scents on the Borders*, 2018. Oil on canvas, 90.9 × 72.7 cm.

Courtesy of the artist. First exhibited at 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo, September 2018.

sources to draw boundaries of inside/outside both on the ground (territorial border) and in narrative (symbolic border)" (Chouliaraki and Georgiou 2019, 594). Digitally mediated bordering disproportionately affects specific mobile subjects (forced migrants, labor migrants, nonbinary groups) over others (expatriates). Generally speaking, this division is also reflected in the conceptualization of specific subjects on the move as migrants and of others as mobile populations. While in both academic and policy discourse, the first group is commonly politicized and scrutinized as a financial burden or safety threat as a result of interacting forces of nationalism, the second group is welcomed, and technologies are improved to expedite their mobility (Leurs and Witteborn 2020).

The papers by Dijstelbloem; Quinan and Bresser; Boersma; and Van Schie, Smit, and López Coombs demonstrate how material and symbolic bordering proliferate outside and inside nation-state boundaries. Huub Dijstelbloem, who works on the intersection of philosophy of science and technology and political philosophy, in his article "Bordering a Hybrid World: Infrastructural Isolation and the Governance of Human and Nonhuman Mobility" addresses bordering as an infrastructural project. Studies on bordering tend to focus on technologization, the human consequences, or geopolitical institutions. Dijstelbloem seeks to account for how nonhuman species and different iterations of "nature" impact infrastructural bordering by recognizing the hybridizing, co-constitutive roles of "ecological systems, landscapes, climate change, specific species, bacteria, or viruses" (Dijstelbloem 2020, this special collection). To do so, he addresses three distinctive infrastructural bordering projects: (1) the externalization of border control; (2) disaster displacement; and (3) health security. The focus is on how infrastructural bordering operates at the interplay of "circulation" and "isolation," resulting in particular movable configurations of spatialities and temporalities, interactions between human and nonhuman actors, and technologies and nature. The word *isolation*, Dijstelbloem reminds us, can be traced back etymologically to "islands," with bordering as infrastructural isolation referring to the "mediating moment—for the coming-into-being of co-isolated spheres" (Dijstelbloem 2020, this special collection). In response to the so-called refugee crisis or the contemporary global COVID-19 pandemic, these mediating moments are clearly observable as nation-states seek to isolate themselves as closed-off islands.

In "Gender at the Border: Global Responses to Gender-Diverse Subjectivities and NonBinary Registration Practices," Christine Quinan, who combines trans, postcolonial, and critical security studies with queer theory, and Nina

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Bresser, who is trained in Arabic, Islamic, and gender studies, scrutinize the workings of borders for transgender and gender-diverse populations. While policies and legislations in various places in the world have sought to allow for nonbinary gender identification options such as gender X or "indeterminate" to be included in travel documents, Quinan and Bresser draw on critical theory and their global survey data to demonstrate how "current border security structures frequently pose a challenge for those not conforming to gender norms" (Quinan and Bresser 2020, this special collection). Between the macro-level power structures and micro-level practices of resistance, the authors document how restrictive policies are subverted and normative laws are exposed: "the multiplicity of scattered and contradictory practices, self-identifications, and lived experiences of transgender and gender-diverse people continue to exist in productive tension with panoptic apparatuses" (Quinan and Bresser 2020).

Sanne Boersma, a feminist science and technology and literary scholar, in her article "Narrating Society: Enacting 'Immigrant' Characters through Negotiating, Naturalization, and Forgetting," addresses how social scientific and governmental knowledge production creates various narratives of migrant integration. For Boersma, "The social sciences and the state are key actors in monitoring immigrant integration, which negotiate the ways of classifying a national population on the basis of, among other things, 'background' and 'origin'" (2020). Immigrant integration monitoring generally does not take into critical consideration majority society norms and practices, while constituting particular mobile subjects as "outsider problems" who need to be scrutinized. Through these mechanisms, some mobile subjects are categorized as being stuck in "perpetual arrival" (Boersma 2020).

Critical data studies scholars Gerwin Van Schie, Alex Smit, and Nicolás López Coombs, in their article "Racing through the Dutch Governmental Data Assemblage: A Postcolonial Data Studies Approach," further scrutinize the workings of categorization by focusing on datafication and quantification of population statistics. They propose a postcolonial approach to data studies, which, they argue, is crucial to scrutinize how datafied systems such as governmental open data platforms embed normative assumptions: "With the proposed postcolonial data studies perspective, it is possible not only to critically engage with the technical apparatus that reproduces inequality but also to place these systems and their ontologies and epistemologies in relation to a (post)colonial history and present" (van Schie, Smit, and López Coombs 2020). They make their argument through case studies of web applications that use open government data to geolocate racialized differences. A third set of papers addresses forms of connectivity across borders.

3. *THE VISION (REPORTAGE)*: DIASPORA, TRANSNATIONALISM, AND NETWORKS

> I imagined co-presence, meeting each other without any direct contact, resembles what we experience in the sea. For example, we can meet in the sea while wearing the same wetsuit, oxygen tank, and goggles, and see the bubbles when we exhale. In terms of the bubbles, violet sea snails roam and drift on the surface of the sea by putting on the bubbles being produced by their mucus... The shells which snails have reflect their anonymity.—Motoi Hirata

In Motoi Hirata's painting, we see the violet sea snail, or "bubble raft snail," as a motif that represents migrants and diaspora groups that face situations of physical separation from loved ones, friends, and wider communities. They have to embrace the use of digital technologies to become "digital diasporas" (Gajjala 2019; Candidatu, Leurs, and Ponzanesi 2019) and "connected migrants" (Diminescu 2020, 74). The fragility of the foamy bubble points to the instability of migrant and diaspora transnational connectivity. Like digital platforms that allow migrants to maintain their "compulsion of proximity" to loved ones at a distance (Diminescu 2020, 76), violet sea snails depend on technological support systems; "if the bubble raft ever breaks apart, the snail will sink into the ocean and die" (Oceans IQ 2020). In addition, bubble rafts enable violet sea snails to find partners and secure their offspring. Motoi Hirata continues explaining his artistic probe into the possibilities and limitations of maintaining bonds through the digital:

> On the internet which expands from our ground to the universe, we find that a lot of unidentifiable people raise their hands. They seem to be waiting to be held by someone.
> There are broadcast towers and Wi-Fi access points all over the world. We will be able to hold their hands with little difficulty and talk to each other with ease. In principle, we can connect to each other at the same distance and intensity on the internet...
> It is not a dream or a fantasy, and it means that the borders which have divided the relationships between visible and invisible, touchable and untouchable, hospitable and inhospitable, substantial and transient have become blurred. Even the feelings of touch may be replaced with the digital signals.
> The questions I proposed in my artwork are: "Are the tower of bubbles phantasms or are they the mountains and the fields of grass under the sea?" In addition, "Will we find out whichever is real?"

To what extent do forms of audio, visual, and textual connectivity and intimacy mediated through what Mirca Madianou describes as the "polymedia" environments (Madianou 2014) of social media platforms and smartphone apps offer a "digital lifeline" (Maitland 2018, 256)? Can members of diaspora groups and migrant communities use them to maintain a sense of "ontological security" (Georgiou 2013)?

In this special collection, Van Amelsvoort, Costa and Alinejad, and Leurs and Patterson chart the workings of connectivity and transnationalism across nation-state borders, from various perspectives. Jesse van Amelsvoort, a literary scholar, in his article "'I Heard Homer Sing': Tsjêbbe Hettinga and the Paradoxes of European Multilingualism," takes language as an entry point to address the relationships between minority and majority communities. Based on the work, career, and evolving recognition of the Frisian poet Tsjêbbe Hettinga, Van Amelsvoort charts the mediating role of poetry to cut across spaces and previously nation-state–bounded imagined communities: "If modernity's political project after 1789, and certainly after the advent of various European nationalist movements in the nineteenth century, was to merge the nation with the state, to unite the latter with the former—in other words, to converge *ethnos* and *demos*—then multilingual, localized, and migrant minorities are a perpetual thorn in the side of those propagating nationalist homogeneity" (2020, this special collection).

Digital anthropologists Elisabetta Costa and Donya Alinejad, in their contribution "Experiencing Homeland: Social Media and Transnational Communication among Kurdish Migrants in Northern Italy," argue that homeland

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Figure 4. Motoi Hirata, *The Vision (Reportage)*, 2018. Oil on panel, 91 × 60.6 cm.

Courtesy of the artist. First exhibited at 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo, September 2018.

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in the present conjuncture should be reconceptualized as a mediated experience, which is increasingly constituted through social media practices. Drawing on the situated experiences of first- and second-generation Kurdish migrants—who are part of the largest stateless diaspora in the world—Costa and Alinejad probe changing relationships between forms of spatiality, territoriality, and sociality as a result of the evolving entanglements of media, migration, and nationalism. They argue that "homeland is not an idealized geographical territory or an internal mental state, but rather a social process in which the migration trajectory, the lived everyday social life, and the routine social media practices of people come together to produce specific experiences" (2020, this special collection).

Digital migration scholars Jeffrey Patterson and Koen Leurs, in their article "Transnational Digital Intimacy Practices: Paradoxes of Transnational Connectivity and Home-Making among Young Adult Expatriates in Amsterdam," shift the geographical scope from Milan, Italy, to the capital of the Netherlands. They seek to contribute to a greater understanding of the specifically situated embodied and emotional consequences of cultural globalization by focusing on the "cultural politics of emotion, migration, and digitization of middle-class mobilities" (2020, this special collection). In their work with young expatriates, Patterson and Leurs combine in-depth interviews and smartphone photo elicitation to develop the concept of "transnational digital intimacy practices." With this notion, they seek to account for how "mobile subjects tactically navigate media environments, including the smartphone and social media platforms," through careful selectivity of media practices in negotiating "emotional precarity" (2020, this special collection). Transnational digital intimacy practices range from experiences of transnational surveillance to transnational sex. Furthermore, they also emphasize the diverging lived realities of mobile subjects, such as, in their case, so-called privileged "expatriates," and argue for a broader geopolitical, intersectional, and embodied nuance of these privileged tropes. The final section shifts focus from the transnational level to the local level of encounters with difference in urban and social media spaces.

4. *THE SPREAD*: CITIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA AS CONTACT ZONES

The final theme addressed in this special collection is that of cities and social media as cultural contact zones. Satsuki Hinokimoto made her abstract painting *The Spread* to address this theme:

> The canvas was structured with the following ideas. First, the blue area, which occupies the majority of the canvas, is the world where there are realistic contacts… the mixture of people is represented by the shades of blue. Secondly, the various colored circles, which are relatively small compared to the blue area, represent communities of migrants who have gone to other countries or other communities created on the internet, establishing different spaces from the blue world. The remainder of the canvas tries to describe to what extent those from other parts of the world interact, or remain isolated subaltern subjects that experience difficulties in acceptance and access as well as keeping in touch.

Figure 5. Satsuki Hinokimoto, *The Spread*, 2018. Acrylic on canvas, 72.7 × 90.9 cm

Courtesy of the artist. First exhibited at 3331 Arts Chiyoda, Tokyo, September 2018.

According to her explanation, if one were to interpret figuratively, the blue circle in the center of the canvas refers to the earth viewed from space. The communities depicted as large and small circles of various colors make their appearance in various shades of light and shadow, indicating that they are neither homogeneous nor uniform. Some circles overlap and interact, leaving colors to alter while blending or to stay unchanged.

In the process of her production, Hinokimoto asked Amanda Alencar, one of the seminar participants, about her "image of migrants/migration in terms of color." Alencar answered:

> Gray is the color. This is because they do not know exactly what position they are in, in their new country or city. They do not know whether they will be able to stay. That indicates the hesitation to take any further step in terms of building a future. Political fluctuations play a crucial role in the whole process, let alone the psychological impact of staying in the "gray" corner of the game.

The bottom off-white area of the canvas refers to the experiences of migrant subjects living in detention centers, camps, and shelters. Their lives are put on hold as they await, for example, refugee status determination or resettlement procedures. Meanwhile, their lives are punctuated with reminders of the world out there, represented in the painting by the bleeding of blue paint.

This work illustrates the various levels and workings of encounters, crossings, and co-presence in contact zones. The "contact zone" is a concept coined by Mary Louise Pratt (2008) in her analysis of travel writings from the period of European colonial expansion. According to her, the notion of a contact zone can be taken to analyze from a "contact perspective... social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other ... not in terms of separateness, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, and often within radically asymmetrical relations of power" (2008, 7–8).

The concept has traveled across intellectual terrains, showing the explanatory potential of taking a contact perspective to address spatiotemporal co-presence that occurs despite power hierarchies. James Clifford, for example, deployed the term in his scrutiny of ethnographic museums: "a space in which people geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations" (1997, 6). Michael Keith analyzed cosmopolitanism in the city through this lens, arguing that "contact zones of the city are thus a constitutive feature of the simultaneous and iterative reshaping of place and

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identity. They become Goffmanesque stages of contestation, subversion and disruption" (2003, 64). Koen Leurs drew on the term to address how young people in London encounter each other on social media: "as postcolonial contact zones where meaningful, intercultural encounters take place, these interstitial spaces reveal not only the formation of new digital consumers, but also the emergence of new political subjectivities as young urbanites learn to live with difference" (2015, 268).

Here, as already highlighted above with reference to Georgiou's discussion of mobilization, activism, and solidarity, we focus on both cities and social media as contact zones. The evolving close relationships between COVID-19, migrant workers, and technology in the context of Asian cities show that this focus remains urgent. For example, in Taiwan, after an Indonesian migrant caregiver was unknowingly infected by the novel coronavirus, the Taiwan Centers for Disease Control (CDC) announced and disclosed her identity as an "illegal" Indonesian migrant worker to the public (Wang et al. 2020). The CDC's disclosure caused "public fear," and "consequently, several county governments announced that they would tighten the measures and crackdown on undocumented workers" (Wang et al. 2020). Furthermore, as the CDC also disclosed the worker's history of activities and contacts, Wang and colleagues warn that "such a press release that has an effect no less than cyber manhunt could set off a vicious cycle. …A deficit of information like this would inflame stronger fears towards undocumented workers within the host society and exacerbate racism and stigmatization" (ibid). It is obvious that across the world, cities have accumulated people "on the move" (Urry 2007). In cities, people on various trajectories can encounter each other and possibly engage with each other about their situations and perspectives through social media channels. In fact, the previously mentioned migrant caregiver used social media from her isolation ward to broadcast her status through livestreaming, which was further disseminated online.

In this sense, from the beginning, cities have always been contact zones; this aspect of their nature might now be accelerated and become more visible through social media records. In particular, the articles by Pramod Nayar, Fiona Seiger and Atsumasa Nagata, and Sanz and Alencar show how migrants present themselves through "aspirational narratives" (Appadurai 2019, 7). For Arjun Appadurai, digital media practices enable the formation of new forward-looking migrant archives: "For migrants, more than for others, the archive is a map. It is a guide to the uncertainties of identity-building under adverse conditions… This living, aspirational archive could become a vital source for the challenge of narratability and identity in contemporary times" (2019, 6).

The postcolonial media theorist Pramod Nayar, in his article "Drawing Migrants and Carceral Spaces: Tings Chak's *Undocumented*," discusses the potentialities of the graphic novel form to narrate migrant experiences by focusing on space making. Graphic novels, at the intersection of visual narration and readers' perceptions, can function as a strong medium for spatial storytelling. Tings Chak's graphic novel allows readers to imaginatively travel through the carceral geographies of immigrant detention centers in Canada. In a bold and innovative mode of narrating migration, detention, and trauma, the first part of the graphic novel is devoid of people. For Nayar, the power in the graphic story lies in the ways in which architectural maps of buildings, sites, and geographical areas confronts us with the "pre-occupied" state of detention centers: they are reflective of the state's governmentality as they are built with a certain population of illegalized mobile people in mind, who need to be set apart and surveilled. Carceral housing of unwanted mobile populations occurs through the heterotopic "inversion of the city": "They are spaces within the city's organized spaces and yet, somehow, outside them" (Nayar 2020, this special collection). Through the incorporation of prisons inside the very fabric of cities, they become "prison-cities." Finally, Chak's panels aspire to a different understanding of the migrant experience through representing the architectural uncanny. The detention centers are impersonalized and heavily secured but also function "as home away from home for the migrants" (ibid).

Migration scholars Fiona Seiger and Atsumasa Nagata, in their article "Hosting Migrants in Kyoto City: Different Migrant Cohorts and Mutual Support," focus on the emergence of new socialities in urban migrant arrival infrastructures. In their ethnographic work with the Filipino community in Kyoto, migrants are addressed as aspiring city makers. In presenting a non-digital-media-centric account of hospitality through offline personal relationship maintenance and community organization, the authors decenter the role of the media in migrant belonging and identification processes. Importantly, they destabilize the dominant binary opposition between local populations as host and newcomers as guests. Hosting is an active process, a subject position, when conceiving "everyday multiculturalism in terms of micro-level interactions and of practices, as well as in terms of their institutionalization, thereby acknowledging hosting as part of a political project" (Seiger and Nagata 2020, this special collection).

Finally, media and migration scholars Camila Sarria Sanz and Amanda Alencar, in their article "Rebuilding the Yanacona Home in the City: The Role of Digital Technologies for Place-Making Practices of Displaced Indigenous Communities in Bogota, Colombia," engage with aspirational place-making practices of internally displaced indigenous people. Informants in their study shared a variety of place-making practices mediated through smartphones and social media, including the establishment of digital support networks. Importantly, they also actively seek to claim their citizenship rights to keep their community from disappearing, doing so through sharing legal information and advice. In addition, they have developed several informal initiatives to restore their collective identities—for example, through educational centers. On the basis of these findings, Sarria Sanz and Alencar make the following plea: "policy-makers should shift their focus from the ever-present digital divide that permeates indigenous communities today and pay more attention to the myriad ways in which these communities are learning autonomously how to involve digital communication technologies in their daily life" (Sarria Sanz and Alencar 2020, this special collection). Furthermore, conceptual and empirical work on indigeneity, internal displacement, and the Global South shows the urgency of decentering and decolonizing Euro-American frameworks, concerns, and interests in media and communication scholarship.

CONCLUSIONS

Media, migration, and nationalism emerge at specific junctures, resulting from specifically situated geopolitical, cultural, economic, political, emotional, and environmental processes. In contributing to a global turn in media studies, this special collection has offered context-specific conceptual and empirical reflection on mediated, digitized, and

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datafied processes co-shaping migration and nationalism across Asia, the Americas, and Europe. Thematically, addressing a variety of mobile subjects including forced migrants, refugees, non-binary-gender- and transgender-identifying travelers, expatriates, the internally displaced, and labor migrants, the articles have reflected on the politics of polarization, bordering, connectivity, and intercultural contact.

In line with Brubaker's critique of "groupism" (2004), the tendency to see migrant communities as singular and homogeneous, the papers included reflected how nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality as well as generation impact differently on mobile subjects and communities in the context of mediation and nationalism. Future media and migration scholarship can benefit from adopting the Black feminist framework of intersectionality. Anna Carastathis, Natalie Kouri-Towe, Gada Mahrouse, and Leila Whitley argue that "intersectional research has consistently shown that experiences of migration and displacement differ significantly, depending on how people are positioned in hierarchies of gender, race, class, age, religion, and sexuality" (Carastathis et al. 2018, 6). An intersectional framework is urgent to move beyond decontextualized, essentialized, and naturalized understandings of individuals and groups like migrants as a research category (Palmary et al. 2010). Furthermore, the grassroots #BlackLivesMatter network, which gained momentum as a global human rights movement after the horrific police killing of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, should inform the agenda of our media and migration scholarship. Besides showing or acting in solidarity, scholars should reflect on contextual specificities but also systematic parallels of institutionalized and engrained anti-Black racism and white supremacy in academia, media, art, culture, politics, and economics. There is a particularly great urgency to account better for how colonial and racist lineages shape contemporary constellations of media, migration, and nationalism. For example, in addressing Europe as the deadliest migration destination in the world for irregularized migrants, we should ask, "Do Black lives matter in Europe?" to expose Europe's so-called "migration-crisis" as a "racial crisis" (De Genova 2018, 1765). When we similarly ask, "Do Black lives matter in Asia?" we can recall the shameful misrepresentation of a news photo of a dark-skinned Syrian refugee girl. In her racist manga distributed through Facebook, a Japanese illustrator sought to question the economic motives of allegedly bogus asylum seekers (Osaki 2015). Or we can find cues to criticize an animation video explaining the #BlackLivesMatter movement edited by Japan's public broadcaster NHK, which focused on "a growing wealth gap between white and black Americans, and a higher rate of job loss among the black community due to Covid-19," which, however, "did not mention the death of George Floyd or police brutality in the US" (Wakatsuki, Cheung, and Guy 2020). For a socially just scholarly engagement with media, nationalism, and migration, it is imperative to broaden authorship; to bring critical, cross-cultural, and historical frameworks into dialogue; and to "decenter White masculinity as the normative core of scholarly inquiry" (Chakravartty et al. 2018, 254).

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