

Transnational digital networks, migration and gender

Deliverable No. 3

Title of Deliverable:

Literature Review and Policy analysis (WP2)

Due date of Deliverable: October 2010

Project coordinator: Panteion University (UPSPS)

Partners: Symfiliosi (SYM)
Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme
(FMSH)
University of Hamburg (UHH)
University of Bologna (UNIBO)
Peace Institute (PI)
University of Hull (UHull)
Utrecht University (UU)

Project no. 244744

Thematic Area: Culture in the creation of a European space of communication

Start date of Project: March 2010

Duration: 3 years

Dissemination Level

PU	Public	X
PP	Restricted to other programme participants	
RE	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium	
Co	Confidential	

Literature Review and Policy analysis

Synthesis Report

Nelli Kambouri and
Dimitris Parsanoglou
(Centre for Gender Studies – UPSPS)

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1. Literature review

1.1. Introduction

This report constitutes a review of the existing literature on transnational digital networks, migration and gender in eight national contexts. Although the examined countries do not share similar migration histories and profiles, although research on gender and particularly on digital networks mark different starting points and different trajectories in each country, we can discern some converging tendencies among them and – more importantly – potential research questions that can be tackled within MIG@NET project.

Beginning with the migration histories and contemporary profiles, one could distinguish at least four types of immigration profiles among the countries examined:

1. (Post)colonial: France, UK, the Netherlands
2. Post-war 'Gastarbeiter' regime: Germany
3. 'New immigration' countries: Italy, Greece, Cyprus
4. Post-socialist: Slovenia (which of course falls also under the category of 'new immigration countries')

It is evident that none of the above types are exclusive neither they constitute ideal types of immigration profiles. In other words, post-colonial immigration countries (particularly France and the Netherlands) have been implementing during the first post-war decades a significant programme of 'invited workers' recruitment through bilateral agreements with several sending countries.¹ In a similar vein, even during the 'golden' period of the Gastarbeiter regime, alternative types of mobility that do not fit within the rigid regulation terms of organised immigration have been flourishing. Similar divergences exist among the 'new immigration countries', which are presented almost exclusively through the lenses of an 'extraordinary' character the main element of which is informality, obscuring the existence of several types of regulation along with the fact that informality tends to be a global characteristic of contemporary migrations (Munck 2005).

Coming to the specific set of questions that concern this report, and looking through the existing literature on Transnational digital networks, migration and gender, and particularly on the intersection, interconnection or even combination of these three variables, what can be deduced at first glance is the *lack* or the *unevenness* of interconnection among them. Here, we will give a brief outline of research and literature relative to each one of the three variables concerned, and we will try to explore existing examples of at least partial interconnection.

¹ It is important to remind that France had already used this instrument of regulation already during the first part of the 20th century (Noiriel 1988).

It is important to note however, that irrespective of whether we do live in the age of migration or not,² irrespective of whether migration has profoundly changed or not during the last decade(s), the way we look at it has changed. It is not only the retreat of systemic or better structuralist interpretations and the emergence of agency-oriented approaches that characterise the dominant perceptions of the migrant mobility; it is also, and mostly, the enrichment of the analysis by embedding additional social categories that have always existed but remained silenced or underdeveloped.

To give an example that figures in the title of this project, the vast majority of studies on immigration cannot avoid reference to (informal) networks as a crucial factor of organisation and sustainability of the migrant movement. The theory of informal networks is latent or evident in almost all the interpretations of contemporary and historic migration. Production and particularly reproduction of the movement (*self-sustainability* in terms of Massey),³ is conceived and explained through a very often vague evocation of existing networks of communication and exchange of information.

In this review we are going to examine two analytical categories that seem to, or should, gain importance in contemporary migration research: gender and digital networks. Gender has embedded itself in social research and theory not just as a significant factor but as an essential part of any social dynamics. Migration seems to be gendered; migration studies as well. Nevertheless, the ways gender is perceived and used analytically remains an open question. As far as digital networks are concerned, definitions seem to be more problematic and need to be further theorised, in particular when they intersect with migrant social networks. In fact, the term 'network' as well as the term 'digital' could easily be characterised as 'fuzzy buzzwords', since they are often used, abused, and misused, reaching to a point that they 'mean everything and at the same time nothing'.

But before we investigate the interconnections among digital networks, gender and migration, we should proceed to a brief outline of the state of the art in migration research in the countries concerned.

1.2. The transnational moment of migration

In all countries involved in this project, one-sided approaches on migration, where the focus has been solely the 'host' societies and the ability of migrants to adjust/integrate/assimilate therein,⁴ have been largely challenged by focusing on

² We refer to the classic work of Castles & Miller (1993), and to the 'decrease of global migration' thesis; see among others Krugman (1991), Fischer *et al.* (2000), Jordan & Düvell (2003), Friedman & Randeria (2004).

³ See among others Massey *et al.* 1994.

⁴ Following Abdelmalek Sayad's (1999) critics on the 'sedimentation of meanings' where "each one of these notions are presented as original, but in reality they are all just different expressions, in different moments, in different contexts and for different social uses, of the same social reality, of the same sociological process": Sayad (1999: 309) ["Chacune de ces notions se veut inédite, mais, en réalité, elles ne sont toutes que des expressions différentes,

transnational spaces, networks and practices. Therefore, the research framework based on the determining link between migrants' needs and the demands of the labour market (so called 'water pump' or 'push-pull' system) has been largely rejected as outdated and mechanistic. As it has been stated, "curiosity, wishes to get knowledge of different ways of living, a desire to pursue opportunities that might improve personal life chances, are some of the factors that remain in the heart of impetus behind these migrations (both documented and undocumented)" (Brah 1996:178).

Therefore, transnationalism, as an approach that highlights the importance of a wide range of networks among international migrants connecting them with people of the same origin in other countries, seems to be to a lesser or to a greater extent the dominant paradigm. Practices that combine social and cultural, personal and institutional links, such as civic memberships, economic involvements, professional bonding and cultural identifications are highlighted in different national contexts.

In this vein, different types of transnationalism are highlighted, in close connection with the diasporic discourse and the typologies suggested within. So, according to a typology proposed by Ambrosini (Ambrosini 2008), 'circulatory transnationalism', based on the continuous movement through the borders, between the sending and receiving countries, but also within the latter one, and towards other countries, goes along with a 'connective transnationalism', which is based not on the physical mobility of the actors, but on the mobility of the knowledge and information, mainly through Internet, the digital networks, and the ICT. Within the latter, ICT are used by migrants for their economic activities, as well as to build up and maintain transnational relations, in a way that the ensemble of these 'digital transactions' form an 'electronic transnational space'. The last two models identified by Ambrosini are the 'mercantile transnationalism', based on the circulation of the commodities, and the 'symbolic transnationalism', focusing the repertoires of cultural consumption and representation of identities (national, ethnic, religious, and so on).

More or less, in similar or in other words, migrant mobility is examined through the lenses of transnationalism. Nevertheless, one of the main difficulties within the transnationalist discourse and literature emanates from the fact that (transnational) networks, which is the keyword in the vast majority of such analysis, are not so easy to define and even less easier to research upon. So, as it happens in the Greek case, although migration studies constitute today one of the most productive sectors of the Greek academia, with several journal and newspaper articles, books and edited volumes being published annually, questions linked to transnational networks and alliances tend to be underexplored, if not marginalised. With the exception of a handful of articles focusing on theoretical aspects of transnational migration networks, there is very little, in particular *fieldwork research* conducted to date on the transnational aspects of migrant movements or the formation of transnational identities and alliances across ethnic borders".

In general, one could argue that static approaches which neglect the diverse socio-spatial dynamics developing around migrant mobility have left their place to more mobility and multi-locality sensitive approaches. What is under construction and

à des moments différents, dans des contextes différents et pour des usages sociaux différents, d'une même réalité sociale, du même processus sociologique."]

negotiation in several contexts is the operationality of such theoretical schemes and typologies in specific empirical research.

1.3. Gender matters!

During the past decades, migration research and literature seem to have overcome their 'sexist myopia' (Lazaridis 2000). Gender issues and gender standpoints occupy a central place in analyses of contemporary migration dynamics. In all examined countries, to a lesser or greater extent, in recent years there have been several research projects and published articles and books that emphasise migrant women as active agents pointing out to their role in production and re-production of migrant mobility.

It is true that the initial interest of migration literature that brought gender at the forefront has been a sort of 'rectification' of a historic injustice. So one of the main concerns of 'gender-sensitive' studies is to insist on the presence and importance of women in past and present migrant mobility. Going further beyond the initial perception of female migrants as followers of their husbands through family reunification and as keepers and 'transmitters' of tradition and cultural identity of the country of origin to the children by focusing on daily life and culture (Green 2002; Hoving, Dibbits & Schrover 2005), women migrants have been largely reinvented, revisited and reconfigured.

The supplementary-to-male-migration type of approaches have given their place to approaches and analyses that take into account the *autonomous female migration*, which anyhow is considered as one of the main tendencies of contemporary migration (Castles & Miller 1993). Growing feminisation of migration, and particularly growing awareness of feminisation of migration by researchers and policy makers, has opened new questions and new fields of inquiry in all countries involved.

One could argue that research on female migration has gradually stepped out of the house. From the early 2000s onwards literature on gender and migration has escaped from the confined space of the household, discovering new places where gender seems to be a crucial factor. One of the key issues, particularly in the UK, where some of the most influencing relative work has been produced, is the labour market. Women migrants' significant participation in some specific sectors, e.g. health, care and domestic services, has provided incentive and empirical material for the study of what has been described as 'ethno-economic clusters' where gender plays a central role (Cox 1999; Anderson 2001).

Another area of interest, which in some cases – such as Slovenia and Greece – has dominated the initial interest with regard to the question of gender within migration, is the issue of *trafficking*. One of the problems that rise within the research and the discourse on trafficking is that women – and not gender relations – are largely perceived and represented within the dichotomy 'criminalisation vs. victimisation' (Agustin 2003). Although large part of the literature purposefully rejects the victimisation discourse and highlights the agency of migrant women, in some cases such as the Greek one, women are represented either as a 'complement' to male migration (in the framework of family reunification) or as 'victims' of trafficking networks constituted by men.

It is important to note, however, that theoretical and empirical production on gender issues and migration has overcome the initial emphasis on women's numerical

participation in migrant mobility. More specific issues, such as migrant women's participation in the labour market, culture, family, daily life, even art have been developed⁵. In addition, and in relation to the content of the MIG@NET project, women's and in general gender representations in the media have been one of the initial subjects of gender mainstreaming within communication studies/sciences.

Despite these efforts, however, most of the literature on migration does not include gender aspects, apart from the literature that has gender as its main focus. Although in many texts we find 'men' and 'women' as sex categories, there is no further analysis of gender as a social relation that affects all aspects of migrants' lives. On the other hand, although intersectionality among various axes of differences is evoked as a constitutive element of identity construction, gender is very often limited to the specific case of women. It is not perceived as a constitutive element/factor of social relations, like class or race, but as a necessary supplement for a more complete analysis of migration. In this context, we could argue that although gender has become part of migration studies, it is yet to be considered as an integral aspect to the more general analyses of migration.

Which brings us to the third transversal component of the MIG@NET project, which is the digital space, more particularly the digital networks that are built and developed within gendered migrant mobility.

⁵ See Dutch and German national reports.

1.4. Does digital matter?

If gender matters as for the construction of migrant dynamics, the question posed is whether digital means of communication matter as a substantive qualitative change in migrant practices. To put it differently: the 'invention' of women migrants (Green 2002) and the unanimous apprehension of the growing tendency of feminisation of migration constitute a qualitative step if not in migration in itself, at least in migration studies. The question is whether the new means of technology, particularly of Information and Communication Technology, constitute a new qualitative step in the global history of migrations. In other words, have we passed to the era of 'digital', or better 'digitally defined', migration?

Communication and information exchange networks have been recognised by historic research as a diachronic vector of migrant mobility. From letters to telephones and from mobile phones to Internet possibilities, communication networks seem to play a central role in migrant lives. Are these technological innovations sufficient enough to urge for a new type of migrant, the 'connected migrant' (Diminescu 2008)?

The first thing that one can grasp from the existing literature, at least in the eight countries which are involved in the project, is that new digital media of information and communication have attracted the interest of both migration and gender studies. It is true, however, that the initial interest on the digital dimension of migrant networks does not seem to have emanated from migration studies, but mostly from media or communication studies. However, in all countries, to a different extent and sophistication, migration or gender (but rarely both) have been studied through/in relation to new media.

1.4.1. Migration and digital networks

Migration and digital networks is a new field of research. Communication science research on immigrants and the media exist, for example in the German-speaking countries, since the 1960s. The main fields of research were related to media content, more particularly to the representation of migrants and ethnic minorities in mass media and its impact on integration, and ethnic-media products. Media use by migrants has become an issue for research only since the 1980/90s, especially after the introduction of Internet, cable and satellite television (Piga 2007).

However, compared with the research on the representation of migrants in the media, studies of the media use by migrants are still scarcer. It has not been an issue but during the last decade. In almost all cases the connection between migration and digital networks follows a 'user-related' approach. What is at stake is mainly migrant's 'amount of connectedness', and mainly in relation/comparison to 'native' populations, where a potential 'digital divide' or 'digital gap' is explored. In rudimentary forms, which is the case for the majority of work already conducted in this field, this interest is limited to the usage of ICT by migrants, or by women, and sometimes by migrant women.

The general tendency is that literature on digital networks and migration is almost marginal in most cases. There are very few publications on the topic and even fewer references to migrants in general studies of digital networks. In some cases, such as the Greek one, migrants are presented as a disadvantaged 'minority' that has limited or very little access to digital networks. While the literature on gender and digital networks focuses on the 'digital divide', as we will see, in the literature on migrants the term most frequently used is that of the 'digital gap'. While the term 'divide' connotes a difference that may be bridged, the term 'gap' signifies unbridgeable distance caused by social, cultural and economic inequalities.

In this type of literature, migrants are identified as a 'vulnerable group' of the population that is generally lacking access to digital networks. What is interesting to note, however, within studies that follow this 'victimisation/handicap' approach is the fact that actually migrants are in many cases more or equally frequent users of computers and equally if not much more skilled than the average 'native' user in the utilisation of search engines (71% of migrants over 73% of general), e-mails and attachments (71% of migrants over 70% of general public) chatrooms, newsgroups, on-line meetings (45% of migrants over 33% of general public), on-line phone services (21% -16%), peer-to-peer file sharing 31%-19%).⁶

Exception to this confined approach is the work conducted in France through various projects, and particularly the project "TIC Migrations" (<http://ticmigrations.fr>). Challenging the figure of the 'uprooted' migrant that seems to be even today the dominant figure following Oscar Handlin's classic book of (1973), new dynamics and forms of action of the 'connected' migrant come at the forefront. The 'double absence', metaphor used to describe migrants' experience between two 'missed' countries, has been converted to a 'double presence' thanks to the development and use of new Information and Communication Technologies; ironically enough, the author of the classic work on the double absence (Sayad 1999) was the first in the French-Maghreb context to make an inventory of communication forms, where he showed the growing use of different 'new' means, particularly tapes (Sayad 1985).

Within this framework, pioneer research has been conducted in France covering several thematic areas, such as *migrant mobilities and ICT, contacts from distance, e-inclusion and e-government, policies of control and political mobilisation, economy and remittances, art and creation, diasporas and web*. In addition, special issues in journals, such as *tic&société*⁷ (2009) and *Réseaux* (2010), have hosted texts that cover several topics around the question of the connected migrant, such as the diasporic practices on the web, the consequences of the ICT development on the reconfiguration of the borders (Ben-David, 2010)(Cehan, 2010), the role of ICT in the improvement of the quality and rapidity of services addressed to migrants (Bounie, Diminescu, Abel 2010).

It is true therefore that in the course of time, more and more specific research questions have been addressed: border crossings, flows, integration, family reunifications, everyday communication, ethnic, religious or youth mobilisation, remittances etc. are questions revisited within the new digital context. For many

⁶ For more see Observatory for Information Society (2007).

⁷ <http://ticetsociete.revues.org/>

migrants, digital networks are important tools for keeping in touch with people from their home country and for meeting those with a similar background in their new country. Especially for the latter goal, there are hardly any other means to connect, except the websites that target these groups specifically. New media are also attractive to migrants because within them they can create their own platforms where they have a voice and people listen to them. This contrary to other media, where migrants often feel ignored or discriminated. Moreover, specific group targeted websites also make the larger public aware of the existence and position of these specific groups, as it happens in the Dutch context (Mamadouh, 2003).

Compared to the described Dutch context, this is also the case for Slovenia, where collectives such as *DostJe!*, the *Rog Social Centre* and generally the *Njetwork* network expand the space for (public) awareness and action, enabling migrants with access to digital media and thus their expression through and with the use of (transnational) digital networks.⁸ Similarly, in Italy, new media, particularly web sites and web TV, constitute a basic vehicle of ethnic and in general social mobilisation. The use of digital technologies is central in the construction of transnational connections not only with the sending countries of parents, but with other European and international countries too. The use of Internet, and particularly blogs and forums are main tools of second generation's associations. These are spaces of communication, circulation of information and knowledge, social relations are constructed. In this framework, research shows that technological means constitute a platform where new forms of participation and citizenship practices are developed.

Most of the above focuses on the question of integration: in other words, the question behind this type of research is whether use of new media improves or hinders integration of migrants, and particularly youth with migrant background, into the 'host' societies. In this vein, some argue that websites that focus on specific groups, such as *Maroc.nl*, enhance segregation, as their visitors dissociate themselves from the public domain. Others believe that such activities on the Internet can have a positive influence on integration and that most migrants combine visits to specific ethnic websites with ones addressing to broader public.⁹

Apart from integration-oriented/aspired research important production, basically in the UK, is linked to the question of transnationalism and 'digital diasporas'. Issues of transnationalism and migration are intensely debated in academic works on communities and ethnic selves on-line. It has been suggested that Internet promotes supranational identities, where national identities are re-negotiated as ethnic minority identities in the host country, but this re-imagining is paradoxically constructed as 'nation building' because migrants ignore local differences important to the country of origin. (Radhakrishnan 1994).

The notion of 'digital diasporas', suggested initially by Mallapragada (2000), is now widely used in research of transnational on-line communications. While in the majority of ICT discussions, power positions are associated with participants who are either more active in communication or who apply personal experiences of the discussed subject, relationships may be structured differently in digital diasporas. For example, Bunt (studying web-sites of Muslim diasporas in various countries)

⁸ See <http://tovarna.org/node/30>, <http://www.njetwork.org/>

⁹ See the Dutch country report.

describes on-line sessions as mainly question-answer or question-comment sessions, where positions of authority belong to a religious leader or organisation (Bunt 2003:193). He notes that although many web-sites incorporate a variety of services for dispersed communities (e.g. matrimonial and financial) and discuss many non-religious questions (e.g. use of credit cards, organ donations, music, and lottery), the Muslim on-line diaspora has a dominant religious perspective where the participants 'place greater emphasis on their [religious authorities'] leadership and networking issues' (ibid). The importance of various forms of internet communications also differs significantly in digital diasporas.

It seems that to a lesser or greater extent, use of ICT has become gradually part and parcel of the social capital of migrants. However, it has also become an integral part of the updated mechanisms of control. Either in the 'hard' form (detention centres) or in the 'soft' form (such as the Schengen Information System or the EURODAC system), 'technologisation' and more precisely 'digitalisation' of border controls is becoming a very 'material' reality that transforms the migrant movement and the social processes and relations linked to it.

1.4.2. Gender and digital networks

If migrants have to overcome a 'digital gap' for women things seem to be considered easier. As we mentioned above, while within the literature on migrants and digital networks the term most frequently used is that of the 'digital gap', in the case of gender the relative term is 'digital divide'. In a similar vein with the studies on migration and digital networks, studies on gender and digital networks detect gendered patterns of differentiated or even unequal access to digital networks reproduced through everyday practices of digitality in the family, the school, the university and the media.

In the Greek case, this strand of literature is mostly developed as a series of statistical surveys conducted amongst specific groups considered to be representative of the Greek population i.e. school children, students, families. Usually the samples are small legitimizing only partial results, while social class, race, ethnic origin and sexual orientation are not central variables in the research. "Women and girls" in Greece are in most cases presented as a unified category of females lacking the interest and the skills to use ICTs and thus lagging behind an equally unified category that of Greek "men and boys". From this perspective, the contemporary "digital divide" is in continuum with traditional gender beliefs and stereotypes about technology and technological change as male dominated sectors (Stratigaki, 1996). Respondents are asked to reply to questionnaires that generally identify the categories of male and female as fixed and stable in terms of gender, race, nation and class. As a result, masculine and feminine identities are conceived as attached permanently to specific users and usages.

Similar is the case of Slovenia, where there are limited connections between the topic of gender and digital networks within academic production. These can be found in a study that shows how the meaning and use of information and communication technology differentiates between men and women (Oblak 1997) and in the field of research on media protection of children and youth (Šribar and Praprotnik 2009).

Moreover, digital is linked to gender in a few publications discussing legal regulation of pornography, particularly analyses of policies that regulate pornography in the framework of media legislation (Šribar 2006). There are also some articles that generally analyse the (negative) effects of digital networks, such as the stereotypical representations of women in advertising campaigns (Pajnik, Lesjak-Tušek 2002).

Similarly, in the UK gender-aware migration research is rarely, if ever placed in digital context. Research conducted so far has shown that ICT 'are more real than virtual' (Miller and Slater 2000:30) and the subjects treated digital forms of communications in the same way as they use traditional mail or telephone. Miller and Slater used this evidence to reject the idea of purely virtual friends and the concept of dislocated or fragmented identities in virtual space: 'We need to treat Internet media as continuous with and embedded in other social spaces' (Miller and Slater, 2000:5). Importantly, the findings of this study were also gendered, and differences in the Internet use specified in terms of time spent on-line, topics and strategies of communication. Both male and female respondents spoke about trust being gradually built up (despite the anonymity) through a continued on-line presence over time.

Due to the popular fascination with technological aspect of communication at the turn of the millennium the national cyber-studies focused on the questions of how confident are female users in these technologies and how to encourage female presence on-line. The research of gender differences in the way how the Internet is used continues in Britain and includes such variables as marital status, 'life stage', career, age etc (Helsper 2008). The shift from research on gendered use of technology towards patterns of gender specific activities and behaviour has followed. There is extensive research on female participation in medical support groups, cyber dating (for example Gunter 2008), rape (Tosh 2010) or bullying.

In general, it is true that the dimension of gender remains limited to some examples of girl internet activities, such as forums and social networks.¹⁰ Another area where gender, migration and ICT are linked together is the examination of matrimonial websites, which reorganise in new and different ways the 'international gender distribution' (Diminescu et. al. 2010). In general, the focus on gender as a multidimensional, relational structure category is a quite recent tendency within the research. Instead of media consumption or media representation, the focus has started to be spread upon media action as a process of communication – a dynamic relationship between content, production, reception – in order to understand processes such as the 'doing gender', and 'gender swapping' in the digital space.

Therefore, and within the context of different receptions of cyber feminism, and in conjunction with poststructuralist feminist approaches a kind of euphoria about the Internet arose from the mid-1990s. Internet's promise was to represent a decentralized, polycentric world that escapes the totalitarian access and thus to undermine the hierarchical gender relations. Initially, cyber feminism celebrated the flexible, "playful" ways of dealing with sex and gender in the virtual space such as the practice of gender-swapping or cyborg metaphors that lock against dualisms, but was soon to gradually lose its specific subversive potential in the context of general gender theory debates and feminist controversies (see Schachtner 2002).

¹⁰ See Dutch report.

Tanja Paulitz (2002) criticizes a still dominant attention, especially in Internet research, on the use or shape of technology versus technology development rather than a preoccupation with the "construction of electronic networking" as a social process in which the category of gender is considered to be universally relevant, but then asks where and how gender is (re)produced. Following Donna Haraway, Paulitz argues for a conception of agents of digital information technologies as both constructed and re-creating themselves, which correlates the spheres of technology and the social. Related to each other these spheres that tend to be separated from one another for analytical purposes provoke redefinitions of inter-subjectivity.

Within this theoretical matrix, research focusing on multiple possibilities of constructing different gender identities online has arisen. Because the participants of Internet communication often do not receive any audiovisual information of each other, it is relatively easy for them to hide or emphasize certain aspects of physical or personal characteristics. An extensive research between primary and secondary school children shows that most youngsters often present themselves differently on the Internet (Valkenburg et al, 2006). Girls tend to pretend that they are older and more 'pretty' than they really are; boys present themselves as more 'macho'.

An additional strand of analysis, which follows the 'doing gender' type of approaches is the one that follows processes of gender ambiguity and gender swapping that exist (at least as possibilities) in digital networks. The enthusiasm of the 1990s over the internet as a "promised escape from body and appearances" has been questioned by research that suggests that gender inequalities and asymmetries are reproduced systematically in digital networks (Wakeford 2000). Although white, middle class, males may still dominate the world of avatars and cyborgs, silencing the possible escapes from gender orthodoxies that may arise on line is misleading.

Implicit in these analyses is the obvious assumption that research in and on cyberspace cannot be limited to ethnic milieus; neither can it be circumscribed to specific linguistic and cultural norms since all identities, including gender and ethnic ones, are potentially changing on line. While actual gendered transformations by users may not be as popular as initially assumed by those who celebrate digital "transgendering", yet the possibilities of changing and mutating gender relations are considered as framing digital spaces in ways very different from material spaces.

1.5. Conclusion: Migration, gender and digital networks?

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the literature review on migration, gender and digital networks is that research is developed in an uneven way among the countries involved. On the one hand, the digital dimension of social interactions that develop within and around migrant mobility remains a new and in most cases unexplored field. On the other hand, interconnections among the three variables examined in this project are practically absent, even if analytical couples, such as gender and migration, migration and digital networks, gender and digital networks, do exist. It is true, however, that there are difficulties or even inexistence of theoretical and methodological (path)ways that help to grasp the intersection between digital-migration-gender, without reproducing supplementary-type approaches.

Apart from this general conclusion that demonstrates the relevance and the necessity of this project, some analytical categories and concepts have to be revisited and re-theorised. Gender, for instance, albeit the massive development, production and impact of Gender studies remains in many cases a mere sex category. Although it has been theoretically established that gender is a *constitutive element of social relations and processes*, not confined only to the case (and cause) of women, most often it is conceived and used within the transnational corpus examined for the needs of this report as a simple sex category, the evocation of which offers a global comprehension of social phenomena.

Similar difficulties are observed with regards to another central concept of the project, the concept of 'networks'. In other words, one of the main challenges that have to/will be encountered is the theoretical and empirical endeavour to define 'networks', and particularly 'digital networks', beyond descriptive and sometimes impressionistic or euphoric assumptions. Migration studies have for a long time adopted the paradigm of (informal) networks as the main strand of interpretation and analysis of migrant mobility; the same applies for new media and communication studies. Nevertheless, networks – migrant and digital – have to be specifically located and analysed, even if they are inherently characterised by multi-locality and diffusion.

Finally, another common ground for contemporary research on migration is that of transnationalism. The transnational character of migrant movements has been sufficiently explored and theorised. Research, as well, follows to a significant extent transnational paths, which override methodological nationalism and potentially aspire to go beyond simple comparatism between national cases. It is true, however, that transnational theoretical premises remain difficult to operationalise in concrete and verifiable empirical methodologies and data collection. There is significant work that has been done towards the concretisation of the transnational theoretical impulse, some of which conducted in the countries involved in this project. The challenge for this project – and not only – is to deepen into the questions already posed and, more importantly, to formulate new ones.

2. Policy Analysis

2.1. Introduction: EU policies on gender, migration and digital networks

EU policies on digital networks envisage a top-down approach to the creation of a European "information society", or "E-Europe". The policies aiming to construct this new society are relatively new and the institutions involved include an amalgam of public and private bodies invariably interconnected to achieve ambiguous and shifting objectives. Furthermore policies on the European information society consist mainly of Policy Plans and Communications that have no binding effect on member states. As a result, there is great diversity in policies implemented in different member states. The most recent policy document on the European information society is the Communication "A Digital Agenda for Europe",¹¹ which sets the principle goals for the period of 2010-2020. The report argues that Europe is in a crisis and promotes the idea of a "borderless information society" at the EU rather than at the national level. The term "information society" broadly refers to the digitalisation of every day practices and institutions. The report argues that the diversity of national policies has undermined the development of this field and as a result Europe is behind the US and many Asian countries in the development of digital technologies and networks. The European information society is considered as a "key economic, political and social process" that will enable the European societies to overcome the crisis by 2020.

The report identifies seven problem areas and proposes specific measures to overcome them: (1) Fragmented digital markets, (2) Lack of interoperability, (3) Rising cybercrime and risk of low trust in networks, (4) Lack of investment in networks, (5) Insufficient research and innovation methods, (6) Lack of digital literacy and skills, (7) Missed opportunities in addressing societal challenges. Policy responses to these problems are based on a neo-liberal agenda that focuses on the "de-nationalisation" of European digital markets, increasing cooperation between EU, national and local authorities with private capital, and technological innovation that encourages interoperability and new investment in digital networks by private capital. The agenda also addresses many social issues such as internet security, digital literacy and what it terms "societal challenges", including health, e-government, the environment, care services for the elderly and the disabled, transport systems etc.

On the contrary, the EU policy framework on migration has been much more developed and established and provides a set of common principles that have been broadly incorporated into the legislation and policies of most member states, including some of the 'new' member states. Since October 1999, when the Tampere Agenda was set up, EU directives, communications and policy plans have been adopted at the EU level forming what could be now labelled 'a common EU immigration policy'. Recent policy developments in this field include the following:

¹¹ COM(2010) 245 19.5.2010

- (1) *Economic migration*: recent EU policy documents include the "Green Paper on an EU approach to managing economic migration" of 2004¹² and the "Policy Plan on Legal Migration" which was adopted in 2005.¹³ The 2005 plan marks a shift towards an approach that no longer aims at the harmonisation of entry and admission procedures, but rather aims at the management of the rights of specific categories of immigrants that are considered valuable for the EU markets, including ICT workers. In this context, a "proposal for a directive on the conditions of entry and residence of highly skilled workers" is introduced. Furthermore it is stipulated that in order to attract these categories of workers it is necessary to boost the market with information campaigns, enlarge the scope of the European Job Mobility Portal (EURES) to encourage the immigration of highly skilled third country nationals.
- (2) *Integration*: recent EU policy documents include the "Third Annual Report on migration and integration".¹⁴ While integration policies differ significantly in different member states, the principle of "mainstreaming integration" in all policies has been adopted. There is also emphasis on the integration of immigrants and refugees through employment and education that includes acquisition of ICT skills. Furthermore, another important goal is "the participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration".
- (3) *Illegal immigration*: recent EU policy documents include the Directive "Common Standards and Procedures in Member states for returning illegally staying third country nationals" of 2008,¹⁵ and the Communication "On policy Priorities in the Fight against Illegal Immigration of Third Country Nationals" of 2006.¹⁶ The Communication does not only focus on preventing illegal entries at the EU borders, but envisages a "multi-faceted approach that targets measures at all stages of the migration process". Furthermore the communication acknowledges that migration flows are mixed: there is "a plethora of reasons for individuals' attempts to enter the EU, including for international protection, present Member States with an array of challenges".

The Communication sets a number of priorities that effectively account in conjunction with the *Schengen Agreement* to a process of digitalisation of border crossings:

1. It emphasises the significance of *biometric technology* as a tool for a more effective border control policy. "The potential of this technology should be exploited to enhance the effectiveness of border control operations while taking into account ethical concerns and the protection of fundamental rights" (p. 5).
2. Linked to biometric control, is the "integrated technological approach - e-borders". This has been backed by the Directive 2004/82/EC, which provides for "the obligation for certain carriers to communicate data contained in their passenger's passports to the authorities which carry out checks on persons at the external border. Further to the full

¹² COM(2004)811

¹³ COM(2005)669

¹⁴ COM(2007)512

¹⁵ Directive 2008/115/EC

¹⁶ COM (2006) 402

implementation of the Directive by September 2006, this system should be extended to other carriers and further enhanced, with a view to developing threat analyses and risk assessments. This implies a more comprehensive targeted use of data".(p. 6)

3. The communication envisages the creation of a "generalised and automated entry-exit system to complement existing databases would facilitate checks on the immigration and residence status of third country nationals entering and exiting EU territory". (p. 6) This objective has been set up in order to deal with the deficiencies of existing and future databases: (a) the envisaged mechanism of "Visa Information System (VIS)" (which will enable border control authorities to check a visa application history and to verify whether a person presenting a visa is the same person to whom it was issued) and (b) the second generation Schengen Information System (SIS II) (which enables the prevention of entries of persons to be refused entry). Both of these mechanisms cover only a very limited number of immigrants and fail to spot the *overstayers*. Currently the entry-exit processes are governed mainly by a system based on manual stamping of the passports of third country nationals on entry and exit.
4. Furthermore, the communication foresees the need for the creation of common European databases on regularisation procedures, asylum, trafficking, and illegal labour.

Overall, there has been a strong effort to harmonize the digitalization of policies on illegal immigration, while policies on legal migration, integration have been mostly limited to national policy initiatives aiming at the integration of ICT specialists in European markets and the ICT training and education of migrants.

Gender mainstreaming should be, at least in principle, implemented horizontally in all aspects of European policy making. However in both information society and migration policies, the main approach to gender mainstreaming has been neutrality with marginal additions of women as a 'vulnerable' group or as a distinct category. On the contrary, the multiple gender inequalities, but also possibilities of overcoming these inequalities through digital and migration networks, are silenced. The latest policy document in this field is the Communication of the Commission entitled "Strategy for Equality 2010-2015".¹⁷ In this document the following actions linked to ICTs and migration are foreseen:

1. *Participation of Women in ICTs*: conduct an awareness-raising campaign on shadowing days in companies across Europe; set up platforms to encourage networking; promote digital literacy and eSkills specifically for women through the Digital Agenda; promote the Code of Best Practices for Women in ICT in as many as possible stakeholders as well as update and refine it.
2. *Migration policies and Integration of Migrants*: promote gender equality in all initiatives on immigration and integration of migrants; promote integration strategies and measures targeted and actively involving immigrant women; promoting the improvement of the quality of services

¹⁷ COM(2010)491final

and structures in order to recognise and respond to the different needs of immigrants' groups; finding the right balance between targeted and general measures at different levels of government; promoting the role of women in the process of integration, as well as that of their families and children; enhancing information and prevention of discrimination against immigrant women and promote their autonomy in society; supporting their training on employment opportunities and language knowledge, as well as knowledge of their rights and their participation in public life; create a new section on the integration of migrant women within the European Web Site on Integration; and provide funding to projects aimed at the integration of migrant women via the ESF.

2.2. Points of convergence between policies on migration, gender and digital networks

Overall there are five points of convergence between policies on migration, gender and digital networks. These are categorised in two policy areas in relation to migration and information society.

2.2.1. Policies on legal migration and integration: the inclusion of migrants and women into the European information society through educations and skills learning

In its [European i2010 initiative on e-Inclusion](#), which was adopted in November 2007, the Commission called on policy-makers at all levels to ensure ICT issues are addressed in social and economic policies as a means of tackling social exclusion issues. Furthermore, one of the main objectives of this initiative was to reduce to a half the backlog of people at risk of exclusion from the Internet by 2010.¹⁸ The Communication of the Commission of the 1st December 2008, entitled "Towards an accessible information society",¹⁹ set as a major objective the inclusion of all vulnerable groups into information society. In this context, the Commission funded the "ICT for All" programme, which set up "an international network seeking to demonstrate innovative uses of ICT, with a potential to create new employment opportunities for the exclusion prone". These were defined as "immigrants, disabled citizens, unemployed and the older".²⁰

These initiatives were implemented mainly at the national level by partnerships of public, NGO and private institutions, local and national authorities. In Greece, more than 100 projects aiming directly or indirectly at the inclusion of migrants and women into the information society were implemented before 2008 in the context of the *Community Initiative EQUAL* mainly by local authorities and NGOs.²¹ These included the creation of digital portals, language and ICT skills for migrants and women. In addition several Greek NGOs participated in the "ICT for ALL" network promoting the acquisition of e-skills by migrants.²²

Migration and gender were also central in the implementation of the "Initiative D21" – Germany's largest partnership between government and industry for the Information Society – which included a cross-party and cross-industry network of 200 member companies, institutions, and political partners, and the "Digital Opportunities Foundation",²³ an information system whose objective was the digital integration of previously underrepresented groups in Internet use, notably "women,

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http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/einclusion/bepartofit/overview/index_en.htm

¹⁹ COM(2008) 804

²⁰ <http://www.ictforall.net/>

²¹ <http://www.equal-greece.gr>

²² <http://www.ictforall.net/>

²³ Stiftung Digitale Chancen, www.digitale-chancen.de

children and young people, people in the countryside, people with disabilities, immigrants, senior citizens".²⁴ A "master plan for Germany's way towards the information society" noted that one of the main target groups for digital integration were women (estimated at the time of the publication at 45%), whereas "migrant women, economically inactive and unemployed women, and women in rural areas" were mentioned as particularly worthy of support.²⁵ The "National Employment Action Plan" of 2004 reiterated the "enhanced participation of women in shaping the information society", as the central content of the government program "Information Society Germany 2006".²⁶

However, there are states like France, the Netherlands, Slovenia, the UK and Cyprus that have no policies for the integration of migrants into the EU information society. In France, the 'France Numérique 2012' digital economy plan makes no specific reference to migrants or ethnic minorities and no concrete relevant action is foreseen. The document only mentions "vulnerable groups" (*publics sensibles*), referring to seniors, persons with disabilities and people with reduced mobility. However, the lack of explicit reference is hardly surprising, given the fact that French state is opposed to defining individuals by their ethnic backgrounds and to naming specific populations in public discourse (cf. recent debates about including so-called 'ethnic statistics' in the public census). Instead, one usually refers to certain geographic areas (*quartiers populaires*) and public policy is always put in a socio-economic context.

In the Netherlands, the two main programmes dealing with New Media, the Media literacy programme 'Mediawijsheid' and the digital skills plan 'Digivaardig-Digibewust' (Ingen Housz, 2009) make no special reference to either gender or ethnicity. In Slovenia the use of any kind of digital networks is not recognised as a matter of policy regulation (Kovačič 2003, 2006) and several migrant and ethnic or religious groups have created websites on their own²⁷ and the state provides only some support through the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities in terms of enabling access to a separate website to all registered cultural societies and associations.²⁸ In the UK the most recent regulatory document, "The Digital Economy Act" that came in force in June 2010, marks the guidelines for the future development of Internet provisions and drafts the model of funding such developments. However it does not analyse neither deals with social divides and inequalities in the access and the use of the Internet. The main criticism of the "Digital Economy Act" in the UK has to do with the fact that this regulatory document was designed and drafted without any consultation with the British public and

²⁴ Under "Berlin talks," ("Berliner Gespräche") the Digital Opportunities Foundation organised a meeting on 01.13.2004 about "Integration Engine Internet-Digital opportunities for female migrants and male migrants" ("Integrationsmotor Internet - Digitale Chancen für Migrantinnen und Migranten"), where three of the five speakers of the participating institutions had a migrant background.

²⁵ "Informationsgesellschaft Deutschland 2006. Ein Masterplan für Deutschlands Weg in die Informationsgesellschaft", p. 50

²⁶ "Nationaler Beschäftigungspolitische Aktionsplan" in "Informationsgesellschaft Deutschland 2006".

²⁷ See for example Njnetwork at <http://www.njnetwork.org/>, the web portal of Bosnians in Slovenia at <http://www.bosnjak.si/>, or Zavod Krog on Facebook)

²⁸ www.kreart.si

Internet users. The Act defines the geography of the British on-line space as the UK domain registry. It neither specifies the language of communication on-line, nor covers the issues of digital divide. In Cyprus as well, migrants are practically invisible in any policy or initiative that concerns inclusion of migrants in Information society. It is indicative that even within the framework of various "Inclusive eGovernment" flagship initiatives that have been promoted, such as ICT classes, migrants are not referred to as a target group; for example ICT classes are addressed to prisoners, young people, and senior citizens. Moreover, there is no reference to a digital strategy for migrant integration in the National action plan for the Integration of Immigrants adopted in September 2010.

Increasingly, however, both migrants and women are excluded from the list of social groups that are considered vulnerable in the policy framework, while relevant actions target mainly "older and disabled" people. In the most recent EU document setting the Agenda is the Communication, "A Digital Agenda for Europe" for 2010-2020, the proposed activities make no reference to migrants or women in relation to digital literacy and competences. This change in perspective may be attributed to the fact that both women and migrants are no longer considered in the national statistics of many states as particularly "vulnerable to exclusion" or "excluded" social groups. In Germany, for example, the ARD/ZDF-media commission carried out a study in 2007, which covered media behaviour (TV, radio and Internet) of migrants in Germany compared with media behaviour of Germans, which came up with the finding that there is no 'parallel' media society and that people with an immigrant background are better equipped with media technology in their households than the Germans, especially in terms of newer technologies such as DVD players, computers, and digital televisions. The study also noted that the Internet has become, in particular for younger migrants, an important information and communication function, as a bridge to the country of origin (ARD-zdf 2007). In a similar study, published in the UK in 2008, entitled "Digital Inclusion: An Analysis of Social Disadvantage and the Information Society" it was reported that the correlation between social and digital disadvantages is not ultimate, and there is statistically important number of cases when socially deprived/ disengaged people are highly active in the digital context (Helsper 2008). This is especially expressed in minorities/ migrants case: minorities representatives were actively digitally engaged while they were often excluded from traditional social channels. It was expected that those who are socially disadvantaged and yet engaged with technology tend to be younger, single, more likely to have a higher level of education, but furthermore, disadvantaged people from minority ethnic groups tend to be more highly engaged with the Internet - the fact that has not been expected. The research recommends to policy makers to address the potential for the Internet to confront social isolation and economic disadvantage – the role of medium which is largely 'untouched' in Britain by policies and policy initiatives.

2.2.2. Policies on legal migration, the digital labour market and knowledge production: Employment and mobility of highly skilled migrants and women in the ICT sector

The integration of women, in particular of young age, and migrants in ICT professions has been one of the central objectives of the inclusive EU information society. Policies aiming at this objective have been induced by fears that the population deficit of European societies will produce a shortage of ICT specialists within the EU. There are three different policy responses to these fears involving a combination of private and public institutions: (1) externalisation of ICT functions to states outside the EU in a form of outsourcing, (2) special Visas and agreements for the migration of ICT specialists, and (3) education schemes encouraging women and migrants to study and work in the ICT sector.

Special visas and agreements encouraging the migration of specialists have been implemented since the 1990s by different European governments. In Germany in 2000, for example, in order to sufficiently meet the demand for experts in the field of ICTs, professionals who came from countries outside the European Union were recruited through the "Immediate Action to meet the need for IT specialists". This special provision expired in 2005. In states, like Greece, Italy and Cyprus, which have no ICT industry and have been characterised by emergency policies adopted as a result of the unexpected influxes and by the extreme precarity of migrants, there were no initiatives for the legal migration of immigrants with ICT skills. Neither in France, which is a state with ICT industry, such initiatives have been undertaken. Although the French policy of "selective immigration"²⁹ could be considered in such terms since it pretends to promote the migration of highly skilled migrants (a migration which is also often considered a cause of "brain drain"), it is in fact nothing else but an "immigration preventing policy".

On the contrary, the UK, which is not a member of the Schengen agreement and does not fully adhere to the EU migration policy framework, has seen an expansion in labour migration, a simplification of the work permit system and loosening of restrictions on the skilled and highly skilled migrants: work permits were extended to five years enabling the individual to accumulate the four years necessary to obtain "Indefinite Leave to Remain" and to apply for citizenship after five continuous years of residence. In January 2002 the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme (HSMP) was introduced allowing migrants with high academic and professional qualifications and with extensive work experience outside the UK to immigrate without a job offer. Under both schemes, applicants were able to bring in family members, including civil partners, who in turn also had the right to work. In 2005 this system was further developed into a policy where a single points-based system is employed to qualify if migrants are eligible to settle. The current system awards points for qualifications, experience and wealth. As the UK report argues, "migration policies are sharing the principles of the EU directives, but mainly use the experience and migration policies of the Commonwealth countries (Canada and Australia in the first instance), rather than adopting migration schemes developed in the EU members".

²⁹ See for example: <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/projets/pl2986.asp>

In the context of Europe, the EU Blue Card directive, adopted on 25 May 2009 by the Council of the European Union (with the exception of Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Ireland) sets out "the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of highly qualified employment" for stays exceeding three months. The directive is oriented towards making the European Union "more attractive to such workers from around the world and sustain its competitiveness and economic growth". Besides equal 'social and economic rights' equal to member state nationals, the admission of "highly qualified workers and their families" is facilitated by the establishment of a "fast-track admission procedure".³⁰

Within this framework, the Netherlands have adopted a special procedure for the admission of "highly skilled migrants". The Dutch "Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst" or "The organization for entry into the Netherlands" has an "Office for Labour and Highly Skilled Migrants",³¹ which can issue a residence permit called "verblijfsvergunning als kennismigrant". In the development of a 'Modern Migration Policy', the Netherlands aims to attract "exceptional foreign talent" through a swift and simple process. Talents include holders of MA's and PhD's from Dutch or foreign top universities who can make a "worthwhile contribution to our economy, sciences or culture".³² Notably, "professional soccer players, ministers of religion, teachers of religion and prostitutes are not eligible for a residency as highly skilled migrant".³³

In Slovenia, no special visas and agreements exist that would encourage the migration and employment of highly skilled migrants, though an amendment to the existing legislation foresees an introduction of the so-called Blue Card aimed at attracting highly skilled migrant workforce. A more encouraging policy framework used to be in place for 'third country nationals': if they happened to possess the appropriate skills and qualifications for so-called deficit professions (for example IT support technicians, various engineers etc.), they could enter with intent to work without the control of the national labour market. The deficit professions were defined according to labour market demands and were not limited to specialists but comprised a wide array of different professions. With a 2009 change in policy, employment of 'third country' migrants has been reduced to issuing work permits only if there are no appropriate unemployed Slovene citizens available for the job. This effectively means that the deficit professions, which were part of the 'uncontrolled labour market', are now being controlled.

Another aspect of these policies is the *education of immigrants and women* in order to acquire the necessary skills for their inclusion as professionals into the high-tech digital market. These policies open up spaces for selected individuals - migrants and women - to enter well-paid fields of employment, while at the same time promoting

³⁰ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:155:0017:0029:en:PDF>.

For research on the topic see <http://www.europeanunionbluecard.com/>

³¹ <http://www.ind.nl/en/inbedrijf/wonenenwerken/kennismigranten/>

³²

http://www.ind.nl/en/inbedrijf/actueel/IND_verstrekt_eerste_verblijfsdocument_voor_buitenlands_toptalent.asp

³³

http://www.ind.nl/EN/verblijfwijzer/verblijfwijzer_mijnsituatie.asp?proc=komen&procedure=Highly%20skilled%20migrants&land=Afghanistan&duur=1&intro=procedure&lang=en

an operationalised conception of education based on the objective of expanding the target groups for specific digital products to include more migrants and women as consumers. An interesting example of the double-sided nature of these policies can be found in a short video, promoting a project undertaken by an EU funded research project that run from 2002-2004, the RISESI. The video is entitled "High Tech Women and Immigrants" and begins with the images of three young girls walking down in a road in Kista Sweeden.³⁴ They are the winners of a national maths competition, on their way to attend a secondary school where a program has been implemented for the integration of second generation migrant girls in ICTs and encourage them to undertake studies and professional carriers in this sector. The school implemented a program of visiting IT specialists that give talks about carrier prospects. "If IBM wants to grow" notes one visiting ICT specialist "they know that they need girls, they know that they need people from different countries". The partnership between the private and public sector becomes operationalised in order to promote labour in education which is inclusive for "minorities". Women and immigrants constitute therefore a potential labour force that is employed in the ICTs sectors, not in spite but because of their cultural – in this case linguistic, ethnic and religious – peculiarities. "This represents a potential pool of excellence as most of these boys and girls are bilingual, often speaking a language which is not commonly taught in Europe such as Persian, Hindi or Arabic", the commentary notes.

A similar initiative took place in Germany, when BITKOM, Microsoft, and the trade union ver.di (confederation of workers in the services sector) signed among others in 2009 the "Charter for the talents of the future. Women in the ICT industry" developed by the "Centre of Excellence Technology, Diversity, Equal Opportunities", in cooperation with IBM Germany and the Initiative D21.³⁵ To date, BITKOM, (the voice of the IT, telecommunications and new media industry in Germany, which represents more than 1200 companies), has pointed out in its publications the shortage of skilled labour in the ICT industry. In addition to the policy strategies of a national training initiative and an increased work site marketing, they call persistently for the facilitation of the immigration of highly qualified people: "Can a law, that in 2007 allowed just 155 highly skilled immigrants a settlement permit, bear right to the name Immigration Law? Or should it not rather be called 'immigration preventing law'?"

In the UK there are similar policies dealing with immigration and high tech jobs such as Fresh Talent Scotland 2005-2008, Tier 1 score migration system. The first one was aimed at third countries graduates of Scottish Universities, who were able to work in Scotland for two years without any restrictions. Unfortunately this initiative turned to be more intentional rather than practical, due to the fact that Scottish parliament was not able to secure special privileges in the area of visa policies, that are in jurisdiction of the Westminster. Tier 1 (former HSMP – highly skilled migrant programme – see above) has created the biggest ever inflow of highly qualified migrants (mainly man) with families. But in the current economic situation the programme has been limited and quotas have been introduced. The Conservative

³⁴ http://www.youris.com/Society/Women_in_Society/HighTech_Women_Immigrants.kl

³⁵ "Wir unterstützen die Charta für die Talente der Zukunft und engagieren uns im Nationalen Pakt für Frauen in MINT-Berufen" MINT is the abbreviation for "mathematics, computer science, science and technology" (BITKOM 2009a)

government under the pressure of anti-migration organisations is planning to eliminate TIER-1, which might put highly qualified migrants and their families living in the country in an uneasy situation of being employed and settled but not wanted by the state.

in France one can mention the initiative of the *Institute of Political Sciences* (Sciences' Po Paris) which, through the "Conventions ZEP" (Priority Education Zones) allows the recruitment of young students from the *banlieues* ("2nd generation" immigrants). Additionally, there are projects or more accurately initiatives that promote the "integration" of foreign students in ICT schools: for example, in *Telecom ParisTech*, 46% of the students are foreigners³⁶. However, it is not an official "policy" (it is often due to foreign companies that pay for the studies of these students abroad). In January 2008, the "Plan Banlieues" (led by Fadela Amara, the former Secretary of State for Urban Policies) was launched. It aimed to focus on the "access to jobs among banlieues residents"; the "opening up and the end of the isolation of the banlieues"; "Education and Success of banlieues residents". However, the Plan has been considered as a *failure*.

Similar initiatives in other countries are quite marginal or inexistent. In the Netherlands, apart from the Media literacy programme 'Mediawijsheid' and the digital skills plan 'Digivaardig-Digibewust' mentioned above, there are no other National policies focusing around this question, although there has been research on the subject.³⁷ In Slovenia, the *Active Employment Policy Programme for 2007-2013* doesn't even mention migrants, while women are only mentioned twice in the whole document – as one of the target groups of the "innovative programmes for increasing the social inclusion and fight against labour market exclusion". In terms of education, Slovenia's integration policy is limited to language courses and courses on Slovene history, culture and constitution (and even these are lacking or poorly implemented). Apart from occasional lip service paid to the need for (re)skilling to ensure migrants' economic participation, the area of education and re-skilling is problematic even for citizens with full access to Active Employment Policy Programmes.

Overall, one could argue that even in cases where such policies of inclusion exist, education becomes operationalised as performance and acquisition of skills with market value. Migrants and women represent an existing productive force in digital spaces that expands the scope of existing knowledge production into new languages and cultures. The filtering and selective inclusion of a small number of "unique" migrants and women in the ICT sector aims ultimately at the broader appropriation or capturing of the social labour of migrants and women in digital spaces by public and private bodies that venture into the development of new products and services specifically designed to cater for the needs of these groups. In effect such market oriented policies of selective inclusion are paralleled with integration policies that

³⁶ http://editions.campusfrance.org/etabs/par_fiche/en/ing_telecom_paris_en.pdf.

³⁷ See for instance Sleijpen G. (2010). '*Niet-westerse allochtonen beschikken over iets meer internetvaardigheden dan autochtonen*'. Available at: <http://www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/E1E15FF9-76B7-4717-93A1-34A0C92D05B8/0/2010k2v4p61art.pdf>

increasingly aim at the integration of specific groups of migrants selected specifically for their skills and capacities to act as "cultural mediators" between "host" and "sending" societies (see above for example EU policies on legal migration and integration, especially the EC "Policy Plan on Legal Migration" of 2005 and the "Third Annual Report on Migration and Integration" of 2007).

2.2.3. Policies on the Media and Integration: "Diversity" and the inclusion of migrant practices into the dominant discourse of digital networks

The dominant EU policy framework on the media is established through a series of abstract commitments to cultural diversity and respect of difference. The relevant EU web-site outlines the basic aims of current media policies: 1. Promote cross-border TV broadcasting and digital content service, 2. Support cultural diversity, press freedom and media pluralism, 3. Protect children from harmful content, 4. Tackle piracy and protect copyright and intellectual property rights online, 5. Promote digital libraries for improved access to cultural resources, 6. Support new digital services using public data (maps, weather, traffic and economic statistics). In this context, it is interesting to mention the Public sector information (PSI) database, which is produced and collected by public bodies and includes digital maps, meteorological, legal, traffic, financial, economic and other data. Most of this raw data can be re-used or integrated into new products and services for daily usage, such as car navigation systems, weather forecasts, financial and insurance services.³⁸

However, there are also several preconceptions about European culture that are often reproduced in on-going EU policy initiatives effectively blocking migrant transnational cultures and gender roles that question the male dominated cultural frameworks. An indicative example of this is a video publicising the on-line digital library *Europeana*³⁹. The video begins with the founding figure of Enlightenment rationalism DeCartes and continues with Isaac Newton, Adam and Eve, a visualisation of the Darwinian theory of evolution, ancient Greek and Roman art, a sign which reads "the abolition of colonial slavery", Bethoven, Rossini, and Maria Calas, amongst others. The choice of personas to represent European culture in this video encapsulates concepts criticised by feminist and post-colonial theory: the rational subject being male and white being over-represented as the canon of European civilization, while women are simply added in as mythic figures (Eve) and divas (Callas) and "coloured" people are included as anonymous masses enslaved and then liberated by colonial centres. The evolutionary narrative further reinforces this form of representation.

A particularly interesting case with regards to the inclusion of migrants into the dominant culture is that of the Netherlands. As the Dutch case study points out, diversity was always a central issue in media policies, but today it "is considered to be one of the central characteristics of Dutch media policies, but not something that needs to be accomplished through clear quota and demands from the government,

³⁸ http://www.epsiplus.net/examples/products_and_services

³⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/nav/nav_med/index_en.htm

nor through special targeted programmes".⁴⁰ This policy choice is the outcome of the dead end reached with the pro-active policies for the integration of migrants into the dominant culture that prevailed in the Netherlands in the 1980s. In the face of the failure of these policies, new media offer the promise of "cultural work without gatekeepers", where anyone can participate in production, decide on the agendas, express an opinion and make her voice heard. In fact, research in the Netherlands shows that many migrants feel misrepresented in mainstream media and at the same time only discussed in negative contexts. In this context, it can be argued that "the media revolution (..), offers groups who do not recognise themselves enough in the public domain nor feel acknowledged, the possibility to do something to change this".⁴¹

In the UK the migration representation in media has been deeply influenced by the post-colonial discourse which combines strong antiracist tendency with an outdated perception of migrants being poor, uneducated and dependent. At the large scale the attitudes to migration are continuously formed and reproduced by traditional media which reflect a variety of opinions in the society. Migrants self-representation is more expressed in digital space with a variety of diasporic and migrants' organisations e-mailing their newsletters and flyers to policy-makers, municipal bodies, individuals. One of successful attempts to self-represent migrants in media was the Migrant and Refugee Media and Policy project, funded by the Big Lottery Community Fund 2005-2008. Among the main initiatives of the project there was a Refugee Media Action Group and Getting Your Say Course. The production of "The New Londoners", first migrant and refugee free newspaper in London, was a pioneering work aimed at reaching out to the general public, and producing migrants' own stories. The group also created a documentary "Torn", which was shown at various events and conferences. When the funding finished the project became a part of the UK online centres network, which includes libraries, community centres, Housing Associations, Age UK centres etc. individual community centres and schools.

In the so called "new migration" states, like Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Slovenia questions of the representation of migrant communities in the media have only emerged recently and do not constitute issues discussed widely in public debates. In the Greek case, there are only marginal state-funded initiatives that have been introduced during the 1990s in order to boost the participation of migrants in public discourse, such as the creation of TV and radio programs in languages of the main migrant groups represented in Greece and information campaigns against the stereotyping of migrants in the media. Following the closure of the TV program and the radio programs for migrants in the 9.84 radio station of the municipality of Athens, the internet looks increasingly as a space where migrant individuals and groups may become more active. There is, however, no research or policy initiatives encouraging such new media projects in Greece. In Slovenia, the state provides only minimal support by way of the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities in terms of enabling access to a separate website (www.kreart.si) to all registered cultural societies and associations. While this means that at least some migrant groups can more easily create their own webpages using this particular policy provision, this is still far from a notable representation of migrant communities in the

⁴⁰ Bink and Serkej, 2009

⁴¹ de Waal, 2003, p 150

media. Apart from these measures aimed to support 'cultural' migrant/ethnic minority organisations, there are also narrow avenues for expression of religious groups in the public media, e.g. the Muslim and Orthodox representative can address the congregation on their religious holidays using the national broadcasting service. As an important new development, a new Radio and Television Corporation of Slovenia Act has recently been adopted (October 2010), where also the former Yugoslavs are mentioned as a public for the first time. Yet, because of criticism of some aspects of the Act by the opposition, it will be the subject of a national referendum on 12 December 2010.⁴²

Another aspect closely connected with integration of migrants in the media discourse is *Cybercrime*. Migrant digital networks are increasingly conceptualised as an Internet security threat, in particular after September 11th and the rise in Islamophobia. Cyber-crime and cyber attacks are very high on the agenda with regards to on-line control of information often leading to the banning or surveillance of migrant web-sites. In relation to migration, policies linked to cybercrime involve mainly migrant groups that are typecast as potentially threatening because of their race, nationality or religion. For example, web-sites of migrant organizations and groups may be monitored, blocked or prohibited because they are considered as dangerous for inciting public unrest, disorder or even terrorist attacks. This is particularly the case with Muslim migrant groups and transnational networks.

The communication of the Commission adopted in 2009, entitled "Protecting Europe from large scale cyber-attacks and disruptions: enhancing preparedness, security and resilience"⁴³ makes no reference to these groups. The proposed actions were introduced as a response to the cyber-attacks targeting Estonia in 2007 and the breaks of transcontinental cables in 2008 and are conceived as actions "complementary to those to prevent, fight and prosecute criminal and terrorist activities targeting CIIs".⁴⁴ There are, however, "different regimes of surveillance" on cyberspace depending on the state and the migrant groups in question: for example states, like France, Germany, or the UK which are considered as potential terrorist targets are more likely to impose bans and more systematic surveillance of web-sites typecast as potentially threatening than Slovenia or Greece. Similar questions are raised with regards to the on-line activities, bans and surveillance of nationalist, ultra-right wing, neo-Nazi and neo-fascist organizations and groups. The extent to which these are considered as potentially "threatening" for public order, in particular when they use hate speech in their on-line platforms is an important question to be addressed in particular in the context of sexist and racist conflict. Other issues that may be indirectly linked to migration and gender are issues of piracy and intellectual property in relation to the digital export and commercial usage of cultural products by migrants.

⁴² The act states, for instance, that the "RTV Slovenia shall be liable to produce [...] programmes for the members of national communities of the former Yugoslav republics (Albanians, Bosnians, Montenegrins, Croats, Macedonians and Serbs) and other national and ethnic communities in the Republic of Slovenia, as well as programmes for the foreign audiences in the Republic of Slovenia." (article 4)

⁴³ COM(2009) 149 final Brussels, 30.3.2009. Previous EU documents on this theme include COM(2005) 229, COM(2006) 251

⁴⁴ p. 2

2.2.4. Policies on Illegal Migration and Border control: control of mobility through digital means, identities, passports, Schengen provisions

The digitalisation of the border crossing regime is an important point of convergence between digital networks and migration control. This process is linked to the creation of what has been now termed the "Schengen area", whose external borders are now governed by the same principles. However, not all EU states are part of this area and as a result different rules and procedures are established.

The latest developments in EU policies include the following:

1. According to the "Schengen Borders Code"⁴⁵, third country nationals must be subject, at entry, to a "thorough check", which in addition to the examination of the travel documents involves verifying their purpose and length of stay and whether they possess sufficient means of subsistence, as well as a search in the Schengen Information System (SIS) and in national databases to verify that they are not a threat to public policy, internal security, public health and the international relations of the Schengen States. The checks involve a number of conditions that are verified by the border guard through questions put to the traveller. Also the validity of the travel document is to be inspected by the border guards, including verification of visa through the Visa Information System, while other documents authorising professional and residence status claimed. Border guards are obliged to manually stamp – indicating the date and place of entry and exit – the travel documents of third country nationals crossing the external border. The SIS can be checked at the consulates in order among others to deny issuing of visa or entry.
2. "The Communication of the Commission Examining the creation of a European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR)"⁴⁶ -2008. This communication focuses on the European Southern Border and in particular the maritime border, which is considered more porous. It focuses on "enhancing border surveillance, with the main purpose of preventing unauthorised border crossings, to counter cross-border criminality and to support measures to be taken against persons who have crossed the border illegally" (p. 2). The main objectives include: the reduction of illegal border crossings through better quality information, to promote internal security by preventing "cross-border crime", such as terrorism, trafficking in human beings, drug smuggling, illicit arms trafficking, to enhance "search and rescue capacity" (p. 4). Two important strategies are introduced: *situational awareness*, that is the ability of the national authorities to detect cross border movements and legitimise their control, and *reaction capability*, meaning the ability to reach cross border movements and react promptly to crises. Both these strategies are to be organised at the EU rather than the national level and consist of measures that effectively amount to the digitalisation of all

⁴⁵ OJ L 105, 13.4.2006, p. 1.

⁴⁶ COM(2008) 68 final

information linked to border crossings. Information should be used in a coherent manner: a single upgraded communication network for surveillance is envisaged, as well as "research and development to improve the performance of surveillance tools and sensors (e.g. satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles / UAVs, etc.)". All information gathered at the national level should be shared and processed in such a manner as to create "a common information sharing environment between the relevant national authorities".

3. The Communication of the Commission "Preparing the next steps in border management in the European Union".⁴⁷ The document states that the Visa Information System (VIS) will be fully operational by 2012 in order to verify authenticity of the visa and the identification documents of the holder. Biometrics – facial image and fingerprints – will be introduced from the start in the VIS. The Commission has presented a proposal to amend the Schengen Borders Code, making compulsory the verification of the identity of the visa holder at each entry" (p. 3). While travellers who do not require visa were not subject to systematic border control, the communication advises that they too should become subject to such control. Another important issue is the identification of overstayers, because exit is not recorded.⁴⁸ The document envisages the creation of an electronic system of exit/entry that includes all types of border crossings, not only third country and visa holders which will be based on automatic registration and alert system in cases of security threats. Third country nationals with no visa restrictions will be registered in an Electronic System of TRavel Authorization (ESTA).
4. The creation of the *European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders* ("Frontex"),⁴⁹ which was established in 2004 and its headquarters are based in Poland, that organises emergency operations in border zones considered to be in crisis.
5. The creation of an *External Borders Fund* that supports States bearing, for the benefit of the Community, a financial burden as a result of implementing common standards on the EU's external border control and visa policy. The Fund has a budget of €1820 million for the period 2007-2013.⁵⁰

As the above indicate, border control policies are not based on the creation of single centralised data basis on illegal migrants shared by all member states, but rather on the interconnection of different specialised data bases shared by all parties to the Schenghen agreement. This interconnection constantly expands the scope of acts that should be digitalised. Increasingly all types of border crossings become subject

⁴⁷ COM(2008) 69 final

⁴⁸ "Overstayers present by far the biggest category of illegal immigrants in the EU. Even if such data would be collected by individual Member States there are no any means for sharing such data between Member States. Border guards are neither able to calculate the length of stay when different travel documents are used to enter and exit the EU or when they are confronted with practical difficulties such as a passport full of stamps or when stamps are illegible": *ibid.*, p.5.

⁴⁹ <http://www.frontex.europa.eu/>

⁵⁰

http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/l14571_en.htm

to processes of digitalisation (legal, illegal, third country, EU, long and short-term) in order to encompass different forms of mobility. The aim of EU policies seems to be the creation of an overarching system of interconnected border crossings that includes all types of movement (entry/exit, legal/illegal).

The constant expansion of the system responds to the different migrant strategies for overcoming the deficiencies of the system. For example, in EU documents the problem is increasingly identified as being that of "overstayers", and those not required to hold a visa or even to EU citizens. However, by constantly introducing new data bases the system has ended up in an overabundance of information that is often difficult to manage. The south European border has become a line of migration crises that shift according to migrant strategies.

Overall, the digitalisation of border crossings has been legitimised as a means of improving the fragmented system of border control and providing safeguards against forgery and mistakes. In practice, the digitalisation of border control has resulted into an explosive situation that puts in question EU asylum principles and positions international and government institutions specialising on asylum and refugees in conflict with border control strategies. This inter-institutional conflict has become apparent from the beginning of the digitalisation of the Schengen regime, but it has really become explosive recently with regard to the Greek border zone. In fact, this form of digitalisation has had a significant effect on the implementation of the "first country rule". Through the information stored in the digital data bases, it became possible to legitimise the return of migrants and prevent the departure of migrants from the border zone states and regions. In the case of Greece, this process resulted into a crisis of the border control regime, with large numbers of migrants being in transit indefinitely unable either leave or stay in Greece, i.e in Patras and in Athens. Instead of acting as a mechanism of more effective control and deterrence, the digitalisation of the system brought to the forefront the inability to intercept migrant movements and confined the whole logic of cooperation in matters of border security into a paradoxical stand-still. Furthermore, it led official government, NGO and international institutions to question the extent to which border control is really compatible with refugee protection and humanitarian standards. This was manifest in the questioning by national governments, NGOs and the UNHCR of the return to the first country rule, with regard to asylum claims because Greece has seized to be considered a "safe country". The Greek state was declared in a state of crisis unable to provide the basic humanitarian standards for asylum seekers. As this example shows, the implementation of digital control failed to prevent incoming flows or transform the condition of porousness of the border but brought into question the rationality of the whole system. The Greek border zone has become a focal point where digital and migrant geographies meet not only in relation to control, but also in relation to possible escape routes.

Another important aspect of this process is the introduction of *biometrical identification* in the Schengen regime, which has been widely criticised from a human rights perspective, pointing out to the dangers of privacy protection and the potential usages of sensitive personal information of migrants for political control. In this context, the digitalisation of border control has been conceived as an exceptional case. As the German report argues, however, this approach is problematic because it establishes border control and migration policies "as the searching and finding of a

permanent state of exception at the literal edges of human rights".

In fact, as the EU policies mentioned above indicate, it could be argued that the digitalisation of control is not purely negative and its purpose is not simply to monitor from a distance, arrest and extradite "illegal" migrants, but involves also a positive gesture, a rather pro-active engagement with the prediction of risks and the mapping of all types of mobility both within and outside the European space. The strategies of *situational awareness*, and *reaction capability* specifically refer to this pro-active engagement with the construction of borders at different places, both within and outside national territories and the Schengen area.⁵¹ In other words, digitalisation is not only a system which allows the detection of illegal migrants at the border, but is mainly *a codification of flows and forms of mobility and a system of profiling in order to predict future trends at all stages of the migration process*. Critics point out to the fact that this proactive form of monitoring is possible only through the massive collection of personal data of the entire population. In that sense, it might be the case that the site of migration policy is paradigmatic of broader trends that involve a digitalisation of control of all forms of border crossings. The EU policy developments mentioned above clearly show a move towards the direction of an all encompassing digitalisation that is closely linked with E-government.

2.2.5. Policies on E-government: digitalisation of administrative procedures involving migrants and gender issues

The 2005 "Manchester Declaration" and the 2007 "Lisbon Declaration" are the two documents that set the main policy priorities on the digitalisation of government practices until 2010, which were codified under the "i2010 policy plan".⁵² The scope of the policy plan is quite wide aiming at the digitalisation of all government administration and services including those linked to migration and gender policies. One of the main formal objectives of these plans was to ensure that "no citizen will be left behind" and that socially excluded groups will be able to benefit from e-government. Migrants are not mentioned in the declarations. However, in EU and national actions adopted during the period 2005-2010 migrants and women are often mentioned as groups that could benefit from e-government in multiple ways. Another important aspect of e-government policies during this period is that they have a *cross-border orientation*, aiming at providing information that may be available and accessible from different geographical locations and national contexts in order to facilitate people's mobility. In order to address the needs of "mobile citizens" several objectives that touch upon migrant movements are envisaged: interoperable systems, electronic id management, document authentication and archiving are considered "critical" for public services cooperating and sharing data across national borders.

⁵¹ It is important to note here that although the UK is not a part of Schengen space, the state has also introduced biometrical identification (since 1998) for both migrants and British nationals.

⁵² "i2010 eGovernment Action Plan: Accelerating eGovernment in Europe for the Benefit of All" Brussels, 25.04.2006, COM(2006) 173 final

The "2010-2020 Digital Agenda for Europe" follows the same objectives, and sets as its primary goal the creation of e-government services that are accessible and usable across borders. These objectives are instrumental to the construction of a new internal digital market, which is linked to the overcoming of the economic crisis that Europe is facing. The document states:

"Most public online services do not work across borders to the detriment of the mobility of businesses and citizens. Public authorities have so far focused on national needs and have not sufficiently taken into account the single market dimension of eGovernment. Yet several single market initiatives and legal instruments (such as the Services Directive or the eProcurement Action Plan) rely on the possibility for businesses to interact and do business with public administrations by electronic means and across borders. (...) Therefore Europe needs better administrative cooperation to develop and deploy cross-border public online services. This includes the implementation of seamless eProcurement as well as practical e-identification and e-authentication cross border services (including mutual recognition of security levels for authentication)". (underlined by the authors)

These objectives constitute part of the national policies of the states studied in Mig@net. In France, a four-year strategic plan (PSAE) for the period of 2004-2007 designed the course for e-government services for citizens, the private sector, and the public sector, resulting in the creation of the website www.administration24h24.gouv.fr in January 2007. This Website provided access to over 300 online administrative formalities and procedures and, in February 2008, it fused with service-public.fr, which had already been created in 2000 and which has now become the unique French civil services gateway. A special e-portal called e-uprava (<http://e-uprava.gov.si>) also exists in Slovenia, offering information on public administration, as well as private sector and general information about Slovenia. This state portal aims to offer an efficient and reliable service, enabling equal access to all public information, administrative procedures and the official forms necessary for these procedures. The website statistics show that the most often searched content regards information on how to gain a work permit as a foreigner, which hints at the usability of e-uprava also for migrants. In November 2009, the Slovenian government implemented a new electronic tool called "Predlagam vladi" (i.e., "I propose to the government") that aims to include citizens in the government policy process with the purpose to stimulate participation. The tool is one of the first attempts to open the government to citizens' participation with the use of new information and communication technologies (ICT).

In Germany, the Federal Government project "Media@Komm"⁵³ started in 1999, aiming at the development and implementation of e-government measures at the municipal level and was realised via pilot projects, some of which had a focus on migration. In the end of 2005 the project "BundOnline" became the largest ever European e-government initiative (with more than 440 online information, communication transaction services) and was successfully completed. In 2008, the registered population in Germany was given a personal tax number valid for life. This

⁵³ <http://mediakomm.difu.de>

was conjoined with the establishment of a nationwide tax file at the Federal Central Tax Office. The tax file, however, should also be stored in a planned central registration file at the Federal Ministry of the Interior. In this database the complete personal registration file is stored and can then be used by all federal agencies as a data basis. In conjunction with the full access to the data basis of the Central Foreigners Index,⁵⁴ this file results, under the label of e-government efforts, into an e-securitization and an "e-rebordering" of the tax authorities and the social administration.

In Italy, in September 2009 the government approved a decree with the technical and security rules related to the residence permit (*permesso* and *carta di soggiorno*), which establishes a kind of denizenship status and was introduced by the Turco-Napolitano law in 1998. In the decree it was decided that the new permit must have the format of a plastic card integrated within an information-technology support, containing biometrical data too,⁵⁵ something that is in conformity with European policies and guidelines.⁵⁶ Moreover, the digitalisation of services is also linked to private-public initiatives. An example in the Italian case is the project "mandaisoldiacasa.it",⁵⁷ which is a platform of information for migrant remittances, with a comparison of costs and services in the market aiming to guarantee accountability and transparency. The website was born with the collaboration of different and heterogeneous partners: the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the ethical bank, associations and cooperative groups, and it is funded by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In Greece, an institution has been introduced since the late 1990s, the Citizens' Services Centre (*KEP* one stop shop), whose aim is to simplify administrative procedures and enable citizens and migrants to follow procedures and fulfil administrative tasks electronically. Many public administration procedures that were previously the responsibility of separate institutions are now unified under a single administrative system. Although the issuing of passports and identities was originally the responsibility of the KEPs it has been moved since the mid-2000s to the police, which remains the only authority responsible for the issuing of such documents. A scheme for the digitalisation of the tax system has been implemented, but it has not been linked until recently with other government administration data bases. Overall, in Greece the digitalisation of administrative services has been proceeding slowly with most of public administration still functioning with the usage of traditional methods. This situation results into complicated, expensive and antiquated administrative procedures in the issuing of administrative documents. Migration related issues (such as the issuing of the residence permits), which are dealt with first by the municipal authorities and then by the Ministry of the interior, are notoriously complicated and difficult to issue, particularly in the urban areas, where there are large concentrations of migrants, and in many cases migrants have to wait for months in order for their papers to be issued and be able to travel across borders. Awaiting the administrative procedures to complete, migrants in Greece

⁵⁴ For example in the Media@Komm-region Esslingen with the 2001 project "citizens go online" ("Bürger gehen online")

⁵⁵ http://www.stranieriinitalia.it/normativa-permessi_e_carte_solo_con_il_chip_10262.html.

⁵⁶ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/justice_freedom_security/free_movement_of_persons_asylum_immigration/jl0001_it.htm.

⁵⁷ Send money to home: <http://www.mandasoldiacasa.it>

were forced to immobility and constant precarity. The example of Greece, shows that the slow pace of digitalisation and lack of connectivity among data bases results into a situation where the issuing of identification documents is still subject to a centralising policing operation rather than a more dispersed form of control that may exist in other states, such as France and Germany.

Similarly, in Slovenia the administrative procedures encountered by migrants remain lengthy and complicated despite their recent simplification. It is not uncommon for migrants to spend months waiting for a work or residence permit, even though in the last years there have been amendments to the procedures, which used to be even more complicated and as such deterring prospective employers in Slovenia from hiring migrant workers. The digitalisation of administrative procedures, though becoming increasingly more user-friendly for citizens, businesses and enabling faster work for public administration employees, has not yet reached the migrant population, and fieldwork research confirms that they still queue and are frequently being sent from one office to another in order to procure all the necessary documents. In the case of Cyprus, even if various "Inclusive eGovernment" flagship initiatives have been promoted, the only official initiative that concerns migrants is the establishment of an Internet Centre for migrants and asylum applicants, arriving in Cyprus, offering them internet access and providing help for accessing any information or eServices through the Internet.

In addition, *E-government measures* include the "e-participation" policy plan that aims at the digitalisation of processes of decision making and democratic participation. These could in principle enable the participation of migrants and migrant organizations in decision making processes. As the German report notes, increasingly the focus of federal government policies shifts from social issues (such as the inclusion of migrants and women) towards e-government/e-citizenship and *e-security/crime*. However, there are initiatives in the area of e-participation and e-inclusion, such as a platform for public online consultation, which was established and used for the first time in connection with the draft law "De-mail / citizen portals". In addition, the "E-Government 2.0" harmonised with the government programs "Reduction of Bureaucracy and Better Legislative Enactment Procedures" and the Action Program "Information Society 2010–iD2010", connected to the EU initiative "i2010–A European Information Society for growth and employment". The example of the electronic deliberation that took place in early 2010 in Greece on the amendment of the Nationality Code (Law 3838/2010) in the government portal <http://www.opengov.gr/> is paradigmatic of how these processes could also reinforce racist conflict and essentially block the participation of migrant groups and individuals from the decision making processes. More specifically, the deliberation ended up in an overflowing of the government portal with racist comments that alarmed and disempowered migrants and other groups that may have participated in the deliberation otherwise. It has been argued also, that the pressure that these groups asserted on line acted as a deterrent forcing the government to amend the draft law imposing stricter criteria with regard to granting citizenship to foreigners.

The participation of certain groups in electronic deliberation procedures is interlinked with the effective usage of new media by these groups. As mentioned above, there is an increasing realisation that gender and migrant status may not be the only

sources of exclusion, but, as a recent report in the UK notes, class may be as well a factor that undermines participation in the e-citizenship processes:

"According to the OII 2009 Internet survey, the UK government related initiatives such as to increase Internet participation and access to services electronically, are reaching the more sophisticated ICT users mainly. The study stipulates that designers of government services need to understand that the socially and economically disadvantaged British people who could benefit most by accessing their services will be the least likely to use electronic means to engage with them. The research recommends to the government the use of multiple channels to engage socially disadvantaged groups, including the use of other forms of technology among these groups, particularly via SMS and TV. It suggested designing public initiatives and innovative social networking applications to promote digital inclusion". (OII, 2009: 21)

As this survey notes, e-citizenship does not necessarily challenge the power hierarchies and asymmetries, but rather it may end up reinforcing inequalities based on a power-knowledge nexus that becomes increasingly digitalized.

Initiated by the Ministry of Education, culture and science in the Netherlands, the *Dutch Digital Pioneer Fund* offers grants to develop Civil Society Media initiatives, aimed at expanding the "diversity and quality of public services on the Internet (reference 1, p 6).⁵⁸ One example is the "love your perfect Opposite" (LYPO) social media application developed by *Couscous and Cola* for youth of diverse backgrounds throughout the world to gather friends and engage in dialogue with "opposites" throughout the world (<http://www.lypo.org/>). Another example, *the Alane Newsreader*, targets newcomers in the Netherlands to learn about Dutch society and to learn the Dutch language. They use recent news articles for their education purposes. This application seeks to select texts that meet the language proficiency of language learners, enabling newcomers to access comprehensible news articles while also broadening their vocabulary (<http://edia.nl/en/alane/newsreaders>).⁵⁹

In other countries, such as Slovenia and Cyprus, there are no policies or regulations focusing on e-participation and deliberation of migrants. In France, however, ironically enough, migrants have been at the centre of one of the main official experiments of e-participation, but before all as *objects of the debate*. It was for the (very controversial) online debate on *national identity* (started on November 2nd 2009). According to our knowledge, there was no discussion about the participation of migrants/non-Nationals to this debate.

⁵⁸ *Open Doors - Programming Civil Society Media in the Netherlands, An Exemplary Guide*, p. 6, available online at <http://www.digitalepioniers.nl/footage/OpenDoors.pdf>

⁵⁹ Other examples of such projects in the Netherlands: 'Digitale trapveldjes' (Digital play fields) developed in low-income areas of cities where youth can go online, see <http://www.kennisland.nl/nl/filter/projecten/digitale-trapvelden>; "Digitale broedplaatsen", aimed at offline and online "integration" of people of diverse backgrounds, see http://www.grotestedenbeleid.nl/terugkijken/gsb_ii/projecten/digitale_broedplaatsen/ and <http://www.iva.nl/uploads/documents/111.pdf>

European information society policies constitute the core of the new forms of governmentality in the Foucauldian sense, that is of practices of government that regulate every-day life, work, health, movement, education and gender. Through the specific usages of new information and communication technologies, the administration of government practices is delegated to both private and public institutions and applied horizontally to all aspects of governance. The main characteristic of these practices of government is their dispersion and potential de-hierarchisation and openness, offering accessibility for usage and re-usage at different levels and for different purposes. The extent to which information is 'close' or 'open' to all determines the power relations established in connection with a specific field. Dispersion and the potential openness and accessibility of policies produce and are being produced by power relations of control, but also open up social space to novel forms of cybernetic living that emerges in digital social networks, including ambiguous gender and migrant practices that may challenge these borders.

In effect, the demonization of the digitalisation of administrative services and e-government that often links this process to Orwellian scenarios is a problematic approach to adopt, particularly in relation to migration. As the Italian report notes:

"It is important to note the ambivalence of the relation between digital networks and ICTs and migrants' movements. On one hand, ICTs are used as tools of control of migrant mobility, to enforce and multiply the borders. This is the case of the Italian southern sea borders (Cuttitta 2008). And the policies on migration are a mirror and often a laboratory of anticipation of transformations in general policies and citizenship rights (Preite 2009). On the other hand, they can be used by migrants to circulate knowledge and information to overcome borders themselves. In other words, while the migrants use digital networks to improve their free mobility, the same means become dispositives of control in the hands of the governments. In both cases the division between real and virtual tends to evaporate. The ambivalence of digital networks is often the ambivalence of official policies too. In fact, in the Internet you can find a lot of services that are at the same time part of the policies, and open up possibilities for migrants' independent use".

2.3. Conclusions: Problematic policy areas to be addressed in the fieldwork

1. Policies on legal migration and integration: the inclusion of migrants and women into the European information society through educations and skills learning

- Contemporary studies increasingly challenge the concepts of "digital gap" and "digital divide" in terms of gender and migration. However, there are important inequalities primarily of gender and class, but also of ethnicity and race that emerge in digital networks and are hardly addressed in the existing national and EU policy framework.
- In general, national policies aiming at the inclusion of migrants in digital networks are designed in an ethnocentric framework, within which social integration is conceived as a process of acculturation to the dominant norms of the receiving states. Thus the transnational and multilingual character of migrant networks is often left outside the scope of relevant policy measures.
- At the same time, policies that ignore migrants and women tend to adopt a top-down approach to digital integration that fails to take advantage of the existing digital networks that emerge outside the EU and nationally funded policies. Gender and migration play an important role in challenging social hierarchies on line, where alternative (in terms of content and language primarily) platforms of communication, entertainment and social networking develop.

2. Policies on legal migration, the digital labour market and knowledge production: Employment and mobility of highly skilled migrants and women in the ICT sector.

-The weak existing framework and scarce policy initiatives for the legal entry of migrants into the EU is a problematic policy area because of the overwhelming emphasis on the control of illegal migration. The restrictions that block the entry of migrants that could potentially work creatively in new media (whether they are already specialists or not) is blocking not only the development of the field but also acts in opposition to the transnationalisation of existing digital networks.

-Education understood as knowledge production is not based on the exclusion of women and minorities but increasingly it tends towards the inclusion of both immigrants and women in order to promote specific ICT products and services in a transnational market. These synergies of private-public involve antithetical forces: commercialisation of knowledge production, selective inclusion of paradigmatic migrants and women but also open processes for gender and migration. Also formal and informal educational initiatives that use digital applications may offer both constraints and possibilities with regard to both gender and migration.

3. Policies on the Media and Integration: "Diversity" and the inclusion of migrant practices into the dominant discourse of digital networks

-In relation to media policies it is very important to study within the project on-line discourse, not simply in relation to dominant stereotypes or narratives, but also and in relation to alternative gender and ethnic performativities that emerge on-line.

-With regards to cybercrime, it is important to identify which migrant groups are being targeted and identified as "threatening" or potentially linked to crime.

4. Policies on Illegal Migration and Border control: control of mobility through digital means, identities, passports, Schengen provisions.

- Digitalisation has exposed the contradictions of the system of border control leading to an internal crisis in particular with regards to the question of asylum. The contradictions of the border control regime may have seemed temporarily resolved with the strategies of "externalisation" which delegated the "unwanted" to geographical spaces outside the EU. With the current crisis on the Mediterranean border the contradictions of the border control regime, mainly its human rights based legitimisation, have been exposed as being unresolved and permanent features.

5. Policies on E-government: digitalisation of administrative procedures involving migrants and gender issues.

- There is a movement towards the digitalisation of the control of all types of movements including citizens' movements. Research within MIG@NET project should address the ways in which the digitalisation of bureaucratic and administrative procedures involves new forms of control but also openings and escape routes.

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