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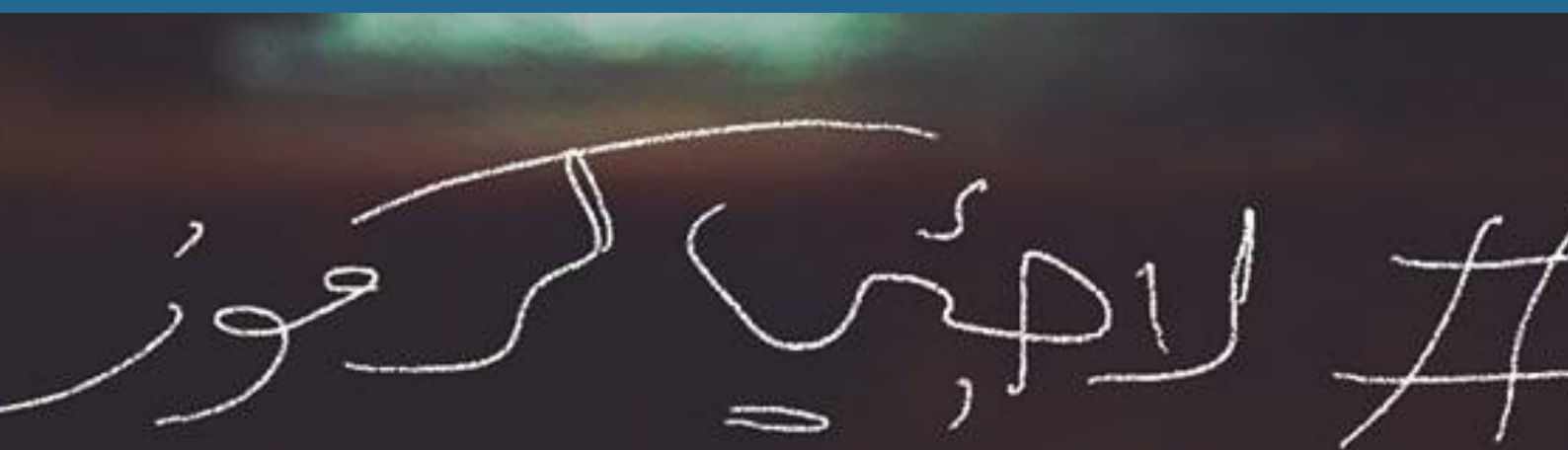
PHYSICAL FENCES AND DIGITAL DIVIDES

A GLOBAL DETENTION PROJECT INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION CONTROL

PART I: EXPOSING THE "CRISIS"

May 2018



THE GLOBAL DETENTION PROJECT MISSION

The Global Detention Project (GDP) is a non-profit organisation based in Geneva that promotes the human rights of people who have been detained for reasons related to their non-citizen status. Our mission is:

- To promote the human rights of detained migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers;
- To ensure transparency in the treatment of immigration detainees;
- To reinforce advocacy aimed at reforming detention systems;
- To nurture policy-relevant scholarship on the causes and consequences of migration control policies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Front cover image: Palestinian-Syrian families in Egyptian immigration detention. A photograph taken inside Karmouz Police Station (Alexandria), originally published as part of the #Karmooz لاجئي كرموز Refugees campaign, November 2014. (Graffiti reads: #Karmouz Refugees.)

This report is also available online at www.globaldetentionproject.org

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SUMMARY

A migrant essential or a criminal marketplace? Since the “refugee crisis” exploded across the international media and political landscapes, the role of social media has been repeatedly dissected, argued over, and—more often than not—misunderstood. Although officials and politicians often present new digital platforms as security threats that enable traffickers and illicit enterprises, these technologies also have played a critically important role in aiding refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in need. They help people connect to the outside world from inside detention centres, provide desperately needed information about sources of humanitarian assistance, and enable the creation of digital communities that give migrants and their loved ones' agency to proactively search out solutions.

This Global Detention Project Special Report is aimed at improving our understanding of how people use social media during their migration journeys, with a special emphasis on their use in the context of detention and migration control in North Africa and the Mediterranean. Part I, “Exposing the ‘Crisis,’” charts the historical relationship between migration and social media, reviewing the various tech responses to the "crisis" and highlighting the importance of human-centred design of new technologies. Two subsequent installments in this series will include on-the-ground reports of the diverse ways people put social media to use during their migration journeys and provide recommendations for human rights practitioners who wish to harness social media in ways that emphasise harm-reduction.

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"Digital infrastructure is as important as the physical infrastructures of roads, railways, sea crossings and the borders controlling the free movement of people."
—Marie Gillespie et al., Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks.

"In Libya, anything is possible."
—Marley, Gambian migrant in Sicily.

1. INTRODUCTION

September 2014. Wandering at sea, Rami thought often of his young daughter, taken from him by an air-strike some weeks before. Rami had decided to leave Syria, history, the war behind, which was why he was now on a boat in the middle of the Mediterranean … or so he thought. On board, the Egyptian smugglers who'd just ferried them from Alexandria to international waters had been lying about their whereabouts for just about as long as they'd been on the water and now phone signal had stopped working. It was anybody's guess where they were.

Trailing a week or so behind Rami, Yousef counted the days on board by the portentous events that marked them. On the first, someone died of a diabetic coma. On the second (or was it the third?), a shipping container passed by. Yousef took photographs of the boat and the men playing cards out on deck throughout. With him were Khaled, Abdullah, and his 15-year-old brother Omar.

All of these young men were Palestinian refugees from Syria (PRS), a detail that became significant the moment they were apprehended at sea, returned to shore, and detained by Egyptian authorities in Alexandria.[1] As PRS, they would be denied basic rights afforded to other refugees because Egypt does not recognise Palestinians as refugees and does not allow either the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to operate in the country or allow the UN High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) mandate to cover Palestinian refugees once they are outside of UNRWA areas of operation—notably, in contravention of Article 1(D) of the 1951 Refugee Convention and UNHCR's subsequent authoritative interpretations of it.

[1] The author has previously written about the young men's case, as well as Karmouz, for both research publications and media outlets. See: T. Rollins, "The Palestinian-Syrian 'Protection Gap': Inside an Egyptian Police Station," *Palestinian refugees from Syria: Ongoing Nakba, Ongoing Discrimination*, *Al-Majdal*, Volume 57(2), 2015; and T. Rollins, "Unwelcome Guests: Egypt's Failed Experiment in Refugee Detention," *Mada Masr*, 17 November 2014, https://www.madamasr.com/en/2014/11/17/feature/politics/unwelcome-guests-egypts-failed-experiment-in-refugee-detention/

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The young men were stuck in detention for months. After being ferried between police stations, they were transferred to Karmouz Police Station (*al-qism al-shorta Karmouz*)—a facility long used by Egypt for detaining refugees from Syria[2]—still trapped by their statelessness and lack of formal legal or refugee status. By November 2014, after another group was caught that month, some 80 PRS were being held inside Karmouz

Those inside the police station followed news from outside using smartphones and mobile phones, which were permitted inside. They maintained contact with family members and friends making the journey from Turkey to Greece, which was being presented as a "crisis" by European journalists. Social media gave them access to loved-ones outside and hope. It allowed Yousef to share photographs through WhatsApp of the squalid conditions they were forced to sleep in—mice, cockroaches, and the rest—and kept them visible to activists, journalists, and international organisations when Egyptian police tried to deport members of the group.[3]

In an age of unprecedented border controls, securitisation of the physical migratory sphere has predictably led to the securitisation of the digital sphere.

After some months inside, Rami, Yousef, and the rest of the Karmouz group joined a hunger strike launched by activists inside and—in tandem with friends, family, and activists outside—launched a media and advocacy campaign through Facebook to push for their release and resettlement to three European countries. Detained refugees maintained contact with local and foreign journalists. In the end, social media had helped the group to mitigate risks (including deportations), raise awareness outside, speak to friends and family, and ultimately challenge the arbitrary, indefinite system of detention that had kept them there for months on end. By autumn 2015, everyone inside Karmouz had been released and resettled to new lives in either France, Germany, or Sweden.

While Rami and Yousef's story is common along migration routes in the Mediterranean and elsewhere in the world, the fact is that this image of how refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants pro-actively employ social media is *not* the one we typically read about. Officials from governments and international bodies like the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) instead often emphasise what they

[2] Global Detention Project, "Immigration Detention in Egypt," 2014, https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/immigration-detention-in-egypt

[3] The author was in contact with one of the original five PRS during one such attempted deportation, when the group were transferred to Alexandria's Passports and Immigration Department and asked to sign a document saying they'd agree to return to Syria. All—unsurprisingly—refused, and they were returned to detention.

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regard as the failure of corporations to prevent the hijacking of technology by criminals to “lure” vulnerable people. Thus, for instance, in late 2017, an IOM spokesperson claimed that major social media channels were ignoring how their platforms were monopolised by smugglers to allegedly entice migrants from West Africa to cross the sea. "People are being lured to deaths, to their torture," the official argued, claiming that social media companies were providing a "turbo-charged communications channel to criminals, to smugglers, to traffickers, to exploiters."[4] EUROPOL has even coined a term of art for this phenomenon: "e-smuggling."[5]

However, a growing number of observers recognise that social media and other online platforms can give agency back to refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in a world of borders and fences that aim to strip them of that agency. Social media can allow people to make better-informed—possibly life-saving—decisions. This Global Detention Project (GDP) Special Report is aimed at improving our understanding of how refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants use social media and other tech apps during their migration journeys, with a special emphasis on the use of these media in the context of detention and migration control in North Africa and the Mediterranean.

Refugees detained in Karmouz Police Station (Alexandria) between 2014-2015 used an advocacy campaign on social media channels to call for their release from detention and resettlement to European countries. (Source: لاجئي كرموز# Karmooz Refugees campaign)

[4] S. Nebehay, "U.N. Calls on Social Media Giants to Control Platforms Used to Lure African Migrants," *Reuters*, 8 December 2017, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-socialmedia/u-n-calls-on-social-media-giants-to-control-platforms-used-to-lure-african-migrants-idUSKBN1E21DT

[5] S. Sanderson, "Refugees Fall Victim to the Other Side of Facebook,” *InfoMigrants*, 12 April 2018, http://www.infomigrants.net/en/post/8579/refugees-fall-victim-to-the-other-side-of-facebook

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Part I of the series reviews existing literature and online tools to chart the historical relationship between migration and social media, tech responses to the "refugee crisis," as well as the importance of human-centred design of new technologies to account for variations in social media use according to age, nationality, migration route, and local *modus operandi* of smuggling and trafficking networks.

Part II of the series investigates these variations from the ground up by comparing testimonies of Sudanese refugees in Egypt and West African migrants in Sicily, most of whom had been arrested and detained numerous times during their migration journeys. What do these testimonies, all of which were gathered by the author in early 2018, tell us about how social media use changes across differing geographic regions, nationalities, and migratory contexts?

Part III concludes the series with an exploration of how faulty or incomplete assessments of the use and impact of social media has hampered beneficial uses of these technologies for safeguarding migrants. In an age of unprecedented border controls, securitisation of the physical migratory sphere has predictably led to the securitisation of the digital sphere. The report provides a series of recommendations for human rights practitioners to help them harness social media in ways that emphasise harm-reduction.

Ultimately, this special report shows that contrary to claims made by some government officials and non-governmental actors, social media is not merely a tool of smugglers and criminals. In fact, there is a real opportunity for migrants and those seeking to protect their rights to harness social media for good. But more work needs to be done to understand social media and harness its various functions to better assist vulnerable groups. At the same time, it is critical to keep in mind potential pitfalls of social media as an awareness-raising tool by assessing how it can by misused as fear-mongering to dissuade people from moving even in contexts where not doing so could cost them their lives.

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2. METHODS AND SOURCES

A critical source of information and evidence for this series were interviews completed by the author with a representative sample of displaced and migrant populations in Egypt (January 2018) and Sicily (February 2018). The author sought to structure an interview sample that broadly reflected nationalities crossing the Central Mediterranean, as well as the complex, mixed nature of migration flows transiting through Libya and North Africa—including West African migrants, Sudanese refugees, asylum seekers, and others. To help determine this sample, data from UNHCR was used to record the top 10 nationalities of arrivals who have crossed the Mediterranean to Italy and Spain during 2017 and 2018, seen in Figure 1.[6]

Since this research began in December 2017, and until April 2018, the top 10 nationalities arriving in Italy via the Central Mediterranean route have changed. So far in 2018, Eritreans have been the largest group travelling the Central Mediterranean route, accounting for approximately a quarter of all arrivals through March, followed by Tunisians.[7] UNHCR observed an uptick in the numbers of Eritrean refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants to the point that Eritreans were, as of April 2018, ranked fifth whereas they had previously been eighth. This trend was also noted by activists, civil society, and other practitioners in Sicily. Tunisians were not found at all in the top 10 in December 2017, whereas Gambians had been and no longer are.

The GDP decided to select two locations as case studies to provide comparative perspective on social media use in Horn of Africa routes (via Egypt) as well as West Africa routes (via Libya). Cairo, Egypt, and Palermo, Sicily, were selected as locations because they provided contrasting situations that are both currently in flux. The Egyptian government has severely cracked down on irregular migration on the north coast (with the EU's backing) whereas Sicily is still the—almost daily—arrival point for people moving through Libya. Sicily is also crucially important given its historical place as a dropping-off point for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, smuggling networks, and multi-stakeholder search-and-rescue operations. Interviews in Sicily were intended to provide a more accurate interview sample of nationalities currently transiting through Libya.

[6] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Operational Data Portal: Mediterranean Situation," https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean

[7] Frontex, "Migratory Flows in March: Fewer Arrivals in Italy," 13 April 2018, https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news-release/migratory-flows-in-march-fewer-arrivals-in-italy-JYGSWQ

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Nigeria	18,484
Guinea	9,878
Côte d'Ivoire	9,718
Bangladesh	9,043
Eritrea	8,364
Mali	7,256
Tunisia	7,211
Sudan	6,353
Senegal	6,172
Morocco	6,140

Figure 1: Top 10 nationalities of sea arrivals to Italy since January 2017 (source: UNHCR)

Each interview lasted between 30-60 minutes, and followed a semi-structured style combining human-centred design ("empathy") techniques with more narrative questions about an individual's journey. A central aim of these interviews was to understand how social media use either helped or hindered a journey, and mitigated risks or provided information about alternatives. Field interviews with migrant populations were supplemented by fact-finding interviews with journalists and researchers, community activists, and local NGO staff, as well as representatives from UN agencies including UNHCR and IOM. In addition to face-to-face and remote interviews, the author undertook extensive desk research into existing social media projects as well as reviews of the literature on this phenomenon.

Throughout this study, the term "social media" is used broadly to refer to a range of electronic platforms that allow users to share, participate in, or collaborate.[8] The term is sufficiently broad that it can encompass collaborative information exchanges such as Wikipedia, social networking sites like Facebook or Weibo, as well as Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) like WhatsApp and Viber. While there are a multitude of definitions for social media, during the course of his research the author found particularly convincing definitions that view social media as a series of platforms that "support collaboration, community building, participation, and sharing."[9] With so much diversity and variation, it shouldn't be a surprise that there are seemingly endless ways to approach social media for research. The "massive and unprecedented generation of "big and broad data"' has necessitated

[8] T. O'Reilly, "What is Web 2.0? Design Patterns and Business Models for the Next Generation of Software," http://www.oreilly.com/pub/a/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html

[9] D. Omondi Otieno and V. Bosibori Matoke, "Social Media as a Tool for Conducting Academic Research," *International Journal of Advanced Research in Computer Science and Software Engineering,* Volume 4(1), 2014.

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development of 'novel and innovative approaches to make sense of the social world through social media data.'"[10]

The author made use of different research techniques during desk studies of social media channels, which was also guided by a desire to gain "empathy" and insights into social media use by different communities. The relatively new discipline of "netnography"—essentially a form of online anthropology—has been used by anthropologists and researchers to better understand online communities and was deemed by the author to be a suitable prism through which to view, assess, and understand Facebook use by displaced/migrant communities. This discipline, which was first coined by Dr. Robert V. Kozinets, Professor of Marketing and Chair of the Marketing Department at Schulich School of Business at New York University,[11] "describes the nexus between traditional ethnographic research and the free behaviour of people on the Internet," and presents benefits for the researcher aiming to understand and target communities because it is unobtrusive.[12]

[10] A. Quan-Haase and L. Sloan (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media Research Methods*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016, p. 2.

[11] R.V. Kozinets, "The Field Behind the Screen: Using Netnography for Marketing Research in Online Communities," *Journal of Marketing Research,* Vol. XXXIX, 2002.

[12] G. DeVault, "Netnography: Obtaining Social Media Insight," *The Balance*, 28 February 2017, https://www.plu.edu/msmr/blog/netnography-obtaining-social-media-insight/

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3. A "NEW AGE" OF MIGRATION

Standard migration text-books often begin with an exploration of the meta-narratives of modern-day global migration: the foundation of UNHCR and its noble but troubled mandate, push and pull factors, refugees and economic migrants, and the changes in our twenty-first century world that have helped facilitate a purportedly unprecedented era in the global movement of human beings. Readers might be directed through an explanation of globalisation and the imbalanced relationship between free trade and free movement of labour; broadening wealth/poverty discrepancies between the Global North and South; a new, post-Cold War age of war and terrorism; as well as an "unprecedented access to communication technologies, information and the development of extensive diaspora networks."[13]

That last point usually presents social media, technology, and broadening global internet penetration as a very modern facilitator for migration in our supposedly globalised world with its "widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life."[14] Through it, a Nigerian migrant might learn about what life is like in Europe from an internet cafe in his or her village, just as a Palestinian refugee in a camp in Lebanon might research statelessness determination procedures through a smartphone.

The notion that technology facilitates migration is now an accepted fact of the migration trail. This is how one New York Times journalist characterised a year reporting on the migration trail:

> The same forces that have shrunk the world for people in its wealthier precincts—instantaneous, pocket-size communication, mundane air travel, globalised culture—have also been an invitation, or perhaps a taunt, to those in less fortunate circumstances. Confronted with war, persecution and poverty, the migrants are well aware that people are living far better in a not-too-distant place, and that their smartphones and social networks can help guide them there.[15]

But how? Claims like this are not hard to find; less has been done to improve our understanding of these modern, electronic dichotomies between migrant and host, origin and destination, rich and poor, south and north. These same dichotomies are still very much sources of controversy. They are unstable, in flux. That is not to say

[13] P. Tinti and T. Reitano, *Migrant, Refugee, Smuggler, Saviour,* London: Hurst, 2016, p. 19.

[14] D. Held et al, *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture,* Cambridge: Stanford University Press, 1999, p. 2.

[15] K. Bennhold et al, "Times Insider: Reporting Europe's Refugee Crisis," *New York Times*, 12 November 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/11/11/insider/europe-refugees.html

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there is not a veritable universe of research on the relationship between migration and technology—varying from more ethnographic investigations of what nationalities use what apps, to theoretical inquiries of inter-connectivity, cross-border communication, and social "ties." In fact, there has been a great deal written about how social media and technology facilitates migration, however there remain "gaps in the literature" regarding how they are used "by people for the purpose of and during irregular migration," including notably by people facing arrest, detention, and deportation.[16]

The notion that technology facilitates migration is now an accepted fact of the migration trail.

In an important 2012 study, Dekker and Engbersen assess how technology and social media facilitate migration through interviews with Brazilian, Moroccan, and Ukrainian migrants residing in the Netherlands. They argue that our present-day "Web 2.0," a more democratised and participatory environment than the earlier internet landscape, had helped create a "deterritorialized social space that facilitates communication among geographically dispersed people in migration networks."[17] The internet and social media, they argue, has opened up migrants—aspiring or actual—to the world in a way that did not exist before, so that social media can be expected to "not only … strengthen people's ability to migrate, but also to feed their aspiration to migrate."[18] This was largely found to work in four different ways, in that social media helped migrants to:

1. Maintain ties with family and friends;
2. Provide communication channels with "weak ties" for "organising the process of migration and settlement";
3. Establish new communication channels with "latent ties";
4. And provide social capital and "insider knowledge on migration."

The authors were more concerned with ties and connectivity that are provided by social media, rather than with a detailed analysis of what apps or platforms are used and why. But their study details how social media facilitates migration in all kinds of ways: whether easing communication and fostering ideas of migration amongst communities back home, or giving a Facebook user access to more-established migrants in a destination country in a way that can ease integration and the migratory experience.

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[16] B. Frouws et al, "Getting to Europe the 'WhatAapp' Way: The Use of ICT in Contemporary Mixed Migration Flows to Europe," *Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat Briefing Paper*, June 2016, http://www.regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Social_Media_in_Mixed_Migration.pdf

[17] R. Dekker and G. Engbersen, "How Social Media Transform Migrant Networks and Facilitate Migration," International Migration Institute (IMI) Working Papers Series, Volume 64, 2012, p. 6.

[18] R. Dekker and G. Engbersen, "How Social Media Transform Migrant Networks and Facilitate Migration," International Migration Institute (IMI) Working Papers Series, Volume 64, 2012, p. 6.

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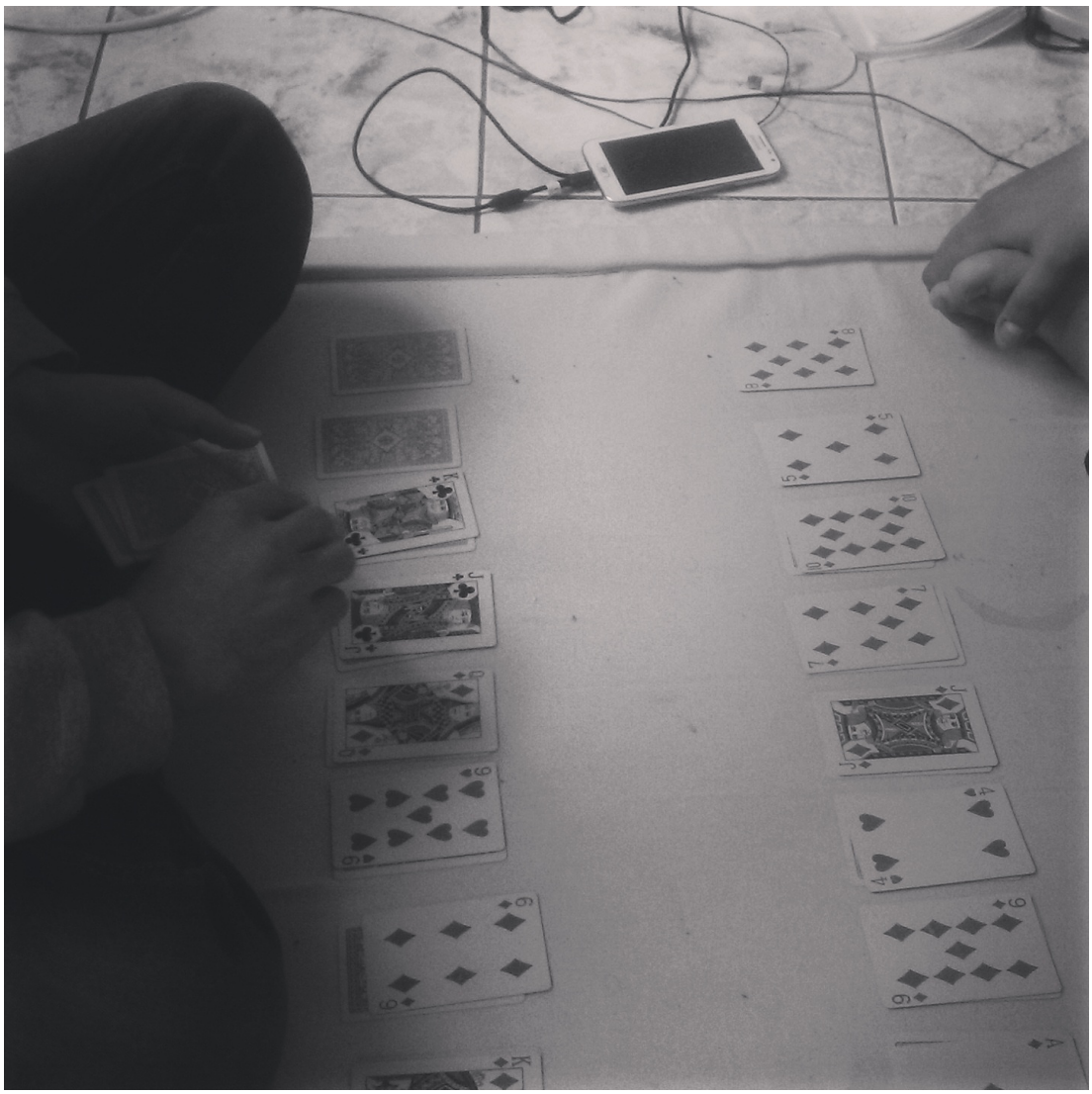
It is not surprising that displaced and migrant communities make use of social media and technology just as anyone else would—to speak to one's mother, to check the news about what's ahead, or to simply pass the time during the long, torturous waits that often define migration. And yet there has been a fascination, at times bordering on the hysterical, about how refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants in transit use social media that can be typified by one enduring phrase—"refugee crisis." Interest in migration and technology has flourished since the advent of that supposed "crisis"—refugee, migrant, or migration?—unfolding on Europe's borders. The phrase has since been used to such an extent, and in so many different contexts, that it has lost all valid meaning. But investigating its roots may help to understand different presentations of social media.



Palestinian-Syrian refugees from Yarmouk Camp, Damascus, pass away the time in a Cyprus church. The church became a temporary shelter for dozens of refugees after their boat was rescued in the Mediterranean in late 2014. (Source: Tom Rollins)

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4. THE "REFUGEE CRISIS"

Several events and trends contributed to the birth of the term "refugee crisis," as well as its endurance in media and political discourse around the topic of migration. Although different analyses might disagree on the source of the "crisis," they usually centre on 2015 as its beginning. Take some very obvious open sources, first: A Google search of the question, "When did the refugee crisis start?" rather confidently places 2015 as the "start date"; while on the other hand, a quick browse of Wikipedia finds that the "European migrant crisis" or "European refugee crisis" refers to a period "beginning in 2015 when rising numbers of people arrived in the European Union" and that those flows included "asylum seekers, but also others, such as economic migrants and some hostile agents, including Islamic State militants disguised as refugees or migrants."[19]

Other sources point to the 19 April 2015 Lampedusa migrant tragedy that left some 800 people dead, arguing that this event "marks the beginning of a *narrative of crisis* associated with the movement of people to Europe."[20] Other recent migratory traumas have also helped force the issue to the forefront of newspapers, Twitter feeds, and blogs across the world. Undoubtedly the most widespread and tragic example was the ubiquitous image of Aylan Kurdi, his small body washed-up on a Turkish beach, in September 2015.[21] The year 2015 also saw the Syrian uprising/conflict enter its fourth year while Syrians were ranked as the largest displaced population on the move towards Europe. The movement of hundreds of thousands of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants through Turkey and Greece towards the Balkans throughout the year challenged European institutions and (supposedly) closely held values. Simultaneously, when a series of horrific Islamic State attacks on European soil began in January 2015, valid fears about the militants led to growing fears that Islamic State members might infiltrate groups of refugees crossing Europe's borders. [22] There was a growing sense of some kind of nexus between terrorism and migration—the idea that migration was a threat.

It is important to note that several experts have since questioned the statistical and thematic justifications for this "crisis." Some have questioned how (or why) UNHCR and others regularly drum-up the idea that we are living in an "unprecedented era of

[19] Wikipedia, "Search: European Migrant Crisis," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_migrant_crisis

[20] M. Collyer and R. King, "Narrating Europe's Migration and Refugee 'Crisis'," *Human Geography*, Volume 9(2), 2016, p. 2.

[21] R. Clarke and C.E. Shoichet, "Image of 3-Year-Old Who Washed Ashore Underscores Europe's Refugee Crisis," *CNN*, 3 September 2015, https://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/02/europe/migration-crisis-boy-washed-ashore-in-turkey/index.html

[22] BBC News, "Islamic State Militants 'Smuggled to Europe'," 17 May 2015, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-32770390

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Migrants attempt to pass a barbed-wire-fence in Hungary, 18 August 2015. (Source: Wikimedia Commons)

human movement" when closer analysis suggests otherwise. One commonly heard argument is that we are living in a crisis "of politics, not capacity"[23]; another that if there is a crisis in global migration, in Europe it is not.[24]

Whichever way one chooses to understand this “crisis,” it was inevitable that current events would lead to greater scrutiny of the ways refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants were using new technology and social media. Questions like "What technology do refugees use?" and "How do people stay in touch with their family members back home?" were followed by more xenophobic lines of questioning such as "Is this safe?" and "How can refugees afford smartphones in the first place?"[25]

[23] K. Roth, "The Refugee Crisis That Isn't," *Huffington Post*, 3 September 2015, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/kenneth-roth/the-refugee-crisis-that-isnt_b_8079798.html

[24] C. Caryl, "If You Think Europe Has a Refugee Crisis, You're Not Looking Hard Enough," *Foreign Policy*, 2 February 2016, http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/02/02/the-weakest-links-syria-refugees-migrants-crisis-data-visualization/

[25] For examples of how this was reported/debated in British media see: J. O’Malley, “Surprised that Syrian Refugees have Smartphones? Sorry to Break This to You, But You’re an Idiot,” *The Independent*, 7 September 2015, https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/surprised-that-syrian-refugees-have-smartphones-well-sorry-to-break-this-to-you-but-youre-an-idiot-10489719.html; A. Byrne and E. Solomon, “Refugees Seek Help from Social Media,” *Financial Times*, 11 September 2015, https://www.ft.com/content/09625b90-56fc-11e5-a28b-50226830d644; and R. Barrell, “Refugees Can Have Smartphones — Get Over It!” *Metro*, 14 July 2017, http://metro.co.uk/2017/07/14/refugees-can-have-smartphones-get-over-it-6770816/

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The “crisis” called for extreme measures and extreme focus. With journalists pouring over the Balkan Route throughout 2015, they discovered that refugees and migrants were relying on "smartphones and social media to avoid police, find ‘safe’ people smugglers and accommodation," while using "Facebook pages that essentially serve as chat rooms for people leaving the Middle East and Africa for Europe."[26] One New York Times journalist noted how "Technology has transformed this 21st-century version of a refugee crisis, not least by making it easier for millions more people to move" through a range of life-saving tools that included "Smartphone maps, global positioning apps, social media, and WhatsApp."[27] The consensus was that social media facilitated migration (in the origin country), but also facilitated the irregular journey itself. It also kept migrants safe in the process. Social media had become a "migrant essential."[28]

[26] D. McLaughlin, “Mass Migration Guided by Mobiles and Social Media,” *Irish Times*, 9 September 2015, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/mass-migration-guided-by-mobiles-and-social-media-1.2344662

[27] M. Brunwasser, "A 21st-Century Migrant’s Essentials: Food, Shelter, Smartphone," *New York Times*, 25 August 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/26/world/europe/a-21st-century-migrants-checklist-water-shelter-smartphone.html

[28] M. Brunwasser, "A 21st-Century Migrant’s Essentials: Food, Shelter, Smartphone," *New York Times*, 25 August 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/26/world/europe/a-21st-century-migrants-checklist-water-shelter-smartphone.html

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5. "DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE" ON THE MOVE

A 2016 Open University/France Médias Monde study is arguably one of the better attempts to address the gaps in the literature about social media use during irregular migration. Through analysis of journalistic reporting, academic literature, ethnographic interviews with Syrian and Iraqi refugees who reached Europe, as well as social network analysis techniques, the study provides a comprehensive look at what social media tools refugees access during migration and how they use them, as well as the risks of social media (largely because of surveillance and migration management by state and EU actors).

The Open University study soberly reports that for people on the move today, the "digital infrastructure is as important as the physical infrastructures of roads, railways, sea crossings and the borders controlling the free movement of people." It is a vital infrastructure that "comprises a multitude of technologies and sources: mobile apps, websites, messaging and phone calling platforms, social media, translation services and more."[29] The study argues that there are generally three central tech tools used by refugees and migrants, GoogleMaps, WhatsApp, and Facebook, with each providing their own tailored functions and benefits.[30] While it may be obvious how migrants use GoogleMaps, the analyses of Facebook and WhatsApp usage provide a number of important insights.

(i) WhatsApp: In transit, WhatsApp is often extremely popular for communication among small groups, as it is private and it is easy to send pictures, despite the fact that it requires an internet connection or potentially costly mobile data.[31] It might be used to connect with smugglers or update friends, family, and acquaintances about a risk or incident on a particular route. The study suggests that the fact that WhatsApp is encrypted and secure has been particularly attractive for people on the move, as it diminishes the risk of surveillance by state and EU security actors. There is plenty of evidence of both smugglers and refugees using WhatsApp as either an information or advertising tool regarding routes towards desired destinations. Figure 2, an advert shared amongst Syrians on the Balkan route, is ostensibly a simplified map of the route from Turkey to Germany, but exhibits a great deal of attention to detail—the changing currencies required to pay smugglers, which change from dollars to euros

[29] M. Gillespie et al., *Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks*, Open University/France Médias Monde, 13 May 2016, p. 2.

[30] M. Gillespie et al., *Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks*, Open University/France Médias Monde, 13 May 2016, p. 25.

[31] M. Gillespie et al., *Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks*, Open University/France Médias Monde, 13 May 2016, p. 24.

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at one point; and European place-names carefully translated into Arabic in order to avoid mix-ups. This is an example of “meme-ification” of social media during migration.

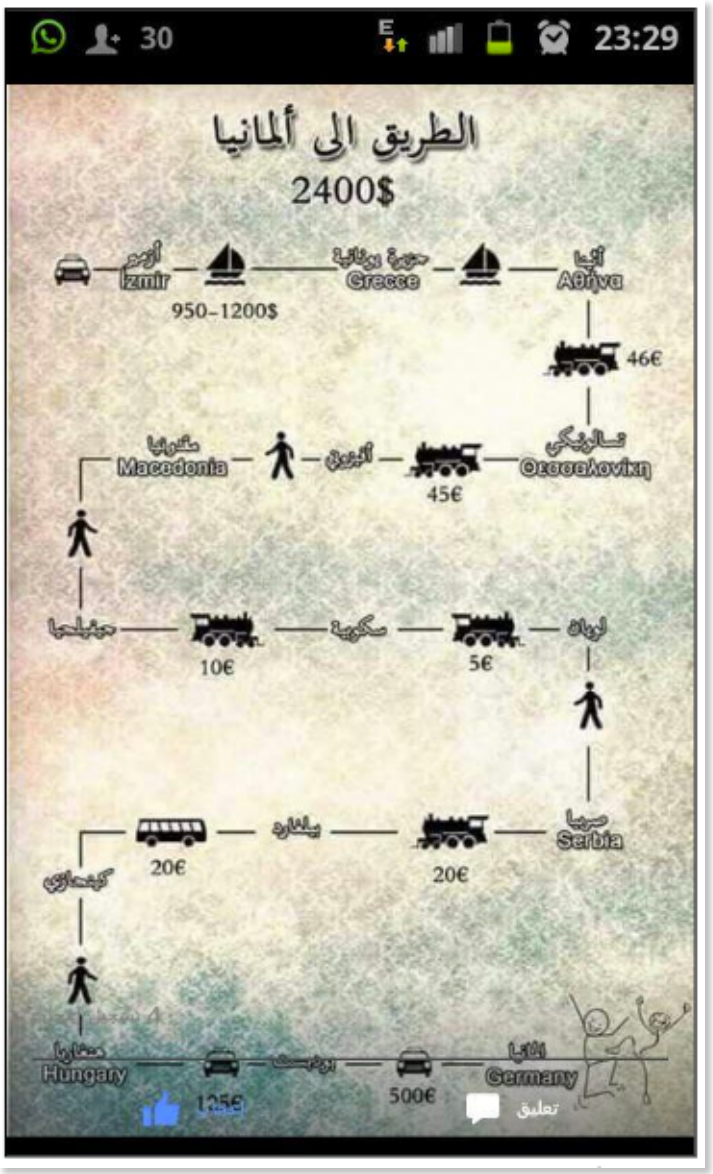

Figure 2: “The road to Germany,” a WhatsApp-based ‘meme’ directing Syrian refugees about the various steps to make it to a destination country. (Source: M. Gillespie et al, Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks, Open University/France Médias Monde, 13 May 2016, p.47.)

(ii) Facebook: Facebook provides a number of functions to the migrant: one can gather information through Pages or contacts via the Messenger app, easily stay in contact with family and friends during migration, or publish information (for example a photo after arrival in Europe). Anecdotally, more tech-savvy refugees may tend to prefer WhatsApp over Facebook Messenger for interpersonal or group communications because it is more secure. Similarly, there are security concerns about Open (versus Closed) Facebook groups in that many refugees will not use open groups to share information because "they believe them to be too public and monitored by organisations that would be harmful to them."[32] Facebook users might mitigate those risks by using aliases on Facebook or restricting the amount of personal information they share online. Even so, "Online groups … are a useful way of gathering important information related to the potential issues faced while crossing."[33]

It might be argued then that Facebook serves more as an information source, and provides that function to both prospective migrants and migrants in transit, as well as migrants newly arrived in a host country looking for information about integration and government services.

Facebook also, obviously, connects migrants with smuggling networks—whether as a “gateway” that allows smugglers to post a contact-number and then conduct

[32] M. Gillespie et al., *Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks*, Open University/France Médias Monde, 13 May 2016, p. 64.

[33] M. Gillespie et al., *Mapping Refugee Media Journeys: Smartphones and Social Media Networks*, Open University/France Médias Monde, 13 May 13 2016, p. 65.

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business-end chatter over secure ICT,[34] or as a kind of travel agency kitted-out with everything from customer reviews to detailed travel guides.

"Digital infrastructure is as important as the physical infrastructures of roads, railways, sea crossings and the borders controlling the free movement of people."

Between March and December 2016, a project initially led by UNHCR monitored Facebook use by Afghan refugees and migrants, Arabic-speaking refugees and migrants, as well as the smuggling networks directing advertising at them. The "From a Refugee Perspective" project involved a research team of Pashtu, Dari, and Arabic speakers making use of Social Media Monitoring (SMM) techniques—including netnography—to monitor Facebook closely. The project illustrated just how inventive smugglers can be, both with services rendered and half-truths told, whether through self-styled "asylum and immigration consultants" available to answer the would-be traveller's questions; a trend of several Facebook profiles posing as "satisfied clients" in order to persuade certain users to employ a particular smuggler; or smuggling pages using logos of international organisations—including UNHCR—to promote their "respectability."[35] In one shocking example found on Facebook in September 2016, an advertisement targeting Afghan refugees and migrants promoted an e-book "that [the smuggler] claimed could be purchased online with a credit card and downloaded" and that, according to the purported publisher, "covered all aspects of asylum procedures under UNHCR rules."[36] (The nexus between social media and smuggling is explored in more detail later in this study.)

[34] B. Frouws et al, "Getting to Europe the 'WhatAapp' Way: The Use of ICT in Contemporary Mixed Migration Flows to Europe," *Regional Mixed Migration Secretariat Briefing Paper*, June 2016, http://www.regionalmms.org/images/briefing/Social_Media_in_Mixed_Migration.pdf

[35] UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "From a Refugee Perspective: Discourse of Arabic Speaking and Afghan Refugees and Migrants on Social Media from March to December 2016," April 2017, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/58018, p. 17.

[36] UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "From a Refugee Perspective: Discourse of Arabic Speaking and Afghan Refugees and Migrants on Social Media from March to December 2016," April 2017, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/58018, p. 22.

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6. CRISIS-SOLVING THROUGH TECH

The "refugee crisis" created a new universe of vocabularies: a crisis in need of control, management, and regulation, requiring burden-sharing, moral leadership, and a collective response. But usually when a crisis unfolds, it requires a *solution*. And in that, the "refugee crisis" has been no different.

From 2015 onwards, the new focus on social media and migration precipitated what has been called a "tech turn,"[37] itself a reflection of unprecedented interest in the migration-technology nexus as well as an "explosion of creativity and innovation from tech entrepreneurs aimed at making life better for refugees."[38] This has involved everyone from grass-roots European "No Borders" activists to professional humanitarian technologists working for UN agencies and other international organisations. Migration-focused "hackathons" have contributed to the development of a multitude of apps and online services.[39] In October and December 2015 for example, London hosted two "Techfugees" hackathons designed to bring together tech engineers, software developers, NGOs, and others from the "incredibly creative tech community with the organizations dealing with the European Refugee crisis [sic]."[40] Various initiatives and networks can be traced back to these events. Meanwhile, industry giants have also stepped in; in 2015, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg announced plans to provide eased internet access to Syrians residing in Jordanian refugee camps through its Internet.org (later, Free Basics) initiative.[41]

Surveying this "digital humanitarianism," Benton and Glennie found a range of tech tools both new and old that could assist migrants before and during migration, as well as throughout integration in a new host country within Europe. Refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants could, for example:

- Plan routes through south-east Europe with the help of the InfoAid app;

[37] Migration Policy Institute, "The Tech Turn in Refugee Protection and Integration: New Solutions or Hot Air?" Webinar, 11 May 2017, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/events/tech-turn-refugee-protection-and-integration-new-solutions-or-hot-air

[38] M. Benton and A. Glennie, "There's Not Always an App for That: How Tech Could Help Refugees More," *Refugees Deeply*, 20 October 2016, https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2016/10/20/theres-not-always-an-app-for-that-how-tech-could-help-refugees-more

[39] In mid-April, for example, Geneva hosted a "Hack4Good" event designed to "empower children to take control of their own protection and get better access to services along their migration journeys." See: Hack4Good, "The Event," http://hack4good.eventcreate.com/

[40] Techfugees, "The Techfugees Followup Conference, London – December 2nd 2015," https://techfugees.com/events/the-techfugees-followup-conference-london-december-2nd-2015/

[41] M. Specia, "Facebook To Give Free Internet To Refugees in U.N. Camps," *Mashable*, 28 September 2015, https://mashable.com/2015/09/28/facebook-refugee-camp-internet/#L5lwEpTO.uqX

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- Share advice about safety, travel routes, and developing situations on national borders through cross-platform ICTs including WhatsApp and Viber;
- Better plan the finer points of journeys, locate meeting-points, and alert rescuers at sea through geographic information systems (GIS) and the Global Positioning System (GPS);
- Collectively access internet services through the portable MeshPoint device (that could get up to 150 people online at once during transit);
- Try to locate family and/or friends who had gone missing during migration through the Trace the Face initiative from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).[42]

A wave of new initiatives has been launched in the past few years. And yet laudable as this wave of "digital humanitarianism" might have been, there appears to have been a relative lack of organised innovation (particularly in assisting new arrivals

A poster for the ICRC's "Trace the Face" initiative. (Source: Trace the Face Facebook Page)

[42] M. Benton and A. Glennie (2016), "Digital Humanitarianism: How Tech Entrepreneurs are Supporting Refugee Integration," Transatlantic Council on Migration/Migration Policy Institute, p. 4.

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A promotional poster for "Meshpoint" WiFi hotspots. (Source: Meshpoint Facebook page)

during integration). Some designs have not been long-term in scope. Others have, crucially, lacked proper consultation and collaboration with other actors, not least displaced or migrant communities themselves, to "improve collective understanding of what is feasible, legal, and has the greatest potential to improve refugees' lives."[43] An explosion in imagined tech solutions created duplicated, short-lived "solutions" and apps created without proper regard for the communities concerned. While social media has been presented as everything from phenomenon to lifeline to threat, many of the problem-solving and solutions envisaged for this "crisis" have come from European or Europe-based initiatives, which—some argue—have not always been undertaken with the refugee or migrant's needs in mind. Human-centred design is arguably the best way to understand a target population and this point, made emphatically by Benton and Glennie, reminds us of the importance of sober, accurate analysis that is informed and guided by migrant populations themselves.

What is the alternative? One example Benton and Glennie provide is the Migreat app:

> A "skyscanner for migration," which pivoted at the height of the refugee crisis to become an asylum information app. Its selling point was that it was obsessively updated by legal experts, so users could trust the information—and rely less on smugglers or word of mouth. At its peak, Migreat had 2 million users a month, but funding challenges meant the platform had to fold. Its digital presence still exists, but is no longer being updated, a ghost of February 2016.[44]

Migreat may have re-morphed itself once again but there have been several "ghosts" like it. There will likely be more.

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[43] M. Benton and A. Glennie (2016), "Digital Humanitarianism: How Tech Entrepreneurs are Supporting Refugee Integration," Transatlantic Council on Migration/Migration Policy Institute, p. 22.

[44] M. Benton and A. Glennie (2016), "Digital Humanitarianism: How Tech Entrepreneurs are Supporting Refugee Integration," Transatlantic Council on Migration/Migration Policy Institute.

Figure 3: an overview of some of the various apps, online resources, and social media channels created in recent years, offering tech "solutions" to issues facing displaced and migrant populations.

Alarmphone/Watch the Med http://www.watchthemed.net/	Born out of a range of European/Euro-Mediterranean activist networks before 2015, Alarmphone is ostensibly a 24-hour phone-line for migrants in distress at sea to call—an alarm, not a rescue line, as the site is keen to stress. Staff maintain shifts to monitor developments at sea, and field calls from migrants in distress. Alarmphone's network includes refugees and migrants either as staff, key informants, or shift workers. It also uses physical (print) awareness-raising on top of an online presence that, for example through Facebook, publishes audio/visual materials in various languages including French, Arabic, West African, and Horn of Africa languages.
Ankommen ankommenapp.de/	An Android/iOS app actually designed by the German government for newly arrived refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants to help navigate the arrival, asylum, and integration process. It is available in Arabic, English, Farsi, French, and German, and does not require an internet connection. The app developers have said Ankommen will be regularly updated, although this has sometimes resulted in a top-down (rather than human-centred design) approach, such as when the social customs section was updated with information about gender equality in the wake of the Cologne attacks on New Year's Eve 2016.
EyeCloud	A sign that international organisations have realised the potential of tech in assistance and service provision, UNHCR launched this programme (with partners Cairo Amman Bank and IrisGuard) in January 2016 to deliver financial assistance to Syrian refugees in various locations across Jordan "through banking and biometric technology based exclusively on UNHCR biometric registration data."
Gherbtna http://8rbtna.com/	Created by Syrian refugee Mojahed al-Akil, Arabic-language app and site Gherbtna (meaning "our exile") targets Syrians in Turkey with information on everything from news from within Syria, job offers, registration requirements for Syrian students in local universities, or regulations regarding residency documents. Designed by and for refugees, Gherbtna provides some memorable lessons about the importance of human-centred design in the refugee/tech world as opposed to the string of outdated or since defunct open-source websites developed top-down since the advent of the "refugee crisis."

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Hababy www.alessandrocrimi.com/hababy/	Riffing/punning off the Arabic word for "sweetheart" or "baby," Hababy is a free and multilingual web app for prenatal and postnatal care for refugee women. It contains specific information based on symptoms, medication advice, and can give targeted information based on the country where the refugee is present. There is a note on the website warning that the app may be out-dated (it was last updated in 2016), a reminder that apps like this require constant, attentive updates to stay relevant and responsible.
ICRC Trace the Face https://familylinks.icrc.org/europe/en/Pages/search-persons.aspx	Every year, the Red Cross is contacted by hundreds of families who have lost contact with relatives in or on their way to Europe. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) developed this online resource to help people on the move and their relatives locate missing loved-ones. Families can share their photo on the website, which is then "printed on posters and hung up at asylum centers, train stations, at border crossings, etc. in Europe," thereby combining online and real-world sharing of information.
IFRC Virtual Volunteer http://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/community-engagement/virtual-volunteer/	A one-stop information resource for refugees in Greece, Italy, Sweden (as well as Filipino nationals who are overseas) that was supported by IBM, Swedish Red Cross, Swiss Confederation and European Union Humanitarian Aid. The app "helps people migrating access reliable and practical information and support wherever they are," like nearby services, medical advice, and basic phrases in the local language. The app is based on the notion that "information is aid."
InfoAid http://appsforrefugees.com/infoaid/	An app developed by Hungarian volunteers at the height of the "refugee crisis," it provides news reports focused on migratory/border developments in Turkey, Greece, Macedonia, Croatia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Serbia, and Slovenia. Updates tended to rely on the https://newsthatmoves.org/ website (no longer active). Clearly, because of its historical/geographical focus, the app is now very outdated and doesn't appear to have been updated for some time. A 22 March 2017 Facebook post stated that the app was being "rehauled" and would hopefully be back in "new and improved form" soon (no date specified).

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Refugees Welcome http://www.fluechtlinge-willkommen.de/en/	One of several Airbnb-style initiatives aimed at refugees and migrants in Europe. Based in Germany (with offices in Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, and Munich, as well as an international network), the website connects refugees and migrants with flat-shares across the country. The German site has matched 420 people across Germany, while the international site (Refugees Welcome International) has matched 1,136 refugees.
Welcome to Europe (W2EU) http://w2eu.info/	W2EU is a web-based information service for refugees and migrants coming to Europe, and is available in Arabic, English, Farsi, and French. Its resources are divided by theme (e.g. Safety at Sea, Dublin III, and Regularisation) but are also broken down country-by-country.
Refunite http://refunite.org/	Another resource aiming to connect refugee families with missing loved-ones. The site has helped create (in its own words) a "user friendly, online global database of over 600,000 profiles" and has used networking/partnerships to expand its reach. Its partnership with Ericcson and various mobile network operators,as well as Facebook's Free Basics service, has made access to Refunite's platform for free in 17 countries: Kenya, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), South Africa, Niger, Rwanda, Liberia, Iraq, Pakistan, the Philippines, Malawi, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, Algeria, Chad, Jordan, and Ghana.

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7. DECONSTRUCTING "CRISIS"

Much of the current literature on the migration "crisis" focuses on the Balkan route, including the sea crossing from Turkey to Greece, and various land border crossings through the Balkans towards central and western Europe. Refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants on the Balkan route were visible and reachable. It provided an easy way for journalists and researchers to access their subjects during their migrations. Journalists often travelled on foot alongside migrants, a style of reporting that for the most part does not exist in North African migratory routes because of the distances, smuggling methods, and security threats involved.[45]

Meanwhile, the perception of an unfolding "crisis" meant that newspaper editors and proprietors, journalism grant funders, and other sources were more than willing to commit funds and endless print-space to the topic. A reasonable portion of the foreign journalists travelling along the Balkan route might have been covering migration for the first time which, in part, explains some of the very public media debates about terminology and responsibilities during migration.[46] As a result, the "refugee crisis," as it existed in 2015, was surveyed every which way but mostly from one dominant geographic and temporal context. Once routes began to shift—and the international gaze along with it—reporting became less focused, and often less informed.

After the establishment of the EU-Turkey Framework in 2016, the "refugee crisis" became a more malleable term—was the crisis now in Libya, Lebanon, or in the heart of Europe?—and at one point, journalists turned to Egypt as a potential "new gateway to Europe" when there was in fact very little likelihood indeed of a replacement route for Syrians (or nationalities transiting through Turkey) on Egypt's north coast.[47]

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[45] One exception might be in northern Morocco, where for instance journalists have often visited refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants staying in the forests of Nador close to the Spanish colonial enclave, Melilia. See Santiago Saez, "Melilla: No asylum for black men," Deutsche Welle, 16 November 2017, http://www.dw.com/en/melilla-no-asylum-for-black-men/a-41404179.

[46] For examples of how this debate over terminology played out in international media, see: B. Malone, "Why Al Jazeera Will Not Say Mediterranean 'Migrants'," *Al Jazeera English*, 20 August 2015, https://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/editors-blog/2015/08/al-jazeera-mediterranean-migrants-150820082226309.html; K. Ritter, "Refugees or Migrants? Debate Over Words to Describe Crisis," *Associated Press*, 28 August 2015, http://www.businessinsider.com/ap-refugees-or-migrants-debate-over-words-to-describe-crisis-2015-8?IR=T; and T. Rollins, "Refugee vs Economic Migrant: Are EU Policies Changing?" *Al Jazeera English*, 18 February 2016, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/02/refugees-economic-migrants-europe-rhetoric-160214130119808.html

[47] M. al-Kashef and T. Rollins, "Is Egypt the New Gateway to Europe?" *Mada Masr*, 11 August 2016, https://www.madamasr.com/en/2016/08/11/feature/politics/is-egypt-the-new-gateway-to-europe/

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This was an issue of statistics, as well. One migration researcher noted the exaggerations of media reporting that failed to base itself on solid numbers:

> Lately, if one happens to watch/listen/read the media, one may be led to believe that an unprecedented wave of refugees and migrants is crossing the Central Mediterranean irregularly. Well, this is not the case. The truth is that, despite the *de facto* closure of the Aegean route since the end of March 2016, to date far more people have arrived in Greece (156,574) than in Italy.[48]

Migration towards Europe has again changed. The route through North Africa and the Central Mediterranean is now the main route towards Europe, albeit one that is being steadily reduced by EU policies and a growing perception amongst predominantly migrant (rather than displaced) communities that Libya is high-risk.

Therefore, the existing literature isn't always the most useful gauge for assessing social media use by people on the move in North Africa. Apps such as route-tracker InfoAid or mobile internet-provider MeshPoint would almost certainly either be commercially inaccessible or simply too expensive for the majority of people transiting through North Africa at present. (And what kind of welcome would an undocumented non-citizen get from an Egyptian police officer or Libyan militiaman, while carrying a portable internet service on their back?) A route-tracker might have been useful for smartphone-carrying middle-class Syrian families on foot in the forests of Serbia, but it might be of much less import to groups of economically worse-off West African economic migrants trying to cross thousands of miles of barren desert with the help of a truck-driving *passeur*.

Social media use by refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants is going to require closer examination to understand its variations, particularly its use during arrest, detention, and deportation, when migrants are often at their most vulnerable.

What little clues do exist in the literature about social media elsewhere suggest the phenomenon fluctuates hugely according to location, and that the "refugee crisis" is not a single homogenous phenomenon straddling the Mediterranean. Social media use varies widely around the Mediterranean, as well as North Africa, depending on everything from the nationality, gender, and age of the migrant to the local migratory risks and financial/logistical *modus operandi* of smuggling/trafficking networks. There are scattered insights into this in the literature. In 2015, a reporter fund that no one at

[48] N. Sigona, "Flow Unchanged, But More People are Dying. Why?' *Postcard From…* blog, 2 June 2016, https://nandosigona.info/2016/06/02/dramatic-situation-but/

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a Sicilian processing centre "had a cellphone or had been able to contact relatives in Africa" (as opposed to Syrians who "often travelled with smartphones").[49] Another journalist similarly recounted time spent in the Sicilian town of Augusta with teenagers, "most … from West Africa" as well as "smaller groups from Egypt and Bangladesh," who:

> Pooled their money to buy cheap smartphones, and … chatted on Facebook with friends and family back in their home countries, and posted photos of themselves pretending to buy expensive clothes and electronic goods in the shops on Augusta's main street.[50]

Clearly social media use by refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants is going to require closer examination to understand its variations, particularly its use during arrest, detention, and deportation, when migrants are often at their most vulnerable. Do people on the move in North Africa use social media platforms differently than those transiting Turkey? If so, how? How do platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp allow migrants to access information and conduct research, facilitate migration, and protect their families, their security, and their rights during migration? What limitations as well as opportunities are there for social media to assist people, including family members of migrants and asylum seekers, in the context of detention and deportation? And how do these technologies facilitate the work of people smugglers looking to profit from people's need or desire to reach Europe?

These are among the questions that are addressed in the following two parts of this GDP special report. Part II explores two case studies employing interview material gathered in Egypt and Sicily early this year to investigate variations in social media use across contrasting situations, taking into account differing nationalities, migration contexts, and routes. Part III investigates the nexus between social media use, irregular migration, and smuggling as part of a larger discussion about how the evolving digital landscape needs to be better understood as a benefit for people on the move.

[49] J. Yardley, "Displaced Again and Again, Some African Migrants Had No Plan to Land in Italy," *New York Times*, 1 May 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/02/world/europe/displaced-again-and-again-some-african-migrants-had-no-plan-to-land-in-italy.html

[50] D. Trilling, "From Africa to Kent: Following in the Footsteps of Migrants," *New Statesman*, 11 December 2014, https://www.newstatesman.com/world-affairs/2014/12/africa-kent-following-footsteps-migrants

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