



Migration, Digital Connectivity and the Reconstruction of Social Belonging

Dr. Elena Fischer

Professor, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany

Abstract

Migration disrupts established relationships with place, family, institutions, culture, and everyday social routines while simultaneously requiring migrants to establish new forms of participation in destination societies. Digital connectivity has altered this process by enabling migrants to sustain transnational relationships, obtain migration-related information, access services, develop new social networks, participate in diasporic communities, and negotiate identities across geographical boundaries. Yet connectivity does not necessarily create social belonging. Digitally mediated relationships may strengthen emotional continuity and social support while also reproducing social isolation, surveillance, misinformation, unequal access, fragmented identities, or excessive dependence on closed transnational networks.

This study develops a multidimensional framework for examining how different patterns of digital connectivity may influence the reconstruction of social belonging following migration. Because no primary participant dataset was supplied, a simulation-based comparative design is used rather than presenting manufactured observations as empirical evidence. Three analytical conditions are modeled across a 24-month settlement period: inclusive dual-network connectivity, transnationally concentrated connectivity, and limited digital connectivity. Social belonging is conceptualized through transnational relational continuity, host-community network formation, institutional navigation, identity coherence, and perceived recognition.

The simulated belonging index increases from a common baseline of 46 to 79 under inclusive dual-network connectivity, compared with 61 under transnationally concentrated connectivity and 53 under limited connectivity. These values are illustrative rather than causal estimates. The paper argues that digital connectivity contributes most constructively to belonging when it enables migrants to preserve valued transnational relationships while simultaneously building local social capital, accessing trustworthy institutions, and developing identities that need not be organized around an exclusive choice between origin and destination societies.

Keywords: migration; digital connectivity; social belonging; digital diaspora; migrant integration; transnationalism; social networks; digital inclusion; identity reconstruction

1. Introduction

Migration is simultaneously a geographical movement and a reorganization of social relationships. Individuals who migrate may leave behind familiar languages, family networks, friendships, institutions, cultural routines, occupations, and spaces through which their sense of identity and social recognition was previously sustained. Settlement in another society therefore involves more than securing housing, employment, education, or legal documentation. It also involves reconstructing relationships through which individuals experience recognition, attachment, participation, continuity, and membership. Social belonging is especially important in this process because migrants may remain emotionally connected to



their societies of origin while gradually developing new relationships with people, institutions, and places in their destination societies. Contemporary migration research consequently challenges the older assumption that migration necessarily involves severing social relations with the place of origin. Diminescu's influential concept of the “connected migrant” highlighted how modern information and communication technologies allow migrants to maintain social bonds across geographical distance on an everyday basis.

The widespread adoption of smartphones, messaging services, social networking platforms, video communication, digital public services, online community groups, and multilingual information systems has further altered this experience. Migrants can communicate with family members across borders, participate virtually in celebrations and crises, receive information from diaspora networks, locate housing and employment opportunities, access public institutions, learn languages, and encounter local communities before and after settlement. Research by Dekker and Engbersen demonstrated that social media can transform the composition, structure, and functioning of migrant networks, while subsequent digital-migration scholarship has emphasized that connectivity operates throughout displacement, arrival, and settlement rather than only after migrants become established residents.

Digital connectivity, however, should not be treated as an automatically integrative force. Online environments can provide emotional support and continuity but can also reinforce separation when digital interactions remain concentrated within geographically distant or socially homogeneous networks. Leurs and Ponzanesi describe connected migrant experiences through the tension between cosmopolitan possibilities and forms of social encapsulation. Contemporary evidence also identifies risks involving surveillance, misinformation, unequal digital literacy, data privacy, exclusion from devices and connectivity, and pressures associated with maintaining multiple audiences and identities. OECD analysis of migrant integration policy similarly cautions that digital tools can support social inclusion while unequal access, digital literacy gaps, outdated information, privacy risks, and technological bias can undermine those benefits.

Belonging is consequently reconstructed through a combination of continuity and change. Recent work by Hultin and Göransson, based on interviews with Syrian migrants in Sweden, shows how social media can sustain continuity with past relationships while migrants simultaneously adapt to new cultural timelines and manage different forms of self-presentation. Their research identifies practices such as maintaining a digital “lifeline” with the country of origin, negotiating parallel social timelines, and compartmentalizing elements of identity across audiences. These practices may support continuity and transformation but may also generate dissonance, guilt, or fragmentation. Digital belonging is therefore neither simply local nor transnational; it emerges through interactions between technologically mediated and face-to-face social worlds.

The present study examines this interaction through the title Migration, Digital Connectivity and the Reconstruction of Social Belonging. The paper proposes that the socially significant issue is not the quantity of connectivity alone but its configuration. Connectivity capable of maintaining valued transnational relationships while also enabling host-society interaction may produce different belonging trajectories from connectivity concentrated almost entirely within origin-country networks or from situations of digital exclusion. Since no completed survey or field dataset was supplied, the study does not claim empirical measurement of these effects. Instead, a transparent simulation is used to formulate theoretically grounded propositions that can subsequently be tested through longitudinal migrant research.

2. Objectives of the Study

2.1 To Examine the Relationship Between Migration, Connectivity, and Belonging

The first objective is to examine how digital connectivity changes the social consequences of geographical migration. The analysis considers connectivity as a relational infrastructure through which migrants maintain family and friendship ties, acquire information, build social capital, navigate institutions, participate in communities, and construct identities across national boundaries.

2.2 To Distinguish Different Patterns of Migrant Digital Connectivity

The second objective is to distinguish inclusive dual-network connectivity, transnationally concentrated connectivity, and limited digital connectivity. This distinction avoids treating all internet or social-media use as socially equivalent and allows the study to examine how the direction, diversity, accessibility, and social composition of digital networks may influence belonging.

2.3 To Develop a Framework for Assessing Reconstructed Social Belonging

The third objective is to develop a framework that can later be empirically validated using migrant surveys, longitudinal interviews, digital ethnography, network analysis, or mixed methods. The framework integrates relational continuity, local network development, institutional access, identity coherence, and perceived social recognition.

3. Review of Literature

3.1 From the Uprooted Migrant to the Digitally Connected Migrant

A major conceptual shift occurred with Diminescu's 2008 formulation of the connected migrant. Rather than conceptualizing migrants primarily through rupture and detachment, Diminescu argued that contemporary migrants increasingly maintain a "culture of bonds" through communication technologies. Mobile and internet connectivity permit relations formerly dependent on physical proximity to continue over distance, making transnational social life part of everyday migration experience rather than an exceptional activity. The contribution was theoretically important because it moved migration studies away from a simple opposition between physical departure and social disconnection. Its limitation, from the perspective of contemporary platforms, was that subsequent developments in algorithmic media, smartphones, datafication, platform governance, and digitally delivered services were still emerging.

Dekker and Engbersen in 2014 investigated how social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. Their work demonstrated that online communication can alter the accessibility and composition of networks from which prospective and established migrants obtain information and support. Their findings strengthened the argument that social connectivity influences migration not only emotionally but practically. Digital ties may affect information acquisition, social capital, mobility decisions, and destination knowledge. Nevertheless, access to a larger network does not automatically indicate that the information circulating through it is accurate or that the network promotes participation in the destination society.

Leurs and Ponzanesi in 2018 introduced a more critical interpretation through their analysis of connected migrants, encapsulation, and cosmopolitanization. Their work recognizes that digital connectivity can expose migrants to diverse social worlds and facilitate transnational participation while also enabling relatively enclosed communities. This tension is central to the present study: maintaining origin-country relationships can be psychologically and socially valuable without necessarily generating local bridging relationships.

In the same year, Leurs and Smets proposed five questions for digital migration studies based on scholarship concerning forced migration and digital connectivity in Europe. Their intervention

encouraged migration researchers to examine digital media contextually rather than assuming that technologies operate identically across migration situations. The study contributed to a more critical digital-migration field in which technological opportunities are considered alongside power, border regimes, inequality, infrastructure, and the everyday circumstances of migrants.

Andersson's 2019 narrative literature review subsequently mapped the growing field of digital-diaspora and migration/new-media research. The review established that information and communication technologies had become embedded in migrant everyday life and that the field encompassed diverse themes involving communication, identity, diaspora, networks, belonging, and mobility. One implication of this literature is that digital communication cannot adequately be analyzed as a separate "online" sphere. It increasingly interacts with employment, relationships, family life, settlement, institutional participation, and offline community formation.

3.2 Digital Diasporas, Identity, and Multiple Forms of Belonging

Ponzanesi's 2020 analysis of digital diasporas extended the discussion by examining the intersection of diaspora, media, affect, and postcolonial relations. The study conceptualized digital diaspora relationally rather than simply as an online replication of a geographically dispersed ethnic group. Digital formations can create new possibilities for affiliation and for negotiating multiple forms of belonging while remaining embedded in political, historical, and social conditions.

This perspective is important because migrants do not necessarily replace one identity with another. Digital environments can permit simultaneous involvement in family networks, ethnic or religious communities, professional networks, neighborhood groups, language-learning communities, cultural interests, political discussions, and host-society institutions. Belonging may therefore become layered rather than territorially exclusive.

The International Organization for Migration's 2021 study on refugees preparing for resettlement in Canada provides a practical digital-inclusion perspective. Using survey and focus-group methods across more than 300 refugees in 22 locations, the study examined opportunities and barriers affecting refugees' use of digital tools before resettlement. The study is significant because it demonstrates that connectivity is relevant before migrants or refugees physically enter the receiving society. Information, orientation, institutional preparedness, and communication can begin digitally, meaning that the reconstruction of belonging may acquire a pre-arrival dimension.

Moran's 2023 scoping review examined 75 studies concerning the connected migrant across different migration stages. The review organized evidence around displacement, arrival, and settlement and documented benefits, threats, opportunities, and challenges associated with digital-media use among displaced migrants. This stage-based perspective is especially valuable because migrants' connectivity needs may change over time. Information about routes and safety may dominate during movement, administrative and language information may become more important after arrival, and longer-term network formation and identity negotiation may become increasingly central during settlement.

More recently, Minchilli and Ponzanesi's 2025 work on digital/postcolonial belongings examines how migrants integrate digital technologies into everyday practices for managing both local and transnational networks. The study contributes to an understanding of belonging as a process unfolding across media platforms and physical environments rather than within a single territorially bounded community.

3.3 Connectivity, Integration, and the Remaining Research Gap

The contemporary policy environment increasingly recognizes digital inclusion as part of migrant and refugee participation. UNHCR defines digital inclusion for forcibly displaced and stateless populations in terms of equitable ability to participate in connected society alongside host communities. Its digital

strategy identifies affordability, infrastructure, policy restrictions, device access, digital knowledge, language, accessible content, and disability-related needs as important barriers. These factors indicate that the socially meaningful unit is not mere internet availability but meaningful connectivity.

OECD's 2025 examination of migrant integration policies also describes digital tools being used for localized information, community building, access to services, storytelling, and social inclusion. At the same time, it emphasizes that unequal digital literacy and device access can reproduce inequalities and that digital integration tools require attention to data protection and information quality.

Hultin and Göransson's 2026 empirical study advances this literature by explicitly connecting migrants' social-media practices with temporal identity and belonging. Based on 30 interviews with Syrian migrants who arrived in Sweden between 2015 and 2017, the authors identified three practices: restoring lifelines, adapting to dual timelines, and compartmentalizing life and self. Their findings show that digital connectivity can preserve continuity and provide possibilities for identity transformation, while simultaneously creating tensions between multiple social expectations and versions of the self.

Despite these advances, a conceptual gap remains. Much research establishes that migrants are connected, that digital networks matter, and that online practices influence identity and migration processes. Less attention has been given to comparatively modeling different configurations of connectivity as trajectories of reconstructed belonging. The present study therefore distinguishes connectivity that bridges origin and destination networks from connectivity largely concentrated within transnational networks and from connectivity constrained by exclusion. This distinction produces a testable framework for examining whether balanced network diversity matters more for social belonging than connectivity intensity alone.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design and Conceptual Model

The study adopts a simulation-based comparative longitudinal design. The simulation is not based on observed migrant participants and therefore does not represent a completed empirical survey. It is designed to convert propositions derived from the literature into an explicit analytical model that can subsequently be validated.

The simulation covers an illustrative 24-month settlement period with observations at 0, 6, 12, 18, and 24 months. Three connectivity conditions are constructed.

Inclusive dual-network connectivity represents migrants who have meaningful access to communication technology and use it both to maintain valued transnational relationships and to develop destination-society networks. The condition also assumes access to multilingual local information, public services, community groups, education or employment information, and opportunities for digital-to-offline interaction.

Transnationally concentrated connectivity represents strong digital communication primarily with family, friends, and culturally familiar communities across borders or within diaspora networks, with comparatively weaker participation in local bridging networks.

Limited digital connectivity represents restricted participation due to affordability, unstable internet infrastructure, inadequate devices, limited digital literacy, documentation restrictions, accessibility barriers, or other forms of digital exclusion. These constraints are consistent with barriers identified in UNHCR's digital-inclusion strategy.

The model intentionally avoids describing transnational connectivity as undesirable. Maintaining family and cultural relationships can provide emotional security, practical support, identity continuity, and resilience. The analytical distinction concerns whether transnational connectivity exists alongside or instead of opportunities to develop meaningful relationships within the destination society.

4.2 Proposed Measurement Framework

Social belonging is treated as multidimensional. A future empirical investigation could operationalize the framework using the following five questionnaire items. These questions are proposed only and were not administered in the present study.

Table 1: Proposed Instrument for Measuring Digitally Mediated Migrant Belonging

Item	Proposed Questionnaire Statement	Primary Construct
Q1	Digital communication enables me to maintain meaningful relationships with people who remain important to me across geographical borders.	Transnational relational continuity
Q2	I have developed trusted relationships and social connections with people in the society where I currently live.	Local network formation
Q3	Digital tools help me access reliable local information, institutions, services, education, employment, or community opportunities.	Institutional and informational participation
Q4	I can express and develop my identity without feeling that I must completely choose between my place of origin and my present society.	Identity coherence
Q5	I feel recognized, accepted, and able to participate meaningfully in the everyday social life of the society where I currently live.	Perceived social belonging

For empirical implementation, each statement could be measured using a five- or seven-point Likert scale. Larger studies should evaluate internal consistency, convergent and discriminant validity, measurement invariance across migrant groups, and relationships with external outcomes such as social participation, institutional trust, language acquisition, loneliness, civic involvement, or intention to remain.

The proposed instrument deliberately separates continuity with origin networks from development of destination networks. A migrant could score strongly on one dimension and weakly on another, making it possible to examine whether belonging operates as a layered rather than zero-sum phenomenon.

4.3 Simulation Procedure, Analytical Boundaries, and Ethics

A common initial social-belonging index of 46 was assigned to all three analytical conditions at the start of the simulated settlement period. This common baseline was chosen to make the subsequent trajectories directly comparable rather than to reproduce a particular migrant population.

Scores were then modeled at six-month intervals based on theoretical differences among the three connectivity patterns. Inclusive dual-network connectivity was assigned progressively larger gains because it combines continuity, bridging relationships, information access, and institutional participation. Transnationally concentrated connectivity was assigned moderate gains because



meaningful social support remains available but local bridging opportunities are more limited. Limited connectivity received the smallest modeled gains because both transnational communication and destination-society participation may be constrained.

No inferential significance tests, confidence intervals, effect-size estimates, or causal coefficients are reported. Applying such statistics to invented observations would create a misleading appearance of empirical precision.

No human participants, identifiable personal information, social-media profiles, administrative records, or biometric data were used. Formal human-subject ethics approval was therefore not applicable to this simulation. Any future empirical implementation should address informed consent, privacy, data security, platform-data ethics, the vulnerability of migrants in precarious legal circumstances, and the risks associated with linking digital traces to migration status.

5. Analysis

5.1 Simulated Belonging Trajectories

The model produces three different belonging trajectories over the 24-month settlement period.

Table 2: Simulated Social-Belonging Index by Connectivity Configuration

Months Since Settlement	Inclusive Dual-Network Connectivity	Transnationally Concentrated Connectivity	Limited Digital Connectivity
0	46	46	46
6	57	54	49
12	66	58	51
18	73	60	52
24	79	61	53
Overall Change	+33	+15	+7

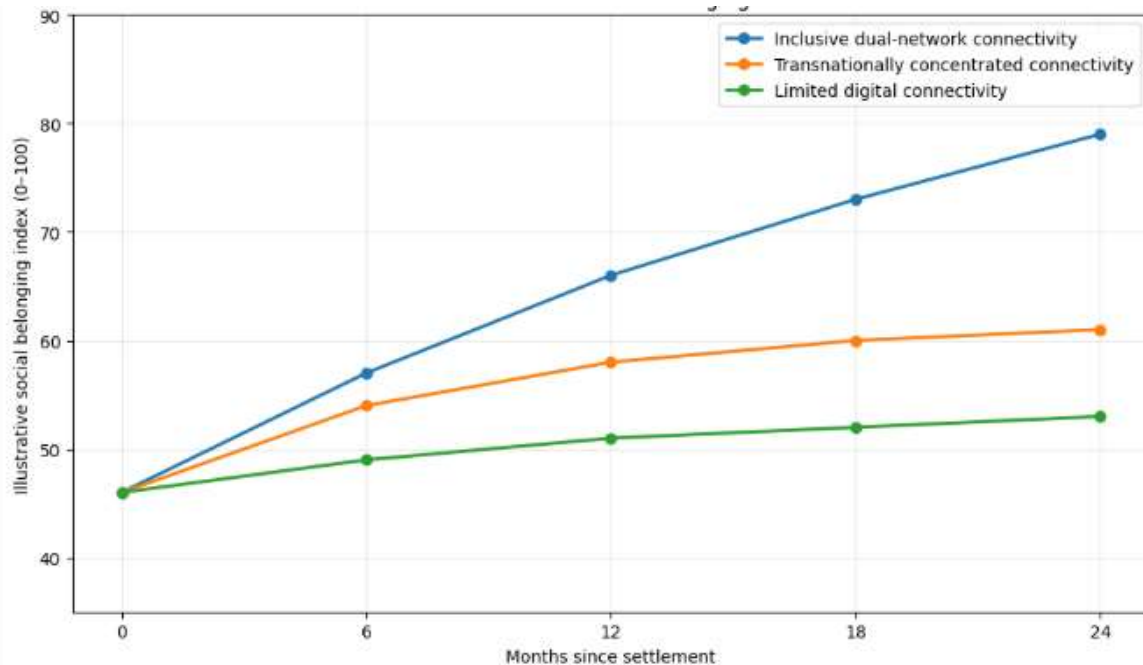
Source/Note: Author-generated simulated values for theoretical illustration. The values are not collected from real migrants and should not be interpreted as population estimates.

At the end of the modeled period, inclusive dual-network connectivity reaches a belonging score of 79, representing a 33-point increase over the common baseline. Transnationally concentrated connectivity reaches 61, producing a 15-point modeled increase, whereas limited digital connectivity reaches 53, only seven points above baseline.

The pattern does not imply that communication with origin-country networks weakens integration. On the contrary, research shows that transnational networks can provide emotional and practical support. The modeled difference instead represents the additional contribution potentially associated with bridging connectivity—the capacity to retain transnational relationships while simultaneously expanding local social and institutional participation.

5.2 Graphical Analysis

Graph 1: Simulated Reconstruction of Social Belonging Across 24 Months



The pattern reflects the cumulative character of social belonging. A digital interaction may initially provide information about a language class, neighborhood event, professional association, migrant support organization, school, workplace, or local service. Such information can subsequently lead to physical encounters. Repeated encounters may produce acquaintanceship, trust, reciprocal support, and participation. Digital access can therefore contribute indirectly to offline social capital.

This digital-to-offline relationship is one reason the distinction between “online belonging” and “real belonging” is analytically weak. Digital practices are often embedded within everyday offline relationships. Andersson's review of digital diaspora research and more recent work on connected migrants support understanding digitally mediated practices as integrated with broader migrant life rather than existing in an isolated virtual domain.

5.3 Interpretation of Connectivity Quality

The simulated results suggest that network diversity may be more important than connectivity intensity alone. A migrant could spend many hours communicating digitally and nevertheless have limited access to host-society institutions or socially diverse relationships. Conversely, relatively moderate but strategically useful connectivity could provide multilingual information, trusted support, local contacts, employment opportunities, educational resources, and public-service access.

The transnationally concentrated trajectory therefore continues to rise rather than remaining static. Family contact, diaspora relationships, and cultural continuity can reduce the relational rupture associated with migration. Hultin and Göransson show how digitally connected Syrian migrants used calls, messaging, social media, and virtual participation to sustain continuity with people and events in Syria.

Its modeled trajectory rises more slowly because social belonging in the destination society also depends upon opportunities for local recognition and participation. If a migrant's information environment, friendship networks, community discussions, and social interaction remain

overwhelmingly separated from destination institutions and populations, digital connectivity may sustain one form of belonging without fully developing another.

The limited-connectivity condition shows the weakest change. UNHCR identifies affordability, unreliable infrastructure, regulatory exclusion, inadequate devices, limited digital knowledge, language barriers, and inaccessible content among the obstacles affecting forcibly displaced and stateless populations. When these barriers are present, migrants may experience not only technological exclusion but reduced access to employment information, education, community resources, government communication, language support, and social networks.

6. Discussion

6.1 Belonging as Expansion Rather Than Replacement

The findings support a conceptualization of migrant belonging as expansive and layered, rather than as a process in which attachment to one society must decline before attachment to another can emerge. Older assimilation-oriented assumptions can implicitly frame origin-country relationships as obstacles to integration. Digital migration scholarship provides a more complex picture. Diminescu's connected-migrant framework showed that modern communication allows migrants to continue relationships across borders as part of ordinary daily life. Ponzanesi's digital-diaspora analysis similarly emphasizes the possibility of negotiating multiple belongings through digitally mediated networks.

This does not mean that every form of transnational connectivity produces positive outcomes. Relationships can contain obligations, conflicts, monitoring, expectations, political divisions, and pressures concerning acceptable identities. Nevertheless, the continued existence of meaningful relationships abroad should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of incomplete integration. Hultin and Göransson's 2026 findings are particularly relevant. Their participants did not simply abandon previous identities and acquire Swedish ones. Digital practices allowed migrants to connect past and present lives, compare multiple social timelines, and experiment with self-expression. These possibilities could be empowering, while compartmentalization could also create feelings of inauthenticity or guilt.

The reconstruction of belonging is therefore best understood as an ongoing negotiation among continuity, transformation, social recognition, and participation.

6.2 From Digital Connectivity to Social Infrastructure

The second implication concerns the design of migrant-integration policy. Governments and organizations often evaluate digital inclusion through infrastructure indicators such as connectivity, smartphone ownership, or platform access. These variables matter, but they do not reveal whether digital participation is socially useful.

UNHCR's current digital-inclusion framework provides a broader understanding by considering affordability, policy environments, accessibility, knowledge, relevant content, community involvement, and inclusion in national planning. This multidimensional perspective aligns with the present study. Digital connectivity should be approached as part of social infrastructure. Multilingual local platforms can guide migrants toward healthcare, education, housing, employment, legal assistance, community activities, and administrative requirements. Digital communication can help migrants maintain family support while also enabling relationships with neighbors, colleagues, teachers, local organizations, and public institutions.

OECD's 2025 integration-policy review documents examples in which digital technologies are being used to provide localized information and strengthen community connections. It also warns that unequal digital literacy and device access can undermine integration services. These findings reinforce the need for hybrid service models.



Public institutions should therefore avoid assuming that every migrant can navigate digital systems independently. Digital platforms should be complemented by language assistance, community intermediaries, accessible physical services, digital-skills support, and trusted local organizations. The objective should be to use technology to expand pathways into society rather than to replace human relationships.

The same principle applies to migrant organizations and diaspora associations. Digital communities can become bridges when they connect newcomers with local resources, institutions, social events, professional opportunities, and wider civic networks. Their role should therefore not be reduced to preserving heritage; they can also function as intermediary structures through which transnational and local belonging interact.

6.3 Risks, Limitations, and Future Research

Digital connectivity also creates significant risks that complicate any simple technological optimism. First, unequal access can produce new forms of social stratification. Connectivity may depend on income, age, education, gender, migration status, identity documentation, disability, geographic location, digital literacy, or access to reliable devices. UNHCR explicitly recognizes several of these barriers among displaced and stateless communities.

Second, misinformation circulating through trusted social networks can influence migration decisions, access to services, or perceptions of host institutions. Trust in the sender does not guarantee accuracy of the information being shared.

Third, migrants may face digital surveillance from states, platforms, family networks, political groups, or other actors. Digital traces can be especially sensitive for asylum seekers, political dissidents, undocumented migrants, and individuals whose identities or relationships might expose them to harm. Fourth, algorithmic environments influence what migrants encounter online. Recommendation systems may repeatedly expose users to culturally familiar information and thereby reduce incidental exposure to socially diverse perspectives. Whether this produces meaningful forms of “digital encapsulation” requires substantially more empirical investigation.

Fifth, connectivity itself can generate emotional burden. Remaining continuously available across national boundaries can create expectations of care, financial support, participation, or emotional presence. The capacity to communicate at all times does not eliminate separation.

The study also has methodological limitations. Its numerical analysis is entirely simulated. The modeled 33-, 15-, and 7-point changes are not real effect sizes and should never be quoted as evidence that a particular form of digital connectivity increases migrant belonging by a specific amount.

The three connectivity configurations are necessarily simplified. Real migrant lives can move between these patterns. A person may be highly transnationally connected during the first months following migration, develop stronger local networks later, experience temporary digital exclusion after losing employment, or deliberately reduce platform use because of privacy concerns.

Future research should therefore conduct longitudinal studies that follow migrants across different settlement stages. Mixed-method designs could combine the proposed five-item belonging instrument with social-network analysis, interviews, digital diaries, ethnographic observation, and administrative-service data.

Network research should distinguish bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. Bonding ties connect migrants with close family and culturally familiar networks. Bridging ties connect them with socially diverse groups in the destination society. Linking ties connect migrants with institutions and actors possessing organizational authority or resources.

Research should also investigate the direction of causality. Digital connectivity may help migrants develop belonging, but people who already experience stronger belonging may also be more



willing to participate in diverse digital networks. Longitudinal and quasi-experimental research is necessary to distinguish these mechanisms.

Finally, future studies should avoid reducing migrants to passive technology users. Digital-migration research increasingly shows that migrants actively select platforms, curate identities, create communities, maintain relationships, exchange resources, and adapt technologies to their circumstances. A strong theory of digital belonging must therefore account for migrant agency alongside technological affordances and structural inequalities.

7. Conclusion

Migration does not simply relocate individuals from one geographical setting to another. It reorganizes relationships with family, community, institutions, identity, culture, place, and everyday life. Social belonging must therefore be reconstructed rather than automatically transferred from one society to another.

Digital connectivity has fundamentally changed the conditions under which this reconstruction occurs. Migrants can preserve intimate transnational relationships, participate in diasporic communities, obtain information about the destination society, access institutions, develop local social networks, and express multiple dimensions of identity without being constrained entirely by geographical proximity. The principal contribution of this study is the distinction among inclusive dual-network connectivity, transnationally concentrated connectivity, and limited digital connectivity. The simulated analysis suggests that connectivity capable of combining transnational continuity with destination-society bridging may produce a stronger trajectory of reconstructed belonging than either connectivity concentrated largely in distant networks or restricted connectivity.

This conclusion should not be interpreted as an argument for weakening migrants' relationships with their countries, families, cultures, or communities of origin. Such relationships can provide continuity, emotional security, social support, cultural knowledge, and resilience. The more productive policy question is whether migrants also possess opportunities to build meaningful relationships and institutional connections within the society in which they currently live.

Digital inclusion policies should therefore move beyond infrastructure alone. Affordable connectivity, accessible devices, multilingual information, digital literacy, privacy protection, inclusive public services, community-based support, and opportunities for digital interaction to develop into offline participation all matter.

The study also cautions against technological determinism. Connectivity can support belonging, but it can also reproduce inequality, misinformation, surveillance, social enclosure, emotional pressure, or identity fragmentation. The social consequences of digital technologies depend upon how migrants use them, who can access them, which networks they connect, and what broader institutional environment surrounds their use.

Ultimately, the reconstruction of social belonging in digitally transforming migration contexts is best understood as neither complete assimilation nor permanent attachment to a distant homeland. It is a dynamic process through which migrants build relationships across multiple places, communities, institutions, and temporalities.

The connected migrant can simultaneously remember, maintain, adapt, participate, and become. Digital connectivity becomes most socially valuable when it enables these forms of belonging to coexist.



References

1. Castells, M. (1996). *The Rise of the Network Society*. Blackwell.
2. Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*. Oxford University Press.
3. Vertovec, S. (2009). *Transnationalism*. Routledge.
4. Levitt, P., & Glick Schiller, N. (2004). Conceptualizing simultaneity: A transnational social field perspective on society. *International Migration Review*, 38(3), 1002–1039.
5. Portes, A., Guarnizo, L. E., & Landolt, P. (1999). The study of transnationalism: Pitfalls and promise of an emergent research field. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(2), 217–237.
6. Glick Schiller, N., Basch, L., & Blanc-Szanton, C. (1992). Transnationalism: A new analytic framework for understanding migration. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 645(1), 1–24.
7. Georgiou, M. (2006). *Diaspora, Identity and the Media: Diasporic Transnationalism and Mediated Spatialities*. Hampton Press.
8. Karim, K. H. (2003). *The Media of Diaspora*. Routledge.
9. Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2009). *Digital Diasporas: Identity and Transnational Engagement*. Cambridge University Press.
10. Wilding, R. (2006). ‘Virtual’ intimacies? Families communicating across transnational contexts. *Global Networks*, 6(2), 125–142.
11. Madianou, M., & Miller, D. (2012). *Migration and New Media: Transnational Families and Polymedia*. Routledge.
12. Dekker, R., & Engersen, G. (2012). How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration. *International Migration*, 50(5), 401–414.
13. Komito, L. (2011). Social media and migration: Virtual community 2.0. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 62(6), 1075–1086.
14. Alencar, A. (2018). Refugee integration and social media: A local and experiential perspective. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21(11), 1588–1603.
15. Wilding, R. (2006). Virtual intimacies? Families communicating across transnational contexts. *Global Networks*, 6(2), 125–142.
16. Dekker, R., Engbersen, G., Klaver, J., & Vonk, H. (2018). Smart migrants: Online and offline strategies of highly skilled migrants. *Social Media + Society*, 4(1).
17. Diminescu, D. (2008). The connected migrant: An epistemological manifesto. *Social Science Information*, 47(4), 565–579.
18. Baldassar, L., & Merla, L. (Eds.). (2014). *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care*. Routledge.
19. Ryan, L., Sales, R., Tilki, M., & Siara, B. (2008). Social networks, social support and social capital: The experiences of recent Polish migrants in London. *Sociology*, 42(4), 672–690.
20. Miller, D., Costa, E., Haynes, N., McDonald, T., Nicolescu, R., Sinanan, J., Spyer, J., Venkatraman, S., & Wang, X. (2016). *How the World Changed Social Media*. UCL Press.