



Smartphone and Internet : Infrastructures for Movement or Infrastructures of Control ?

(Latonero & Kift 2018, p. 1)

digital migration infrastructures

“systematically interlinked technologies, institutions, and actors that facilitate and condition mobility”

(Xiang & Lindquist 2014, p. 122)

• sociotechnical assemblages

(Gillespie et al. 2018, Latour 2007)

{social media, mobile apps, online maps, instant messaging, translation websites, wire money transfers, ...}

• “mobile commons”

(Gillespie et al. 2018, Trimikliniots et al. 2015)

{border crossings, routes, shelters, hubs, escape routes, resting places; policing, surveillance, strategies against bio-surveillance; communities, social support, educational resources, access to health, ethnic economies, micro-banks, ...}

• based on material infrastructures

{SIM cards, charging docks, electric cables, power plants, ...} (Gillespie et al. 2018)

• entangled with other infrastructures

- legal, financial, military
- policing, border controls
- sociotechnical arrangements (Gillespie et al. 2018)

-> “stratified mobility regime”

(Gillespie et al. 2016, p. 10)

infrastructures of control?

“infrastructural violence”

(Rodgers & O'Neill, 2012)

surveillance: “distinguish ‘desirable’ refugees from ‘undesirable’ irregular migrants at the borders”

(Gillespie et al. 2018, p. 10)

- Frontex and Europol: “social media monitoring for preventive risk analysis” (European Commission (ed.) 2016, p. 5)
- social media: micro-targeting (Leurs & Patterson 2020)
- apps: data collection and control (Gillespie et al. 2018)

- asylum? verify migration routes (Leurs & Patterson 2020)

further challenges

information precarity

(Gillespie et al. 2018, Gillespie et al. 2016)

- social media main source of information
- lack of reliable and timely information
- ideological insularity

{misinformation (inaccurate), disinformation (lies), conspiracy theories}

- dependence on material infrastructures {telecommunication network, energy network, ...}
- human rights violations where there is no access to smartphone infrastructure (Gillespie et al. 2016)

infrastructures for movement?

lifeline: “as important as water and food”

(Gillespie et al. 2018, p. 1)

“access to information [...] and a phone call can make the difference between life and death”

(Gillespie et al. 2016, p. 11)

“network capital”

(Gillespie et al. 2016, p. 10)

communication & connectivity

information access

emergency phone calls

navigating

translation

digital self-representation

(Leurs & Patterson 2020)

financing

“pocket archive”

(Leurs 2017)

“cultural identity preservation”

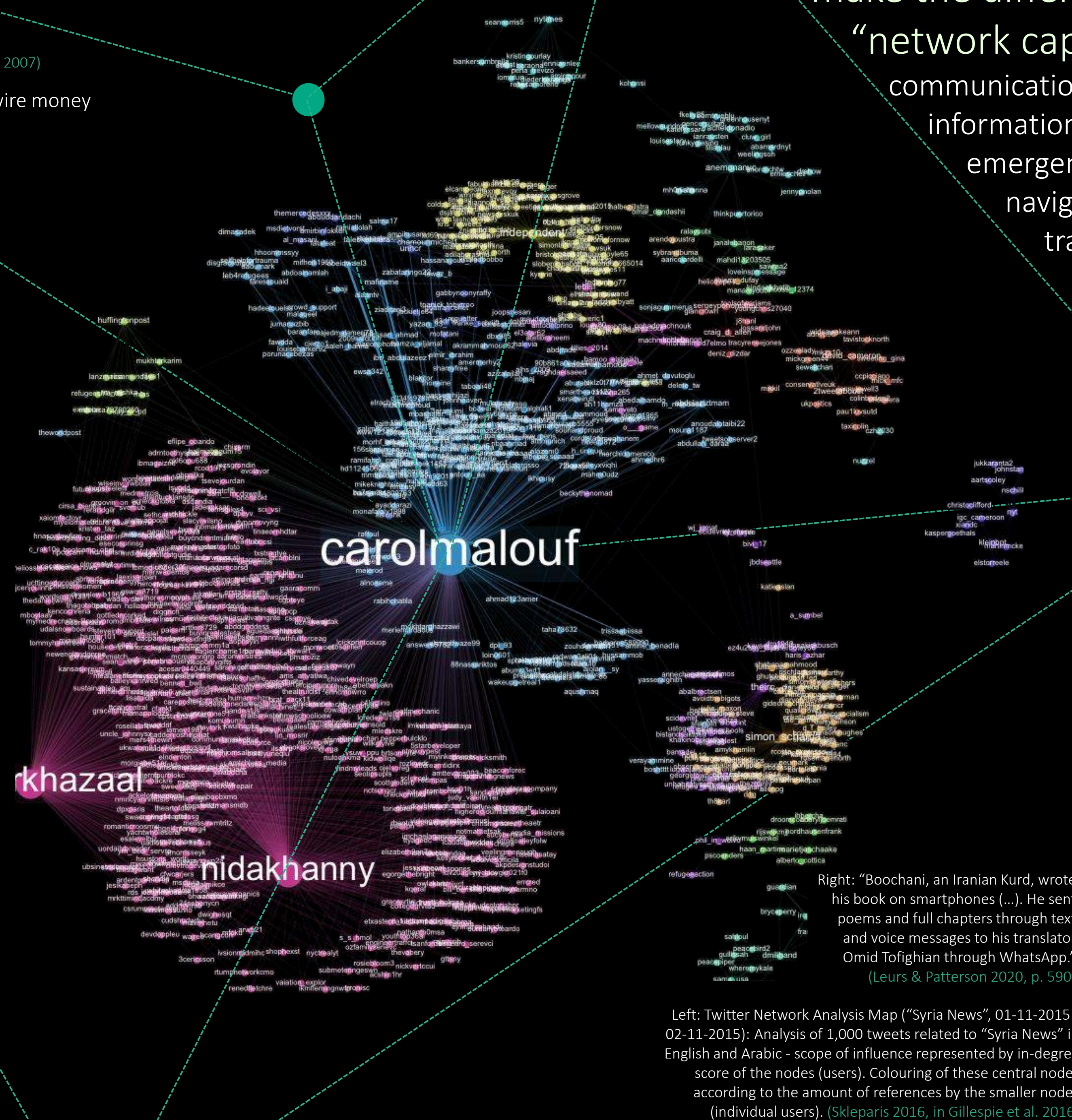
(Bilge 2018)

“digital witnessing”

(Gillespie et al. 2016, p. 25)

“communicative acts of citizenship”

(Stavinoha 2019, p. 1212)



Right: “Boochani, an Iranian Kurd, wrote his book on smartphones (...). He sent poems and full chapters through text and voice messages to his translator Omid Tofighian through WhatsApp.” (Leurs & Patterson 2020, p. 590)

Left: Twitter Network Analysis Map (“Syria News”, 01-11-2015 - 02-11-2015): Analysis of 1,000 tweets related to “Syria News” in English and Arabic - scope of influence represented by in-degree score of the nodes (users). Colouring of these central nodes according to the amount of references by the smaller nodes (individual users). (Skleparis 2016, in Gillespie et al. 2016)

smartphone as analytic entry point

research object and tool

- infrastructure access point
- “pocket archive” (Leurs 2017)

important source of knowledge co-production

- affordances - possibilities for action each one

entails dialectic tension between benefits and threats (Gillespie et al. 2018)

- “ban-opticon” - “separates the ‘kinetic elite’ who have the right to travel and cross borders with ‘the majority’ from those who do not” (Morley 2017, p. 80)

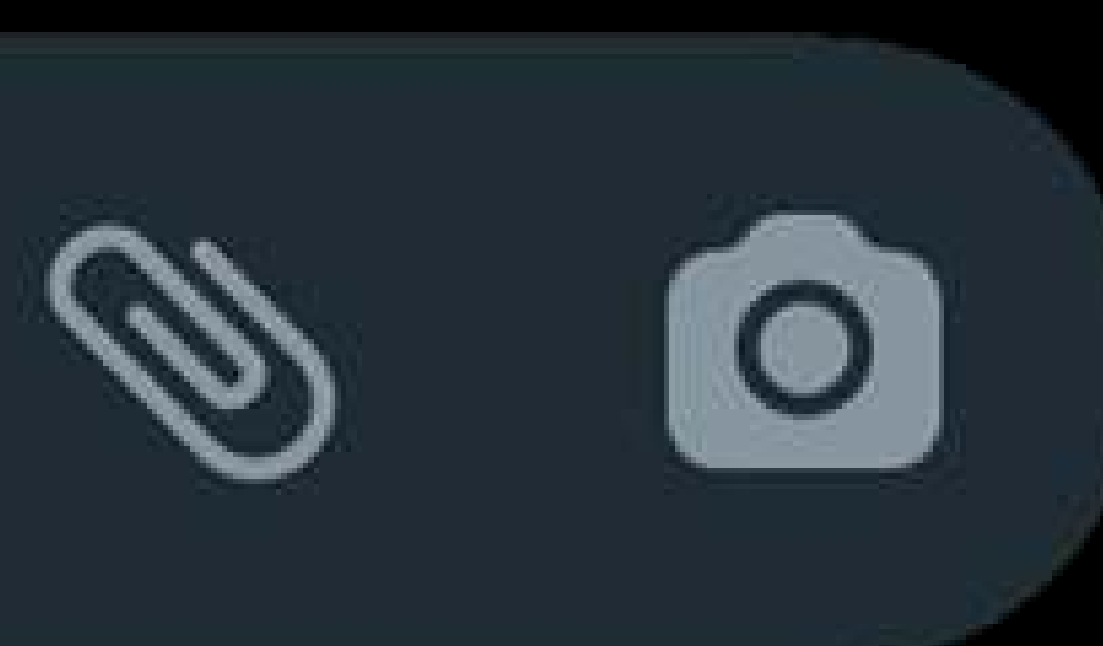
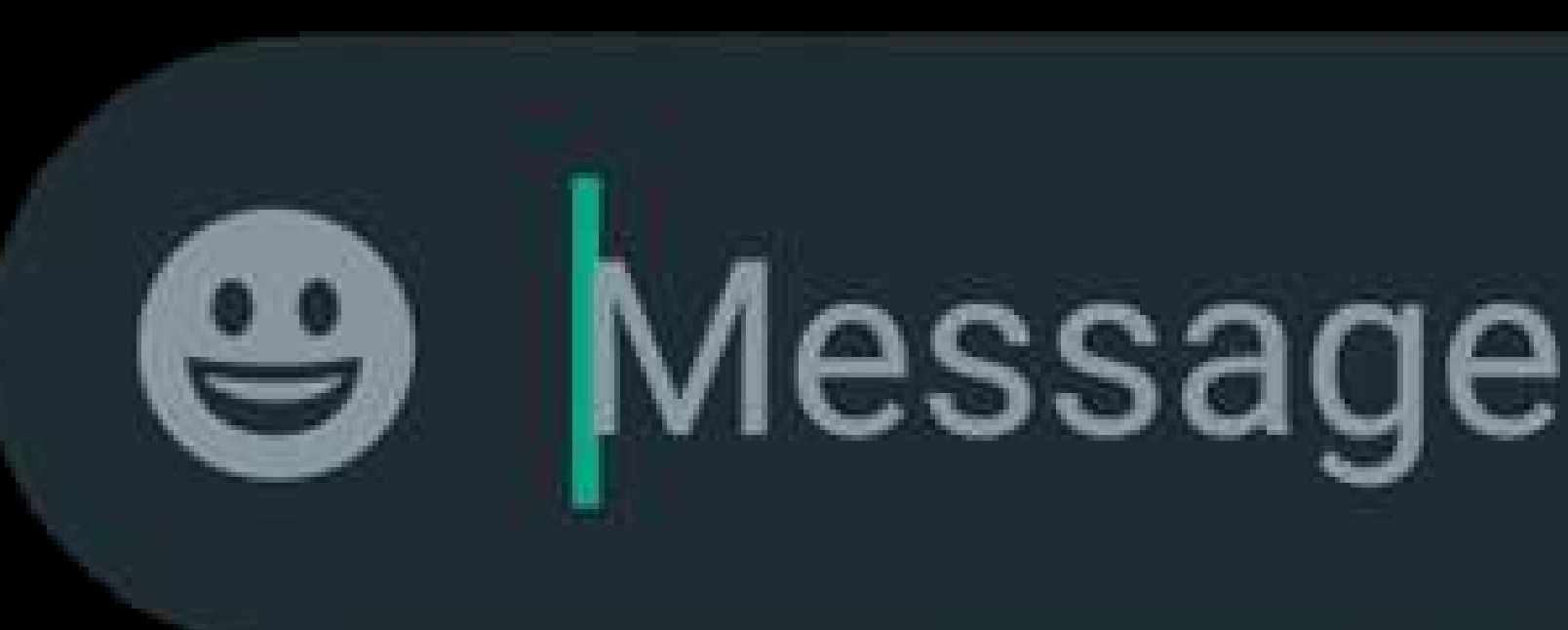
Alarm Phone Initiative

multilingual hotline for refugees in distress at sea

“bringing to light what is meant to be hidden”

(Schwarz & Stierl 2019, p. 5)

- “practice of intervention”: real-time documentation and scandalization of the situation refugees face in the Mediterranean Sea (Watch The Med 2014, p. 2)
- challenge borders between “us” and “them”
- sustain movement and reconnect spaces
- “voices from the sea [...] claiming the right to move” (Schwarz & Stierl 2019, p. 5)



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Media

Smartphone design (background) and text bubble: own figure adapted from screenshot of own WhatsApp chat with own profile photo.
Twitter Network Analysis Map (center): Skleparis, Dimitri (2016): https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Twitter-Network-Analysis-Map-for-Syria-News-1-November-2015-to-2-November-2015-The-map_fig9_310416833 (access: 31-03-2023)
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