

Postcolonializing the Internet: Digital Media, Migration and Glocalized Youth Cultures

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(Draft version, do not quote without contacting the author)

Introduction <<see slide 2>>

"I am proud to be Moroccan. An honest person cannot deny his cultural and religious background. I am not a liar, I am who I am, I am a Moroccan Dutch". This is the description provided on the ikbeneenmarrokaan (I am a Moroccan) group on the Dutch social networking site Hyves. Groups like these include pictures, embedded, videos, polls, discussions and friendlists. Prominent on the top left of the page sits an uploaded cartoon figure. This cartoon depicts a Moroccan-Dutch boy, wearing a hat and with curly hair showing. He states "Salaam". This picture is an example of user-generated content (ugc) circulating on the Internet. The group-page reflects the formation of a community around a specific interest: the performance of individual and collective identification around being Moroccan-Dutch. Migrant youth publish bricolage³-like user-generated content online and thereby negotiate their footing in multiple cultures and legacies. This content is often circulated through the Internet by means of hyperlinks. Online profile pages consist of dozens sometimes hundreds of hyperlinks, creating a dense hypertext.

This introduction served to show that although the Internet is per definition a global place and is often seen as de-territorializing, people still act and see themselves as particular individuals in specific, contextual local spaces. In this paper I will explore further how second generation Dutch Moroccan youth (the children of those who migrated to the Netherlands⁴) aged 12-18 express themselves online. Key in this

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² This paper is developed in the context of a Utrecht University, the Netherlands, research-project called Wired up. In this project, the Internet is approached as co-constructing innovative socialization practices for Dutch Moroccan migrant youth.

³ I see user-generated content as examples par excellence of what in cultural studies is seen as cultural bricolage. It is based on the appropriation, remixing, recirculation, reproduction and reinterpretation of encountered cultural artifacts to forge new meanings and cultural identities.

⁴ As of 12 march 2009, 3% of the 16,5 million inhabitants of the Netherlands are listed by the government as having Moroccan roots. With a number of 341 640 persons, Dutch Moroccans are counted as one of the major migrant groups living in the Netherlands today next immigrant workers from Turkey and population groups of post-colonial origins such as the Caribbean and Indonesia. Of this group of Dutch Moroccans, more than 50 percent are 'second generation migrants', meaning they were born in the Netherlands to parents who migrated to the Netherlands (Statistics Netherlands, 2009).

paper is my attempt to go beyond understanding digital mediation and mass migration as either constraining or enabling constellations, rather I will seek out a middle ground by understanding migrant youth' negotiation of selves in the context of digitally mediated mainstream youth cultures. I build on the assumption that information communication technologies (ICT's) or applications themselves do not determine certain cultural effects; rather I assume that everyday Internet experiences are the result of a dynamic and often conflicting interplay of discourses.

In this paper an attempt is made to unravel processes of online identification of Moroccan-Dutch youth. This will be done by examining on the one hand user-generated content, especially pictures, uploaded to social networking sites. These pictures are often simultaneously linked to other pages, therefore on the other hand; these links are taken into account. The analysis of individual and community identity formation is done based on postcolonial theories. The following main question guides this research. How do Moroccan-Dutch migrant youth express themselves online? Do they express heterogeneous and differential selves; by showing they subscribe to different loyalties and affiliations?⁵ Or do they homogenously emphasize their ethnic backgrounds and thus corroborate dominant views of failed multiculturalism and ethnic segregation?⁶

<<see slide 3>> My talk will be structured as follows: First I will briefly set out the research approach. Subsequently I will present 5 examples on the basis of which I want to respond to my research question. Finally conclusions and points of discussion will be raised.

Approach <<see slide 4>>

A hypertextual account of the Internet allows me to take into account the diverse, and sometimes contradictory information flows that can exist simultaneously on the Internet. Texts on the Internet exist in relational webs, meaning they can best be understood as being nonlinear, multi-vocal, open and non-hierarchical. Through the circulation of texts, migrant youth produce social spaces that operate both constraining as well as enabling for identification⁷ processes. As Leander argues

⁵ As argued by for instance Dirlik (1997; 520) and Brah (2003; 197).

⁶ As argued by for instance Scheffer (2007; 40).

⁷ Key for my understanding of migrant youth' identification processes in this paper are these 3 assumptions: a) identities are *made*, in a process of both external ascription and internal claiming, b) identities are *performed* resulting from encounters between individual bodies and discursive

“[c]onstructed spacetimes and the multiple relations among them are critically important sites to be mapped for an understanding of identity and culture, but at the same time they are prone to escape modernist social scientific desires for mapping” (2002; 204).

I will see whether the vocabulary of postcolonial theory is useful in mapping the multivocality and active encounters that I hypothesize to be common for migrant youth on the web. As such I do not start from two different premises, that is, Dutch Moroccan youth on the one hand and the Internet on the other, but I try to analyze them as entanglements. The focus is here on analyzing user-generated content, mostly in the form of uploaded visual material, in participatory web 2.0 contexts. The illustrative user-generated material presented here was gathered from the mostly Dutch language social networking sites Hyves (www.hyves.nl)⁸, Partypeeps2000 (www.pp2g.nl)⁹ and Habbo Hotel (www.habbo.nl)¹⁰. Member profile pages and specific community pages using the term Moco were interpreted in their contexts, by for instance following hyperlinks created by the users themselves.¹¹

frameworks and c) identities are performed through *matter*, through material artifacts (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996; Butler, 1996; Haraway, 1997; Barad, 2007).

⁸ Hyves is a very popular Dutch social networking site (the name is derived from Beehive), existing since October 2004. For instance in June 2008, more than 6.650.000 people were registered, mostly between the age of 15 and 35. Hyves allows members to create communities based for instance on shared interests.

⁹ PartyPeeps 2000 is an urban youth community listing parties, party pictures, artist interviews and releases and is also a very popular social networking site, connecting 652.142 members (april, 2009).

¹⁰ Habbo Hotel is a social networking site aimed at teenagers where users create a profile page and compose their avatars and their rooms in a hotel environment. Habbo targets users aged 12-18, but anybody can join the network. Within Habbo, members can join groups of interest.

¹¹ In this section I provide an overview of the scarce number of publications on the topic of Dutch Moroccans usage of Internet applications. Researchers have found that new technologies are reshaping the cultural imagination of second-generation transnational migrant youths. For instance Brouwer argued that Dutch Moroccans are especially active on the Internet, in their taking up of new technologies to establish “a new transnational imaginary” (2006a). Additionally she found that the Internet enables Dutch-Moroccan girls to voice themselves (2006b). Merolla details how a form of digital imaginative expression reshapes Berber diaspora group identities between transnationalism and local identities, allowing for the expression of a discourse of the self (2002, 2005). Van den Broek and de Haan found that online ethnic identification processes of migrant youth are gendered. They found that migrant girls are more focused on their ethnic heritages than migrant boys. They also state that the Internet is used by Dutch-Moroccan youth for flirt and dating purposes (2006). As such, there are suggestions that Dutch-Moroccan youth actively and creatively express themselves online. This paper builds on this assumption, and tries to seek how migrant youth present themselves as non-homogeneous individuals in web 2.0 contexts, in response to stigmatization and discrimination.

Example 1: Imagining home <<see slide 5>>

For second-generation Dutch-Moroccan youth, Morocco is a place from where they are fractured in space and time. And although they were born in the Netherlands, it may maintain an emotional influence over their lives. This emotional influence is observable in parts of the images they circulate. These images are common imaginations of their belonging to Morocco. They reflect the partialities of the imagining of the “home” in practices of self-fashioning of Dutch Moroccan youth. National symbols such as the yellow, blue and green Berber flag, the red and green starred Moroccan national flag, Arabic script and touristy imageries of beaches, camels and oasis’s are for instance included. Also for instance clocks displaying the actual local time in Morocco are included.

It must be noted that two thirds of the people with a Moroccan background living in the Netherlands are of Berber (Imazighen) descent. Berber people are considered the indigenous inhabitants of Northern parts of Africa, spanning across Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. These are tribal configurations of people, only to be seen as united by dialects of the Tamazight language. In Morocco they were suppressed by the national government and remained cut off from modernization efforts (Ter Laan, 2009). Berber Moroccan identity as such is a unstable hybrid between fluctuating Berber cultures, long time but not static Arabic-Islamic influences from the 7th century onwards, influences from French colonization from the 19th century onwards as well as for instance late 21 century Western-globalization processes.

As appears from these examples as well as from those that will be discussed later on, different spheres of influence (Berber, Arabic-Islamic, English language) have also left an their marks on the imagination of Morocco by these youth. Different flags are combined with statements of “being proud”. Salman Rushdie captured his imaginations of “home” as only reflected “in broken mirrors, some of whose fragments have been irretrievably lost” (cited in McLeod, 2000; 211). The process of imagining the “home” is fragmented and full of gaps. In sum it is not only an interval between fixed stable points of departure and arrival, but it is a “mode of being in the world” (McLeod, 2000; 210). These gaps appear clearly in the construction of migrant youth’ online identities. A mode of being in the world is for instance reflected in understanding “being Mocro” as a style. In the following examples I will elaborate

how identities become reflected as mobile and fluid, and are fashioned and expressed as being composed on the basis of partial fragments.

Example 2: “Mocro” as third space <<see slide 6>>

In the last couple of years a distinctive Dutch-Moroccan urban youth culture arose around Dutch-Moroccan rap/hiphop music with the focus on street life, use of street-language/slang, Arabic music samples and social criticism and engagement (Afshar, 2008; 209). The term *Mocro* is an interesting example from this scene. It originated on the streets of the Netherlands during the late 1990’s and is now commonly seen as a slang honorary nickname for people of Moroccan descent living outside of Morocco, but its most popular in the Netherlands. After Ali B., a Dutch Moroccan hip-hop recording artist, put out a music single in the Netherlands in 2005 called “Crazy mocro flavour” that reached the top levels of Dutch music charts, the term became established as a collective identity marker for Dutch Moroccan youth. <<see slide 7>>

<<see slide 8>> Online, youth have taken up *Mocro* as a collective identity marker. Within communities such as Hyves, Habbo and Partypeeps, the term is often included in nicknames and community pages. Take for instance within Hyves¹², the following community pages, claimed virtual spaces that bring together Dutch-Moroccan youth: “Lovely Mocro’s”, “Join the family: Mocro’s are hot”, “Only for 100% Mocro’s”, “Mocro’s are relax,cool people”, “I love Mocro chickies”. This is an overview of a few of the 50 dynamic communities around the topic existing. <<see slide 9+10 >> These communities are also to be found in the Habbo Hotel, see for example “Proud to be a mocro” community. Besides collective identity markers, *being Mocro* is also performed at the individual level.

<<see slide 11 >> To give an impression of the scale, for instance in the Partypeeps social network 5904 youth and 844 youth in the Hyves social network⁶, take up the term in their nickname, often combining it together with age, gender, sexual preference, religious, sport, music and other youth cultural affiliations. This paper centers on a selection of those people. These examples show how us how youth claim individual and group territories at the fringes of multiple online spaces. As Bhabha argued “cultural interaction emerges only at the signifiatory boundaries of

¹² Networks are highly dynamic and ever changing. The figures given here are snapshots of these networks, taken April 8, 2009.

cultures, where meanings and values are (mis)read or signs are misappropriated” (1994; 34). *Mocro*-communities can be understood as materialized third spaces¹³ where “new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation” (Bhabha 1994: 1) can be articulated¹⁴. Across these examples of nicknames and profile pictures, we already see what can be called ethnic politics through style; think of nicknames such as “My own mocro styly”, “Mocro-licious”, etcetera. These are already strong examples of how both ethnicity and youth culture serve as important self-presentational reservoirs.

Example 3: From roots to routes <<see slide 12>>

The cultural bricolage of remixing Berber identities, Moroccan identities and youth cultural identities is common on the Internet. The incorporation of a Berber symbol “Aza” appears to be central. This symbol derives from an ancient alphabet. It was appropriated by the transnational Berber movement and became included in the green yellow and blue Berber flag. Migrant youth have mixed the Aza with other expressions of in this case aggressive masculine global youth culture. On profile pages of Dutch Moroccan boys, there are for instance expressions of (English language) hip-hop toughness: ‘I’m a Berber soldier’ showing a gun toting figure (figure A). Or a (photo-shopped) stack of 50 euro bills in the form of the Aza (fig B). Another avatar combines graffiti-style street imagery with an attachment to being a Mocro, by using the colors and symbols from the Berber flag and by including the slogan ‘Mocro Power’ (fig C). The other combines the Moroccan flag (red-green) with Arabic-like lettering stating “Mocro Stylo” (fig D).

These avatars taken from Hyves, are graphical narratives of the self, that again underscore how migrant identity combines different elements.¹⁵ In his article “It ain't where you're from, it's where you're at” Gilroy argued that migrant identities can best be characterized by taking into account both descriptions of where people imagine to

¹³ Somewhat utopian, Bhabha described this space where the containment of cultural difference is breached. It signifies a new frame of reference to processes of signification that occur in the *liminal* spaces *in between* cultures resulting from contact and clashes of difference. He spoke about the dwelling of colonial subjects in the “in-between space” on the margins of nations, but I want to show how it can help grasp online identification processes of those living in the former centers of the Dutch empire

¹⁴ These third spaces allow for the imaginative formation of communities (Anderson, 2006).

¹⁵ Dutch Moroccan pedagogical scientist Abdel Boulal wrote about the different ‘masks’ that generation Dutch Moroccan youth have to take up. Migrant youth have to negotiate between completely different situations; the home situation with its expectations and norms, and the other cultural contexts; this demand great creativity (in De Fauwe & Van Amerongen, 2006; 30).

be coming from, their “roots” together with their responses to current cultural environments including other ethnic communities, aspirations and future directions, their “routes” (1991). He also described how young people of color in the UK may exhibit a strong identification with a global “Black culture”, which traverses “the Black Atlantic” (Gilroy, 1993). Gilroy referred to the cross-fertilization of African American, Black Caribbean, and Black British music related cultural forms. Hargreaves notes that Moroccan and other North-African post-colonial minorities in France “have no ancestral connections with the Black Atlantic [but] they have come to identify strongly with that space” to claim new territories as theirs (2005; 208). As we see from these widely circulating images made by Dutch Moroccan youth a particular translation of similar attachments is observable. The mixing of orientations is also evident from other often-circulated images of consumer goods such as clothing and shoes, where affiliations become projected on.

Example 4: Politics of hybridity in avatars & hyperlinking <<see slide 13>>

Profile pages and avatars reveal a rich portrait of Dutch-Moroccan girls.¹⁶ The avatars used are often pictures of (details of) themselves, both with and without headscarves. In these pictures their clothing styles range from wearing traditional Moroccan dresses to what has been called ‘porno-chiq’. This slide presents us with the contrastive set of self-presentation avatars uploaded to social networking sites. On the one hand the common insertion of a black box (fig A.) or the wearing of semi-obscuring stylish sunglasses (fig. D) denies the scopophilic gaze of the onlooker. On the other hand certain body parts are often emphasized by offering a voyeuristic glance on especially (repetitions of) eyes or eyelashes (fig. E). Headscarves are combined with tight fitting clothes, or other identity artefacts (Leander, 2002) such as a mobile phone (fig. B, D). The avatar in figure B displays a girl who’s into robots, combining a figure of an anime like fierce looking figure with a remediation of a mobile-phone taken picture of her head. With a layer added in a picture editing software, this picture was coloured pink and eyes and a mouth were also drawn. She combines this on her page with the statement “I’m a fucking Princess Bitch”. Figure C is a contrastive example of a drawn picture of a devout young girl set in an idyllic

¹⁶ Pels & de Haan emphasize that especially Dutch Moroccan girls have to negotiate between opposite motivations of continuity and change. Moroccan parents are said to emphasize cultural and religious continuity especially towards their daughters, as boys are traditionally allowed “wider action radius of action outside the house” at the onset of puberty (2003; 52-61).

background of roses. Of course these images are just examples, but they already hint at a complex process identification. Provocatively, Nourhussen wrote about migrant girls in the Netherlands who combining head scarves with tight fitting clothes. She argues that they partly also do it to make a statement, to confront narrow-minded people. “They are not fundamentalists, but are just youth who demand attention from the world. They make a statement: I am different, get used to it. They are the punkers of the new millennium”(2008; 20).¹⁷

<<see slide 14>> What I want to underline is the clear expression of the non-heterogeneity of these girls on an individual level. When examining individual profile pages, taking into account the almost standard adherence to a wide and diverse variety of communities is revealing. A brief excursion through a number of *Mocro* girl profile pages shows that these girls individually subscribe to and participate in as many as 50 different communities. For instance food preferences, such as global junkfood like McDonald is contrasted with being a Moroccan tea junky’ and the Moroccan and Turkish kitchen. A demand for respect for wearing a headscarve is connected with a community such as “Moroccan Male Hotties” and “Moroccans with brains”. Brand preferences (H&M) and preferences for skinny pants can be found as well as attachments to traditional Moroccan dresses. “Berber music” and “Hijab style” and “Islam = peace” and “I love Holland” also go together. As well as “choosing for freedom” and the statement “women are in charge”.

Again turning to Bhabha can be useful, this time I focus on his notion of hybridity. Taking away its prior negative connotation, Bhabha takes up the term ‘hybridity’ to focus on the cutting edge of negotiation and translation as an antidote to go beyond essentialism and primordial notions of identity. Duits stated that girls’ bodies “function as carriers of broader discussions about decency, feminism, Islam, and consumer culture”, thereby neglecting their agency to decide for themselves what their self-fashioning entails (2008; 7).¹⁸ For instance in Europe women and girls wearing headscarves are often “singled out as the living example of backwardness and fearful subordination” (Afshar, 2008; 414). However as these images and hyperlinked communities show, this singling out is very problematic. Rather, their

¹⁷ My translation, original in Dutch.

¹⁸ It has been argued that girls’ bodies “have become the metonymic location for many of the social and cultural struggles in West European immigration societies” (Duits & Van Zoonen, 2006: 114)

online behavior suggests a complex politics of hybridization, in their combining and contrasting of multiple affiliations.

Example 5: Mockery, solidarity and activism <<see slide 15>>

Interesting often-recurring images react or play with the mainstream representation of Dutch Moroccan boys as rascals, trouble-makers and thieves. Three exemplary avatars mocking this image: “the Netherlands was partly made possible by Moroccans” (fig A.) “Error, this Moroccan is too dangerous to be depicted in a picture” (fig B) and a mimicry of a road sign stating “Watch out, a Moroccan is waiting there for you” (fig C.). These are examples of countering stereotypes or “cybertypes”.¹⁹ Nakamura found that people are often “cybertyped”, or presented online according to stereotypical content and racialized interfaces decisions (Nakamura, 2002). These examples show that in this case migrant youth are able mobilize counter initiatives online.

<<see slide 16>> A similar practice is the establishment of anti-extremist communities. These ones are oriented towards countering right-wing extremists in the Netherlands who often wear clothes of the brand Lonsdale. “Mocro Power” and “Fuck Lonsdale” are exclaimed (fig A). The logo of Lonsdale is appropriated and changed, changing the brand name Lonsdale into “allochtonen”²⁰ (fig B). Another one uses more stronger language “fuck Lonsdale” and “We’ll eat you alive”, uniting different ethnicities by depicting a number of other country flags (for instance Morocco and Turkey) than those of Europe and the US that are often connected with the original Lonsdale logo.

<<see slide 17>> In online social networks expressions of solidarity with other migrant groups are not unexceptional. Migrant youth show solidarity with other people with a migrant background by grouping together in “The largest allochtonen

¹⁹ In a comparison between Dutch-Turkish and Dutch-Moroccan youth it has been found that “[w]hereas Turkish youth resonate with ethnic pride, it takes on a primary meaning of ethnic assertion against negative stereotyping in Moroccan youth. They suffer more than their Turkish peers from stigmatization, one main reason being the high rate of marginalization among them” (De Haan & Pels, 2003; 73).

²⁰ In the Netherlands, a discursive constructed top-down binary identificational mechanism divides “allochtonous” and “autochtonous”. The term “allochtonen” (‘allochtonous’ in English) in the Dutch context concerns inhabitants of the Netherlands who were born in a ‘non-western country’ (first generation allochtonous people) or people from which at least one of the parents was born in a ‘non-western’ country (second generation allochtonous people). The constructed binary opposition between ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ groups is very problematic. In every dichotomy one side is favored over the other, which in this case is of course the ‘autochtonous’ people. The non-favored side is “othered”.

Hyves ever” “We love allochtonen” “Wij zijn multicultureel ouwe” communities and share information and frustration online²¹. These acts can be seen as what Spivak described as “strategic essentialism” (1993; 2-5). These youth purposefully chose to present themselves on the net as being different from the norm. McLeod described how people of different ethnicities may cling together in acts of “solidarity through difference”, “bringing together for a moment oppressed people in disparate locations” (McLeod, 2000; 232).

<<see slide 18>> However, most migrants do not stick only to one cultural identity group. Youth for instance connect with *Mocro* communities, multi-ethnic migrant communities as well as simultaneously with other (political) causes and youth cultural affiliations. Activist oriented behavior is quite visible online. Acts of resistance are evidently present by for instance circulating user generated “Free Palestine” imageries, and by creating communities such as “Freedom” “Stop Racism” and as well as “Anti Geert Wilders” groups. <<see slide 19>> This is an online movement that criticizes this Dutch right-wing extremist politician. However, these communities are not distinguished by ethnicity whatsoever, as almost 50.000 people with different backgrounds connect here.

Conclusions

In a multiethnic society like the Netherlands, a person’s identity is often problematically encapsulated and essentialized as a distinct set of symbolisms, practices, assumptions, values, and norms that are taken together to define a person as a being member of a particular ethnic group. By means of a top down classificatory process, first and second generation Dutch-Moroccans boys and girls are ‘safely incorporated’ into certain social classes and stable ethnic groups, and as such pose no danger to the cultural and social status quo of ‘mainstream Netherlands’. In this paper I sought to find out how Dutch-Moroccan youth constructed their ethnicity and their individuality in a bottom up process. These practices displayed an ongoing construction of heterogeneous and differential selves - that operate beyond the binary of global and local contexts - as they emphasize different loyalties and affiliations.

²¹ Black feminist author hooks described such processes of exposing and employing ones’ marginality as follows, it is a “central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives. As such, I was not speaking of a marginality one wishes to lose, to give up, but rather a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one’s capacity to resist. It offers the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and to create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds” (1992; 341)

The examples explored in this paper draw our attention to the discontinuous, localized and unpredictable ways of how circulating cultural resources are creatively put in use by migrant youth. What we get from the user-generated content is that there are many imagined, instable dimensions shaping the cultural identification of Dutch-Moroccan youth: such as ‘Berber’ (Imazighen) identity, Arabic-Muslim attachments and symbols, Moroccan national culture, Dutch culture, black culture, generational peer group affiliations, group solidarities, political activism, resistance as well as global youth cultures. Next to a heterogeneous self presentation, the mockeries, solidarity as well as activism practices show these youth counter dominant views of ethnic segregation, as they connect not only with their own self-constructed ethnic group, but also come into contact with peer cultures as well as others on the basis of shared interests such as political activism. These initiatives provide us with hope that the Internet is not necessarily purely a “cybertyped” space where power-relations enforce a salience of gender and race through social and material Internet practices, applications and interfaces.

Postcolonial studies has been described as ‘a more or less distinct set of reading practices [...] preoccupied principally with analysis of cultural forms which mediate, challenge or reflect upon [...] relations of domination and subordination” (Moore-Gilbert, 1997; 12). These conceptual tools served to be useful for the study of Internet culture. I showed that in the case of the Netherlands (as in other Western European immigrant societies), where a normalizing practice such as the homogenizing “othering” of Dutch Moroccan youth takes place, migrant youth can be seen to take on a hybrid strategy online, thereby opening up a third space of/for the rearticulating of themselves. In their processes of negotiating over meaning, they establish themselves as particular individuals by stressing “roots” and “routes”. Similar to how Miller and Slater observed people in the Trinidadian diaspora performing being “Trini” online (2001), Dutch-Moroccan youth make the Internet a *Mocro place*, by claiming a *space* where they can be *Mocro* and perform being *Mocro*. *Being Mocro* on the Internet involves performing oneself in publicly-private spaces through the production and circulation of material cultural artefacts. It is a bottom-up construction of ethnicity through the consumption and production of imageries. These artefacts are appropriated, made anew and circulated online to an extensive network of non-homogenous friends and strangers with migrant and non-migrant backgrounds.

Discussion

This paper was written based on case-study material in preparation of a team effort of data collection. The future data collection is methodologically based on three steps that scale down from large-scale quantitative research to small-scale qualitative research (ranging from survey-work, to semi-structured interviewing, to virtual ethnography). My personal aim remains on the focus on the interfacing of migration, youth culture and digital media. As our research project collaborates with an international partner, in a future stage comparisons will be made with Mexican-American youth living in Southern parts of the USA. I would be happy to hear other conference participants reflect on the US context regarding Mexican-American migrant youth' usage of digital media and their affiliations with particular youth cultures.

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