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**Making a Digital Home? Homeliness at Times of Digital
CoPresences and Absences
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Making a Digital Home? Homeliness at Times of Digital CoPresences and Absences

Myria Georgiou

HRF Presentation Summary

Professor Georgiou's expertise in media communication challenges the static physical notion of home. She argued that we all live increasingly borderless lives facilitated by technology. In this sense migrants are not alone in having multiple connections rather than a single place of home reference. Virtual mobility is a shared phenomenon but the implications of borderless lives impact more negatively on those without the status of "belonging" in their places of often temporary residence. The smartphone allows migrants to organise collectively and to remain in contact with their home context. This is very valuable, but by the same token the loss of a smartphone can be the complete loss of contact and identity. It can also be a means of control and coercion when only those with power over the migrant journey have access to phones.

Drawing on testimonies of migrants who have superficially at least found stability and success in their receiving countries, another strand emerges. This is the difficulty of integration at a deep level in the face of negative media profiling. The impact of stereotyping migrants as costly and dangerous to the host society is that even when places to live and work are found, people do not feel at home and as one person put it "there can be no dignity outside your own country." Addressing this pervasive sense – and lived experience - of discrimination will require action by those setting the media message agenda.

Overcoming these obstacles to make meaningful connections needs emotional as well as practical support, and is a long process and the opportunities are uneven. Likewise the digital home requires both a virtual and emotional sense of connection as real home lives are reconstructed.

*Full paper is being prepared for publication. Further details to be announced.