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Rethinking Integration: 
Superdiversity in the Networks of Transnational Individuals

by

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Rethinking Integration: Superdiversity in the Networks of Transnational Individuals

Monika Nemcová
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1 Migration and integration in the age of superdiversity

Migration and global trade connections have been present around the world over the course of millennia, for example, during the Migration Period or throughout the use of the Silk Road. What is specific about the 21st century is the scale in which these phenomena exist and further develop. Despite their omnipresence, the idea of nation states is still prevalent, especially within Europe, influencing lives of minorities and migrants, while their individual experiences may differ from what countries’ policies expect. In the following chapter, I am going to introduce the concepts of superdiversity and transnationalism, the influence of the new media on migration, as well as challenge the traditional understanding of integration.

1.1 Superdiversity

The lives of people are intertwined with and affected by the lives of so many various people that it is hardly possible to even grasp it. Clothes and electronic appliances sold in Europe are made in China, Bangladesh or India; car parts are manufactured in Germany or Korea and assembled in the Central Europe; people from one country migrate within it, or to the other side of the globe; students from tens of countries study together in Netherlands, where their language of instruction is English.

The interconnectedness of the contemporary world has become enormous, and that is why the term diversity, which “emphasizes the multiplicity, overlapping and crossing between sources of human variation” (Dietz, 2007, p. 8), is gradually becoming deficient. As such, Vertovec (2007) proposed a new term encompassing the “diversification of diversity” (ibid, p. 1025), superdiversity, particularly in context of migration. This notion challenges the traditional understanding of what diversity is, referring to “differences between cultural groups, although it is also used to describe differences within cultural groups” (Diversity Dictionary, 2015). Such groups have been considered as having members who share certain qualities, for example, physical or biological features, or stylistic aspects (Ely & Thomas, 2001, p. 230).

Vertovec (2007) argues that many other factors enter an interplay creating the current superdiverse environment, including “differential immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlements and restrictions of rights, divergent labour market experiences, discrete gender
and age profiles, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents” (ibid, p. 1025). Although Vertovec “sought closer attention to the human, cultural and social intricacies of globalisation, focusing on very specific migrant trajectories, identities, profiles, networking, status, training and capacities” (Arnaut et al., 2016, p. 4) when defining superdiversity, this term can be understood in the wider context of globalization, which is “the increasing interaction among and integration of diverse human societies in all important dimensions of their activities--economic, social, political, cultural, and religious” (Aninat, 2001).

This interaction has been taking place for a long time, however, what is new, is the large scale in which it occurs (Wang et al., 2014). It enables creation of flows and trajectories not only of migrating people, but also of markets, products and ideas in an extremely complex way. Although Arnaut et al. (2016) proposed superdiversity as a sociolinguistic conceptual tool, it is evident that this term can, accordingly, be used “for the vastly increased range of resources, linguistic, religious, ethnic, cultural in the widest sense, that characterize late modern societies” (Jørgensen, Juffermans, 2011).

There are several aspects of such societies, which enable the presence of superdiversity, which “has been linked, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, to modern communication technologies” (Deumert, 2014, p. 116). Wang et al. (2014) consider them a part of infrastructures of globalization, which are tools, institutions and technologies facilitating and enabling mobility, including namely “airplanes and cars, mobile phones, educational institutions” (Deumert, 2014, p. 116), as well as “new forms of economic activity, specifically call centers and heritage tourism” (Wang et al., 2014, p. 30). These infrastructures do not only enable the global flow and interaction of people, markets and ideas, but also expand the range of diverse types of resources that people have at their disposal.

Without the infrastructures supported mostly by the fast development of the communication technologies, this interaction and expansion of resources would hardly be possible. The concept of superdiversity encompasses these infrastructures as mechanisms, which allow people to communicate, travel, migrate and integrate on a scale beyond the traditional understanding
of migration and diversity. This interconnectivity results in transnationalism, which coins a process in which migrants maintain contact both within host and home countries.

The concept of superdiversity can also be used in sociolinguistics, as “(d)iversity has been a central concern in sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology for much of the 20th century” (Arnaut et al., 2016, p. 6). Other issues discussed in sociolinguistics include group identification, as well as critiques of essentialism (ibid). Arnaut et al. (ibid) also bring attention to varied terms referring to the complexity of the sociolinguistic situation, such as ‘linguistics of contact’, ‘hybridity’, ‘heteroglossia’ and ‘fluidity’ (ibid). The authors propose that “new forms of understanding are now needed to make sense of the contemporary social landscape” (ibid, p. 7) and the concept of superdiversity questioning this complexity may be a suitable starting point of the process of understanding this landscape. Arnaut (2012) discusses how superdiversity as a perspective can contribute to contemporary sociolinguistics and comes to the conclusion that “(i)t is there to remind sociolinguistics of the complex dynamics of diversity both as social and cultural practice and as (hegemonic) discourse and regulation” (ibid, p. 12). Therefore, superdiversity can be viewed both as a practice and as a new perspective of exploring the contemporary world.

One of the basic sociolinguistic concepts is the notion of repertoire, which earlier “emphasized the connection between (socio-)linguistic resources, knowledge and communities” (Blommaert & Backus, 2012, p. 27), but currently, it is being brought towards superdiversity; the focus shifts to the individuals and their existence in the superdiverse world, where the repertoires represent “records of mobility: of movement of people, language resources, social arenas, technologies of learning and learning environments” (ibid). The scope of an individual’s repertoire is wide and covers not only languages that the person is able to actively use, but also ones that they are able to understand and that they have limited knowledge of. Thus, in various domains of one’s life, in diverse parts of his or her social networks, the person may use different languages or even different vernaculars. Such person can be defined as plurilingual, where plurilingualism is “the potential and/or actual ability to use several languages to varying levels of proficiency and for different purposes” (Beacco & Byram, 2003, p. 8). The plurilingual person has varying
competence in different languages, ranging from being able to recognize the language to having maximum competence in it.

The important feature of the individual linguistic repertoires is that they “change all the time, because they follow and document the biographies of the ones who use them” (Blommaert & Backus, 2012, p. 28). One’s linguistic repertoire is, therefore, an important indicator of one’s life trajectory in the contemporary superdiverse world. Furthermore, existence of such repertoires is a manifestation, and therefore, a practice of superdiversity, while at the same time, superdiversity can be a paradigm to view and research the phenomenon. When examining superdiversity, it is impossible to ignore the human mobility, migration, which is discussed in the following section.

1.2 Transnationalism and the new media

Migration, broadly defined as “a permanent or semipermanent change of residence” (Lee, 1966, p. 49) is a phenomenon that is as old as the humanity. In its widest sense, “(n)o restriction is placed upon the distance of the move or upon the voluntary or involuntary nature of the act, and no distinction is made between external and internal migration” (ibid). Factors influencing migration vary greatly. Some of them are associated with the area of origin, which are referred to as push factors, while others are associated with the area of destination, which are named pull factors. Kainth (2010) mentions four main factors, which are economic, demographic, socio-cultural and political, and then there are miscellaneous factors, not belonging to any of the categories. He points out that “most of the studies indicate that migration is primarily motivated by economic factors” (ibid, p. 2).

In the 21st century, patterns of migration have changed. More people are migrating from more places to more places, they differ in their “immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlements and restrictions of rights, divergent labour market experiences, discrete gender and age profiles, patterns of spatial distribution, and mixed local area responses by service providers and residents” (Vertovec, 2007, p. 1025), which results in superdiversity.

Conceptualizations of migration, migrants and immigrants have progressively become insufficient, as they evoke “images of permanent rupture, of the uprooted, the abandonment
of old patterns and the painful learning of a new language and culture” (Glick-Schiller, Basch & Blanc-Szanton, 1992, p. 1). Instead, lives of migrating people have started to comprise not only host societies, but also ties with societies in the home countries. The processes “by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement” (ibid) have been labelled by the term transnationalism. Emergence of such type of migration experience is linked to global economic processes and global capitalism (Bello, 2013).

Global conditions are changing, they “include new circuits of capital that make and maintain transnational connections; improved technologies of communication and transportation; the advent of global cities” (Kim, 2009, p. 682). The improvement of the technologies and continual development of new ones has an unprecedented impact on the face of the world and on lives of migrating population.

The internet and information and communications technologies (ICTs), parts of the infrastructures of globalization, have been influencing the process of migration, as well as lives of migrants, as they facilitate “the flow of people across the planet and the formation, growth and maintenance of diaspora communities and family ties” (Oiarzabal & Reips, 2012, p. 1334). ICTs have become incorporated into daily communication practices of migrants, when they communicate not only within the host country, but also with relatives and friends in countries of origin - transnationally. the communication is mostly internet-based, through the new media, which “combine text, audio, digital video, interactive multimedia, virtual reality, the Web, email, chat, a cell phone, (...) computer applications, and any source of information accessible by a personal computer” (Logan, 2010, p. 5). Such communication may develop into “not only a way to keep in touch with [migrants’] loved ones, but also a mechanism for reconfiguring hybrid family memories, history and identities in the transnational space” (Benítez, 2012, p. 1446).

One of the early technologies that facilitated the process of global interconnection, were cheap international phone calls (Vertovec, 2004). The volume of international phone calls increased by more than 12 times from 1982 to 2001 (ibid). Vertovec (ibid) explains that the availability
of cheap phone calls is associated with technological development, for instance, introduction of fibre-optic cable and low-orbiting satellites, as well as with the rise of highly competitive market. While before, migrants had to rely on traditional mail and pricey phone calls; with increased availability of cheap phone calls, they have been “able to communicate with their families abroad on a regular, if not day-to-day basis” (ibid, p. 220). The author highlights that the usage of both public telephones and cellphones has become accessible also in poorer and remote areas of the home countries of migrants, where their families live (ibid), which is helpful in maintaining transnational ties.

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of people who use the internet. In 2005, it was 1 billion around the world, and in 2015, the estimated number of users was 3 billion (Internet Society, 2014). Also, more and more people have been connecting to the internet through their cell phones. In January 2014, 50 per cent of cell phones were smartphones, which “perform many of the functions of a computer, typically having a touchscreen interface, Internet access, and an operating system capable of running downloaded apps” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2016). The usage of the internet has also been growing in developing countries (Internet Society, 2014). Alonso & Oiarzabal (2010) argue that “there have been major differences in the experience of migration before and since the creation of the Internet and digital communication media” (p. 9), as the migrants are able to not only maintain, but also develop and recreate transnational relations (ibid).

Communication through ICTs differs from more methods of communication such as letters and audiotapes, which were more frequent in the past, in its simultaneity and instantaneousness. Messages that are sent are also being received immediately (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014, p. 407), be it texting through SMS (Short Message Service), IM (Instant Messaging), Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and other apps. Furthermore, the user can choose from various types of calls such as Skype phone- or videocall, Viber, or regular cell phone call. These types of communication are often visual, including video chatting or sending and receiving pictures (ibid). Thus, a person has a variety of choices of forms of messages that he or she can send.
As can be seen, there has been a significant development in the use of technology for communication and people have needed to learn how to use the respective technologies in order to communicate effectively. Selwyn (2004a) states that improvement of ICT skills can have many forms, including informal learning by oneself, as well as “(s)ocialization into technology use and ‘techno-culture’ via technocultural goods, (e.g. Exposure to ICT via magazines, books and other media), family, peers and other agents of socialization” (ibid, p. 355). Furthermore, in his research of the role of children in adults’ adoption and use of computers, Selwyn (2004b) finds out that “children seem to be a significant factor in parents’ and grandparents’ adoption and/or purchase of computers” (ibid. p. 67), although they are not the sole reason for those activities (ibid). Thus, the aspect of learning plays an important role in the usage of the new media in transnational communication.

Moreover, when a migrant moves and eventually settles in a new place, he or she develops a social, as well as cultural identity, which “can sit uncomfortably with his/her social and cultural identities of the place of origin” (Bello, 2013, p. 5). In cases when migrants want to “behave in a way which is coherent and appropriate in the host society and at the same time to keep their own identity and the specificity of their own cultures” (ibid), a specific type of discomfort can appear, known as the dual identity discomfort, which results in psychological stress in migrants (ibid). Bello (ibid) suggests that the use of new communication technologies can help diminish the discomfort and therefore relieve stress, because “(i)mmigrants feel less nostalgia and those left behind are less worried about the conditions of their beloved and friends living apart” (ibid, p. 14). Furthermore, communication through the new media enables migrants to share their everyday lives with their families and vice versa, resulting in strengthening the emotional bonds (Szecsi & Szilagyi, 2012). Through their computers, they can experience ‘extended home’ (ibid). Transnational communication through the new media can also lead to enhancement of understanding of customs, traditions and norms of a country or culture of one’s parents, when these are discussed, for example, with relatives left behind (ibid).

Furthermore, the usage of social media, which are “forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content” (Merriam-Webster, 2016), can
strengthen connections with weak ties, as they differ from one-to-one communication form (Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). These weak ties “may function as ‘pioneers’, providing information or assistance to new migrants – for instance to find housing or employment” (ibid, p. 408). The new media may also have certain limitations in facilitating migration. These include unequal access to the ICTs and differences in the ease, effectiveness and quality of use (ibid). In some cases, especially when the quality of the preexisting relationship is lower, “digital media can (…) heighten tensions within long-distance relationships” (Madianou & Miller, 2012, p. 203).

Within the superdiverse context, the new media are infrastructures which enable migrants to communicate within their social networks, which are located not only in the country of origin and the country of reception, but also in transitional countries. This communication serves several purposes - maintenance and development of old ties, establishment and development of new ties and facilitating the process of migration. These media are widely available in the developed world, but are becoming still more and more accessible also in less developed and/or remote regions. Therefore, contextualizing transnational migration is impossible without taking into consideration the effect of the new media on this process. Moreover, it is important to look at how this type of migration, enabling migrants to participate in the society in their home countries, influences their participation in the host societies and their ability to “integrate”.

1.3 The idea of integration

The concept of integration has been discussed an endless number of times within the academia and there have been many definitions of what it means to integrate within the context of migration. It “in its broadest sense implies a process of incorporating immigrants and ethnic minorities into the economy, society and political life of their host country” (Boswell, 2003, p. 75). Boswell (ibid) names four dimensions of integration, which are economic, social, cultural and political dimensions. These comprise “insertion into the labour market and education and welfare systems”, “knowledge of the host country’s language, some understanding of its society and respect for its basic norms” and finally “the right to vote and to stand for election, usually acquired through naturalization” (ibid). Furthermore, countries differ in their ideologies of how immigrants should adapt into the life in the new society, including assimilation and multiculturalism (ibid). In these cases, migration is perceived as permanent. As opposed to it,
there is temporary migration, which is termed as *temporary worker model* (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, p. 11).

However, as Vertovec (2007) noted, superdiversity brings about large differences in migrants, especially in their immigration statuses, age and gender profiles, skills and experience etc. People’s migration trajectories, especially within the Western countries, have become much more complex than migrating from one place and settling in another. Still, policies of integration usually presuppose that migrants arriving into the country will settle there permanently.

For example, if a person wants to have either “continued” or “permanent residence” in the Netherlands, they need to undergo a process of “civic integration”, generally within the period of three years (Immigration and Naturalisation Service of the Netherlands, 2016). In order to integrate, “you must learn Dutch. You must then learn how the Dutch people live and work. (...) You take the integration exams after you have learned enough Dutch” (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, 2016). It can be seen that the traditional view of integration with its four dimensions is applied in this case. The idea of ‘complete’ integration stems from an ideology about forming a socially and culturally cohesive nation. However, reasons for migration are diverse, as people move for work, education, love, but also when their lives are threatened by war or famine. Therefore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to estimate if the migrants settle permanently or rather temporarily.

Furthermore, transnationalism may be viewed as impediment of integration. Borkert, Cingolani & Premazzi (2009) discuss that

(\textit{t}he present-day migrant is the representative of a new culture of mobility which entails international geographical mobility and also digital mobility. In spite of distance, the modalities of connection allow a continuous copresence, which disturbs the sociological classical interpretations of the migrants in terms of 'twofold absence': absence from home, but also absence of proper integration in the destination country. (\textit{ibid}, p. 2)

Snel, Engbersen and Leerkes (2006) researched transnational involvement of various migrant groups living in the Netherlands and its influence on their integration in social, cultural
and economic life. They found out that being transnationally involved does not necessarily impede integration at a group level (ibid). Furthermore, at an individual level, “there is no indication that transnational involvement is related to the various factors that together determine the degree of integration” (ibid, p. 304). However, the results of their study also showed that “(g)roups that are (perceived to be) culturally different from mainstream society appear to have a harder time combining transnational involvement with cultural integration” (ibid). The study did not explain the causes of this.

Bello (2013) looks into the psychological discomfort in immigrants “resulting from (...) needs of managing different social and cultural identities” (ibid, p. 5) and researches how this distress could be minimized. The author discusses that it could happen through developing mobile identities, which are defined as “the ability to move from the social identity of the host society to that of the society of origin according to the specific network in which in turn the immigrant is interacting” (ibid). There are indication that the new media can play a significant role in developing such identities (ibid).

It seems that the concept of integration as becoming a part of the host society needs to be reconsidered in the contemporary superdiverse period, in which technological, and especially communication advances, are a crucial part of human lives. Based on the thesis of Brandehof (2014) on the use of communication technologies of Cameroonian doctoral students in Ghent, Belgium, Blommaert (2016) comments on the new understanding of what it means to be integrated. The social networks of the informants are spread through several locations and the communication within the networks is ordered and nonrandom (ibid). He describes that a particular informant from Brandehof’s (2014) research is

integrated in his professional and social environment in Ghent, in the local labor market, in the Cameroonian labor market, and in his home community. (...) he is “integrated” in all of these “zones” that make up his life – he is not “not integrated”, (...) because his life develops in real synchronized time in these different zones, and all of these zones play a vital part in this subject’s life. (Blommaert, 2016)
This “integration” is enabled through the use of the new media, which simplify the long-distance communication. Blommaert (ibid) concludes that “(d)emands for “complete integration” (...) can best be seen as nostalgic” (ibid). However, this nostalgia is still prevalent in integration policies of diverse countries around the world.

As shown above, it can be argued that, in general, the understanding of what integration is in the contemporary society, in the age of transnationalism and new communication advances, does not reflect the actual situation which transnational migrants experience. The traditional understanding stems from the past, when moving from one place to another may have meant that migrants never saw their left-behind relatives and friends again. However, such perception is outdated and does not reflect the reality, in which migrants do not have to replace certain parts of their lives with other, but rather maintain and develop old networks, as well as develop new ones. Furthermore, they employ their vast linguistic resources and use various new media in doing so.

1.4 Research questions

It is apparent that superdiversity present in the contemporary world has impact on people’s, and especially migrants’, lives and their participation in the society. Therefore, the main research question of this thesis emerges: How does the current superdiverse context influence the integration of migrating individuals into the society?

There are also three research subquestions:

- What transnational and local networks do the individuals maintain?
- How do they employ their linguistic resources in different networks?
- How do they employ the new media in their networks?
2 Methodology

2.1 Qualitative research and research interview

The type of research chosen to explore integration in the superdiverse context is qualitative research, which is empirical and works mostly with non-numerical data. Qualitative research comprises many diverse research methods, which also work with different tools and may serve different purposes, but “...all these methods rely on linguistic rather than numerical data, and employ meaning-based rather than statistical forms of data analysis” (Elliott & Timulak, 2005, p. 147). The motivation for the choice was that the qualitative research focuses on the meaning within human actions and their interpretation and understanding. Its methods are “employed to answer the whys and hows of human behavior, opinion, and experience” (Guest et al., 2013, p. 1). Theories can arise from the collected data rather than theories being applied on the data to confirm the hypotheses. Also, the qualitative research is usually done on a rather small scale.

The data collected are not only described and analyzed, but also interpreted. The aim is to make meaning of the human actions, to find out “what is going on” (Spotti, 2015, personal communication), and to do this from an insider, or native-like, perspective. Although results of this type of research may not be generalizable, as they are usually rather small-scale, they can quite precisely reflect the real world of subject, therefore it can have high ecological validity (Psychology Press, 2013).

The research method used in this research is interview, which aims to discover what the informants know and do and to comment on it. The research attempted to look at the issues from the point of view of the informants, therefore, give them the voice, which is “the way in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so” (Blommaert, 2005, p. 4), and for that, the interview, “where knowledge is produced through the interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee” (Given, 2008, p. 470), was the most appropriate method.

The interview is “an ordered conversation” (Blommaert & Jie, 2012, p. 44, emphasis in original), which is mostly “semi-structured as a consequence of the agenda being set by the researcher’s
interests yet with room for the respondent’s more spontaneous descriptions and narratives” (Given, 2008, p. 470). Blommaert and Jie (2012) stress that an interview is rather a conversation than an interrogation and emphasize the importance of topics, not questions themselves, as “not all there is to be found out can be found out by asking” (ibid, p. 46, emphasis in original). When preparing for an interview, “researcher will be interested in concrete descriptions of the respondent’s experiences rather than more abstract reflections. Concrete descriptions are obtained by posing “what” and “how” questions” (Given, 2008, p. 470).

2.2 Choice of informants, interview and analysis process

To show the complexity of migration and the issue of integration in the age of superdiversity, the informants were chosen based on several criteria. They had to be transnational migrants with intricate migration paths and they had to be plurilingual. Also, they had to be active users of the new media. I, being myself a person living abroad as well and knowing many people in a similar situation, decided to first look into my own network. As I was aware of the fact that the interviews would have to be conducted repeatedly, it was reasonable to choose informants that I knew in order to ensure their repeated availability for interviews. Finally, I approached three people that I knew, who fit the aforementioned criteria, explained them the idea of the research and all three of them agreed to be interviewed about their lives, with focus on transnationalism, new media and languages. Approaching of the interviewees, as well as the interviews themselves, took place consecutively, with the first interview led at the end of November and the last in mid-April.

The interviews with two of the informants took place in person in Tilburg in a variety of locations, for example, my kitchen, a restaurant, an office or a university cafeteria, and on Skype with one informant, as he was located in China at that time. The interviews were led in English in case of two of the informants, as it is the language in which we could understand each other the best, and in Slovak in one case, as it is the native language for both me and the informant. I know all the informants on a personal level, although to varying levels, therefore I think that I managed to create informal atmosphere during the interviews.
At the time of the first interview, the exact topic of the thesis, as well as the main research questions and the research subquestions, were not clear. I made a list of topics with questions regarding the informants’ migration histories, their experience with using the new media to communicate within and across countries, and about their linguistic repertoires. Further, some of the questions about usage of and relationship to language were borrowed from the research of Goana (upcoming, 2016), who based her interview questions on the research of Tannenbaum and Tseng (2016). Given that with each of the informants, there has been more than one interview, it was possible to ask additional questions depending on the course that the research started to take.

All interviews were recorded with a device that usually laid on the table between me and the informant and the informants were asked if they agreed to be recorded. I decided not to transcribe the recorded interviews completely. Instead, I would listen to the recordings and make a “précis” (Blommaert & Jie, 2010), that means, detailed notes and noting interesting comments, which could be possibly relevant to the research questions and “worthy of further attention” (ibid, p. 69). Furthermore, after the first interview with each of the informants, a visual representation of one’s network with media and languages employed was created, which I later showed to the informants, asked them to correct it and fill in what was missing in the charts. The informants seemed to genuinely enjoy seeing what their networks looked like.

Furthermore, it was also a method used for ensuring whether I understood the informants’ statements correctly and whether I reported the results accurately. This can be regarded as ethnographic monitoring, a term coined by Hymes (1980) to address a mode of research, in which “(t)he participants will not have been bystanders. They will… be able to address the processes that have produced whatever statistics and graphs a formal evaluation process may yield” (ibid, p. 115). It gave way to “co-constructed epistemology” (Van der Aa, 2012, p. 108).

After that, an analysis of the data followed. I chose thematic analysis, which is a “(...) method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 6). According to the authors, this method is used extensively, but is not firmly established. Thematic analysis
may be a method which reports on experiences, meanings and reality of the interviewed. Its output includes the argument related to the research question (ibid). This type of analysis helps to organize and describe a set of collected data in detail, and often it also involves an interpretation.

To do the analysis, I color-coded the notes from the recordings according to which research question they could relate to. Then, I observed which common or recurrent themes related to the research questions emerged from the testimonies of the informants, namely regarding their networks, new media use and language use. I looked more closely at the specific statements that the informants made to be able to discuss them. Finally, these themes were linked with the theoretical part of the thesis and arguments to the research questions were made and conclusions were drawn. Blommaert and Jie (2012) suggest that in the analysis, the researcher should make use of “everything that is needed to solve [their] problems” (ibid, p. 68). The visual depictions served to not only to represent the complexity of one’s life, but also to co-construct knowledge and as analytical tools. In general, the statements of the informants helped me to uncover more abstract principles behind their concrete behavior.
3 Introducing Nadya, Genadij and Bobby

The three informants participating in this research, Nadya, Genadij and Bobby\textsuperscript{1}, are transnational migrants originating from three different countries, who maintain various relationships across and within borders. In their daily lives, they extensively use new media to communicate with various people, with whom they have diverse affiliations. Furthermore, they are all plurilingual, speaking several languages with varying proficiency and in different domains.

They are introduced in brief profiles in order to provide a basic insight into the informants’ lives, which will facilitate the reader’s orientation in the discussion part, where the more complete data are presented and examined. Moreover, the informants’ networks together with languages and the new media they use in them are visually represented in flowcharts. The extensive transnational and local connections of the informants are mapped.

3.1 Nadya

Nadya is a 25-year-old woman living in the Netherlands. Born in Moscow, she spent first twelve years of her life in the Russian capital. Then, her mother got a job in the Netherlands, where they moved together. Nadya started to go to a Dutch high school in Eindhoven. Although she couldn’t speak Dutch at first, she was able to learn the language within one year. Upon graduation from high school, she applied for Dutch citizenship and received it, while retaining her Russian passport at the same time. Nadya started to study law at Tilburg University. She met a man from Russia online, they got married, when she was 18, and a year and a half later, they divorced.

Nadya successfully finished her Bachelor’s degree and did her Master’s as well. She moved to Den Haag, where she worked and also has found a boyfriend. Then, she has started a PhD. at Tilburg University, which she currently continues working on, and lives in Den Haag and Tilburg alternately. In her daily life, Nadya uses various new media, for instance, Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Facetime or Vkontakte, to keep in touch with her relatives, friends and boyfriend. Apart from Russian and Dutch, she also speaks English, French and German up to varying levels.

\textsuperscript{1} The names of the informants have been changed.
3.1.1 Visual representation of Nadya’s network

Figure 1
3.2 Genadij

Currently living in China, Genadij was born in a small Ukrainian town 24 years ago. When he was not even two years old, he moved to Detva, Slovakia with his family, where he started to go to kindergarten and later to school. When he was 14, he started going to a bilingual English-Slovak high school in order to improve his already good level of English. After graduating from this school, he chose to study sinology in Prague, Czech Republic. During his Bachelor’s studies, he studied in China for a year and after finishing, he returned to China again. He now lives in Chengdu with his Russian fiancée and plans to start his Master’s degree in Prague the next school year.

Genadij regularly keeps in touch with his mother and friends in and from various places. To do that, he uses mainly Facebook, Skype and WeChat. Genadij knows several languages, which he also uses in his communication, these are namely Slovak, Russian, English and Chinese. In addition to those, he understands Ukrainian, mutually intelligible with Russian, then Czech, mutually intelligible with Slovak, and has passive knowledge of German.
3.2.1 Visual representation of Genadij’s network

Figure 2
3.3 Bobby

Coming from the capital of Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Bobby spent the first 15 years of his life in this city. Although he spoke Tajik with his parents, he went to a Russian-medium school. In the last year, he was selected for programme which enabled him to study at an American high school and live with an American family for one year. After coming back to Dushanbe and graduating from high school, he went on to study at Tajik Agrarian University. Later, his family moved to Ankara, Turkey and Bobby followed them to the country, but chose Istanbul for his subsequent studies. After finishing there, he decided to do his Master’s degree in Tilburg, the Netherlands, which he is currently about to finish at the age of 24.

Except for Tajik and Russian, Bobby speaks and understands several other languages with varying proficiency. These are English, Turkish, Persian/Farsi, Arabic, French and Chinese. His relatives and friends live in various countries and to keep in touch with them, Bobby employs diverse applications, specifically Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Viber, Line, Instagram and Vkontakte.
3.3.1 Visual representation of Bobby’s network
3.4 Legend to the flowcharts

- Place(s) of residence at the time of the research
- At least once a week frequency of communication
- Less frequent than weekly communication
- Communication activities not taking place anymore

3.4.1 Media

Facebook
WhatsApp
Skype
Skype chat
Viber
Vkontakte
Facetime
Line
WeChat
Regular phone calls
Regular SMS
ICQ
MSN
LiveJournal
Moi Mir
Mail.ru Agent
3.4.2 Languages

- Arabic
- Chinese
- Dutch
- English
- French
- German
- Persian/Farsi
- Russian
- Russian-Ukrainian mix
- Slovak
4 Discussion

In this chapter, themes relating to the research questions are discussed in accordance with the data from the informants. The recurrent themes that have emerged from the interviews, regard the transnational and local networks of the informants, their new media use and specifics of this type of communication, as well as emergence and employment of their diverse linguistic repertoires in various domains of their lives. Reviewing the themes in the light of other researches and theoretical information leads to certain conclusions about what lies behind the statements of the informants and what it suggests about the issues of integration in the superdiverse world.

4.1 What transnational and local networks do the individuals maintain?

4.1.1 Maintaining old ties and building new ties across borders

Nadya, Genadij and Bobby are migrants, whose paths have led through several different places both across and within countries. In those places where they have lived and travelled, they have encountered various people with whom they have built some kind of relationship. Some of them are family members, others are friends, schoolmates, colleagues or language learning partners. Interviews with the informants have shown that intra- and international networks are extensive, encompassing several locations (refer to the Chapter 3 for visual representation of the networks).

Nadya’s network stretches from Russia to the Netherlands, as she was born in the first country and migrated to the second one at the age of 12. She is in contact with friends from Russia and especially with her grandmother living in Moscow. Within the Netherlands, her network comprises three main locations - Tilburg, Eindhoven and Den Haag, as in each of them, she has a certain network, be it colleagues from her department in Tilburg; mother, sister and stepfather in Eindhoven, or her boyfriend and French language learning partners in Den Haag. Apart from that, she has friends who she met during her international activities, such as AIESEC internship in Ukraine.

The migration trajectory of Bobby led from Tajikistan, his birthplace, to the United States of America, where he spent one year as an exchange student, living with a host family. After that,
he returned to Tajikistan and later moved to Turkey, where he studied at a university and made friends with people from various countries. After finishing, he decided to do his Master’s degree in the Netherlands. His family, from which he mentioned grandmother, uncle and cousins, live in Tajikistan, while his nuclear family has moved to Turkey. Furthermore, he occasionally keeps in touch with his American host family and friends he met there. He has been participating in several international programs and conferences, which has led to further diversification of his network.

Genadij’s family moved from Ukraine to Slovakia when he was less than two years old. He lived there until he finished high school and then continued his studies in the Czech Republic. As he studied sinology, he also went to study to China, then returned after a year, finished his Bachelor’s degree and went back to Asia. Some of his relatives and family friends live in Ukraine, his mother and grandparents reside in Slovakia, his friends from high school in Slovakia now live in several European countries and his friends from the university are mostly in the Czech Republic or in China. In addition to that, he has local friends in China, where he has also met his Russian fiancée.

The informants of this research have been migrating from place to place, but also returning to certain locations. In each of the places where they spent a period of their lives, they have built networks of contacts which they, with varying frequency and intensity of contact, maintain. When moving from one place to another, the respondents have been not only able to maintain contacts with people from previous locations, but also create new contacts in the new locations. The networks of Nadya, Genadij and Bobby include parents, grandparents, siblings and other relatives, then friends from school as well as other activities, such as language learning or sports, and also colleagues from internships and jobs. These networks involve numerous locations across several countries. Due to such contacts, the three informants can be considered transnational migrants, although their statuses, experiences and reasons for migration differ.
4.1.2 Education as infrastructure of globalization

The reasons for the migration in the lives of the informants vary, but include decisions of the immediate family, new jobs, better life prospects, as well as education. For Bobby and Genadij, the reason of their international mobility was, actually, education. The internationalisation of education is a global trend. In 2015, around 5 million students studied at a university abroad, which is “more than double the 2.1 million who did so in 2000 and more than triple the number in 1990” (ICEF Monitor, 2015). It is not clear if this statistic includes only degree-seeking students, or also exchange students, who spend only a part of their studies in another country. If the former is the case, the total number of migrating students would be even higher. It is argued that

(t)his astounding growth has occurred in the context of an increasingly globalised world in which economies are closely tied to others within their region and beyond. In 2015, money and trade are flowing freely across many borders and from many sources. So, too, are knowledge and skills. (ibid)

Traditionally, international students have been aiming for English-speaking destinations, such as the US, the UK, Canada and Australia, the enrolment is now also distributed throughout non-English-speaking countries (ibid). Universities in European countries, for instance, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands, as well as in East Asia, started to offer courses in English “in an effort to internationalise their curricula and boost foreign student recruitment” (The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, 2007, p. 1).

The increasing interconnectedness of the world economies, as well as the role of English as a global language, make it easier for students to study at universities outside their country of origin. It can be contended that educational institutions are infrastructures of globalization, boosting human mobility, which Bobby and Genadij also have made use of in their mobility efforts. These infrastructures encompassed within the superdiverse world have enabled the informants to pursue parts of their education in various countries, namely the US, Turkey and the Netherlands in case of Bobby and the Czech Republic and China in Genadij’s case. Stays at educational institutions allowed the informants to interact with various people, as well as expanded the range of their linguistic and economic resources.
4.1.3 Simultaneity

Physically, a person can be only at one place at one time. However, with the emergence of communication advances, especially over the internet, people can easily communicate without being restricted by borders and oceans, which is also the case of Nadya, Bobby and Genadij. Arnaut (2012) refers to the notion of simultaneity and why it can be relevant to “the emergent perspective of super-diversity” (ibid, p. 4). People are members of “multiple belongings in diasporic configurations” (ibid), they “can engage in multiple transnational processes at the same time” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004, p. 1028) and therefore, it is necessary to “explore how transnational practices and processes in different domains relate to and inform one another to understand how these developments are defining the boundaries of social life” (ibid).

The concept of simultaneity has a multitude of dimensions, also from the point of view of sociolinguistics, especially “in connection with multi-membership in different communities of practice, (…), the co-presence of a multiplicity of communicative channels, from face-to-face to mass media (…) or the copresence of different languages or codes in the same word or segment” (Arnaut, 2012, p. 4).

Nadya, Bobby and Genadij have extensive transnational social networks, with members of which they keep in touch. Therefore, it can be maintained that they belong to multiple configurations at the same time. They are involved in various transnational activities, too, except for communication within their networks. Genadij reads news from Slovakia on a daily basis and also attempted to make use of his voting right in Slovakia while living in China. Furthermore, he was able to arrange becoming a freelance writer for a Slovak newspaper in the meantime. Nadya’s mother and grandmother update her on the political situation in Russia. Bobby votes in Tajikistan when he has a chance. He has also engaged in organization of a summer university in Austria.

Although living in one country, the informants are simultaneously able to participate on life elsewhere. Although transnational activities comprise mostly communication within a private social network consisting of relatives and friends, they are not restricted to this, but also include other pursuits. Genadij’s case shows that these do not have to be only activities started in one
country and continued in another, but new avocations as well. Both old and new transnational activities are accessible across countries. Additionally, the simultaneity symptomatic to the superdiverse world entails concurrent use of a variety of communication channels and different languages within the same segment of speech. These issues are further discussed in the following chapters.

4.2 How do they employ the new media in their networks?

4.2.1 Nonrandom fashion of the new media use

To communicate transnationally, Nadya, Bobby and Genadij use multiple communication channels to maintain contact with people within their networks. Bobby currently uses at least seven applications, which he employs in communication with his peers, namely Facebook, WhatsApp, Skype, Viber, Line, Instagram and Vkontakte. Nadya mentions use of five applications, which are Facebook, WhatsApp, Facetime, Skype and Vkontakte. In addition to that, she also uses regular phone calls. Genadij most often utilizes three applications, Facebook, Skype and WeChat. However, their communication within their networks is not channelled through all the applications in all the relationships. Instead, various relationships, including transnational relationships, have specific constellations of the new media use. Blommaert (2016) argues that “tremendous amount of order and nonrandomness to it” (ibid).

For example, Nadya uses Skype calls with her grandmother, but regular phone calls with mother and Facetime and WhatsApp with her boyfriend. Genadij uses Skype with his mother, however, they do not call each other often, but rather daily chat on this platform. He uses Facebook with his friends from the university in the Czech Republic, but adds Skype to the combination with friends from high school. Bobby employs Skype and WhatsApp in communication with his immediate family in Turkey and Poland, but when it comes to his grandmother and other relatives in Tajikistan, he uses Skype and Viber. It can be argued that their communication is structured and the new media are not employed in a random way. In a word, they have specific configurations of media use within individual relationships, which can be termed as polymedia.

Madianou and Miller (2012) brought this new concept to social anthropology, migration and communication studies, referring to the contemporary communication environment. It
denotes different platforms of the new media such as e-mail, video calls and instant messaging, and how these various kinds of means of communication are used for different purposes by different users. „(...) ‘polymedia‘ is (...) proposed (...) as a term to refer to these various, constantly changing media and the need for each relationship to create a configuration of usage generally employing several different media“ (Madianou & Miller, 2012, p. 124). Polymedia can, thus, be the right term to coin the usage of the specific media within the relationships in informants’ networks, which needed to be established in order to maintain these connections, especially the transnational ones.

4.2.2 Regional differences in media use and limits of infrastructure

Nadya, Genadij and Bobby use Facebook and Skype, which are popular among people throughout the world. However, other communication apps are used in some regions and the respondents also use applications that are popular in locations they have a connection to. Genadij extensively uses WeChat with his Chinese friends, as well as with friends from the Czech university, who are in China. Although the app has more than 700 million monthly active users (Custer, 2016), it is not largely used outside China. The app is primarily designed for smartphone use.

Nadya uses Vkontakte, which is a social network popular among Russian speakers, and she uses it exactly for that purpose - to communicate with her Russian-speaking friends, mainly those who do not use Facebook. Bobby also uses Vkontakte to keep in touch with Russian speakers. Furthermore, he uses Line app, which is an app for instant communication. Through this app, he communicates mostly with people in Iran and Turkmenistan. It can be seen that when the respondents want to stay in touch with people in their network, they make conscious choices about using region-specific popular applications, which would enable them to easily reach their friends. Polymedia, in this case, therefore, can refer not only to the need to create a configuration of the media use in a relationship (Madianou & Miller, 2012), but also to consideration of which channels could be most effective to maintain the desired level of contact.

Differences in the use of the new media around the world are caused by certain limitations, such as unequal access to the ICTs, as well as differences in the ease, effectiveness and quality of use,
which are referred to by Dekker and Engbersen (2014). People in Russia, China, Turkmenistan or Iran, which are the countries that the respondents have networks in, can access the internet, however, these countries belong to the “enemies of the Internet” according to the Reporters without Borders (2014), as they restrict access to information online. In China, for instance, Facebook and the major search engine Google are generally inaccessible. Instead, local alternatives are used, as aforementioned WeChat, or the search engine Baidu. Although the communication technologies are infrastructures of globalisation, they are not equally accessible to all people, and one of the reasons can be structural - restrictions of the local governments. If they want to maintain contact, people are bound to look for alternatives, such as freely accessible social networks and mobile apps.

According to Bobby, the internet is not free in Iran and Turkmenistan. There is a possibility to access restricted websites through VPN (Virtual Private Network), which “enables (...) to send data between two computers across a shared or public internetwork in a manner that emulates the properties of a point-to-point private link” (Microsoft TechNet, 2001). Bobby claims that even with the use of VPN, the internet connection is very slow. That is why he prefers to use the Line app with his friends from Iran and Turkmenistan, who he knows mostly from his studies in Turkey. The app is accessible there. He also uses the app with an Iranian friend living in the US.

When Genadij came to China, he was not able to access Facebook and Google. In order to do so, he had to arrange a VPN connection, which he received from his friend. Obstacles in access to Facebook can also be the reason why Genadij’s Chinese friends do not use it and prefer WeChat instead. When he wanted to stay in touch with them, he had to adapt to their communication preferences. On the other, neither Genadij nor Bobby have abandoned other channels they previously using, but added new channels to their communication repertoires. Widening the range of the communication channels and searching for alternative internet connection options can be considered ways of overcoming the structural limits of the infrastructure.
Genadij also notices a certain limitation of the WeChat app itself. He describes it as a platform where users can only see content added and shared by their contacts. He notes that it limits the users from discussing on a larger scale and also from organizing mass events, such as gatherings or protests. He thinks that it is designed in such a way on purpose, to prevent the possible riots against the Chinese government in a similar fashion as during Arab Spring in 2010-2012. The design of the app together with restricted access to other social networks and various websites may be an effective method of controlling the population.

In essence, the three respondents of this research use region-specific new media in order to keep in touch with their friends in respective countries. By using these apps, the informants widen their communication repertoire, which enables them to communicate with the people they want to maintain contact with. This diverse media repertoire is a consequence, and at the same time, also a solution of the unequal access to ICTs. Moreover, restrictions of the access, as well as design of some apps, WeChat in particular, can work as a prevention of possible social unrest by hindering mass communication through the new media.

### 4.2.3 Development of communication channels over time and the aspect of learning

Bobby and Nadya also mentioned the communication channels that they used to use in the past. When Bobby left for the US, he kept in touch with his classmates from high school via Mail.ru Agent, which is an instant messaging service, used predominantly by Russian speakers. Furthermore, he used Moi Mir, which he describes as a platform similar to MySpace, where he could see who checked his profile, for example. For the past few years, he has not used Moi Mir or Mail.ru Agent anymore, as all the people he communicated with moved to other platforms, such as Facebook and Vkontakte.

Nadya has a similar experience from the time when she moved to the Netherlands from Russia. Her online activities took place in Lord of the Rings-themed chatrooms and also on LiveJournal, a social network of blogs and diaries. She communicated with her friends on MSN, ICQ and Mail.ru Agent, which are all instant messaging services. With her grandmother and then-boyfriend ex-husband, she used a special phone number enabling cheap calls abroad, which Vertovec (2004) called “the social glue of migrant transnationalism”. At the same time, this was
one of the first technologies enabling transnationalism. Currently, Nadya does not use any of the above mentioned services anymore. She still uses regular phone calls, but within the Netherlands.

It can be seen that in general, there is not only an increase in the number of the internet users around the world (Internet Society, 2014), but the existing users also develop their preferences in the online communication. Instead of ICQ, MSN, Mail.ru Agent and chatroom appointments, the respondents now use Facebook, Vkontakte, Whatsapp, etc. The online communication of Nadya and Bobby has transformed over the years, when some communication channels have been replaced by other.

This is also related to the means of communication with family members. Previously, Nadya was using phone to call her grandmother to Russia, but eventually, she and her mother taught the grandmother how to use Skype by initially drawing a scheme for her. They call each other on Skype several times a week now. Later, the grandmother also started to use Facebook, where she, according to Nadya, frequently comments on pictures of her granddaughter. Bobby mentions that he and his siblings taught his parents how to use Whatsapp, on which they now have a family group and communicate on a daily basis. What is present here is the element of teaching. Not only the informants themselves learnt which media to use and how to use them, they also taught their relatives to use certain media to make the communication easier.

Szecsi and Szilagyi (2012) argue that when transnational migrants communicate with their left-behind family members through the new media, it enables them to share their everyday lives with each other, which may result in strengthening of the emotional bonds. In the interest of staying close and being able to share what is happening in their lives, Bobby and Nadya taught their family members to use the respective new media, which brings about the possibility of daily communication and maintaining the close relationships.

Kress (2003) discusses literacy in the new media age and socialization into a media environment. This process of socialization, “the valuations of the media (…) and modes (…) in that media landscape” (ibid, p. 164) can be also reflected upon in context of socialization into modes
of communication. A generation or two older relatives of the informants were socialized into different modes than their descendants, and in order to effectively communicate with these, they had to be “re-socialized” into new modes in the current new media landscape. As mentioned by Selwyn (2004b), the offspring have played a role in parents’ and grandparents’ adoption and use of the communication technologies. However, this also applies to the informants themselves, especially Bobby and Nadya, who also had to learn to employ newly emerged communication channels instead of the ones they used to use. If Bobby wants to keep in touch with his friends in Tajikistan, it makes no sense to try it through Mail.ru Agent anymore, because he will not be able to reach them there.

What can be seen here is the two-foldness of the element of learning. On one hand, Bobby and Nadya took up the role of teachers, when they taught their family members to use WhatsApp and Skype. On the other hand, before they could teach others, they had to learn themselves, what modes of communication would be the most efficient in communication with the respective people. Therefore, the learners eventually became teachers. The “re-socialization” into the new media landscape takes place so that people can maintain their connections, which are varied local and transnational networks in cases of Bobby and Nadya.

4.2.4 Inextrinsicity of online and offline environments

Although online communication is discussed in this chapter, the distinction between virtual and ‘real’ world cannot be made in the case of Nadya, Bobby and Genadij. Wittel (2002) points out the problematicity of this distinction, because “because it suggests the existence of a real reality, a reality that is not mediated” (ibid, p. 8). He argues that activities that people do online such as chatting, web browsing and others “are very real experiences for the people performing them” (ibid). Sade-Beck (2004) further elaborates that “the virtual world and the ‘real world’” merge, creating a broader definition of reality (ibid, p. 9).

It can be argued that transnational online communication plays a significant role in the lives of the three informants, as they communicate across countries or even continents on a daily basis and do so with their families and close friends. However, by no means are these relationships restricted to the perceived online domain. On the other hand, these relationships have either been
established beforehand, or they started through online communication and later the participants met in person. The latter happened to Nadya, as she started some relationships with people from Russia when she moved to the Netherlands, who she later met on her holiday in Russia and further developed her relationship with. She also met her ex-husband on ICQ. He later moved to the Netherlands and married her. This relationship emerged through online communication, but had consequences in Nadya’s ‘real’ life. This shows the inextricability of online and offline environments, which cannot be explored separately from each other.

The online communication allows maintenance and further development of preexisting relationships, but at the same time establishment and development of new relationships. At the same time, the online channels that the informants use serve as mediators of very tangible connections between them and their families and friends. Therefore, online and offline environments are inseparably intertwined in the lives of Nadya, Bobby and Genadij.

4.3 How do they employ their linguistic resources in different networks?

4.3.1 Emergence and employment of linguistic repertoires
Blommaert and Backus (2012) assert that linguistic repertoires on an individual level are records of mobility, and not only movement of people, but also of language resources, social arenas and learning environments. The languages that Nadya, Bobby and Genadij use, speak and understand record trajectories of their lives and at the same time, allow them to effectively navigate themselves throughout their complex networks.

Nadya learnt Russian as her mother tongue and then she started to learn English as a foreign language. After moving to the Netherlands, she started to speak Dutch and it also became her main language of education at that time. Russian became restricted to the private sphere, she used it mostly with her mother and grandmother. She was still learning English. Later, she also took up other languages, namely German and French. She mentions that she started to learn French because the thought it would be practical for her future career, but later developed a passion for it. In the meantime, she has been using English in both private and public spheres, with her boyfriend and international friends on one hand, and in her work as a PhD. researcher on the other. Her linguistic repertoire has her life journey imprinted in it.
Bobby has also learnt several languages throughout his life, starting with Tajik, then adding Russian, English, Turkish, Farsi and several other languages to the mix. He learnt these languages because of educational, as well as practical reasons. Furthermore, Farsi also had a certain sentimental meaning to him, as he considers it a language of his ancestors. Interestingly, Bobby differentiates between standard and ‘street’ Tajik, and he generally speaks the street Tajik. His repertoire contains several languages, as well as vernaculars, which he uses in various domains and knows, speaks and understands them up to varied levels.

Genadij also speaks several languages. Although the first language he was exposed to was a mix of Russian and Ukrainian, he considers Slovak to be his native language. Other than these languages, he speaks English, Russian, Chinese and understands German. For example, he learnt German in primary school and then he went to visit friends of his grandparents to Germany and his German improved significantly. However, with the start of high school, his knowledge of the language became more and more passive, but in some form still stays in his linguistic repertoire.

These three individuals are plurilingual, they use several languages with varying levels of proficiency in them, as well as with different purposes (Beacco & Byram, 2003). It can be seen that the linguistic repertoires both follow and document the biographies of the informants, as they have been learning the respective languages in diverse situations - as first or second languages, foreign languages - with accordance to their live paths. Furthermore, these repertoires are not only documentations of their trajectories, but also allow the informants to navigate and orientate themselves in the environment that surrounds them and in their networks. Their knowledge of certain languages may be sufficient in situations, in which they usually find themselves in within their networks, but also could be insufficient in other. For instance, Nadya’s knowledge of Russian is sufficient to communicate with her grandmother, but she admits that she no longer understand the slang, so she might lack it in conversations with younger speakers of Russian.
4.3.2 Learning the languages

The informants have learnt languages in their linguistic repertoires in various ways. Bobby started attending a Russian-medium primary school, although he did not speak Russian. However, his skills in this language developed quickly, as the language was all around him, not only through formal instruction, but also through being surrounded by Russian speakers at school. According to Bobby, being frequently exposed to the language sped up the process of learning.

When Nadya started learning Dutch at the age of 12, at first she went to school where she had six hours of the language a day. Although she reports that she never did anything more for learning Dutch that she had to, she was able to learn it to the extent that she can teach Bachelor’s classes of law in the language. She says that she is not proud of having learnt Dutch, because she had to learn it, while she is proud of her French, because it was a conscious decision to learn it.

Genadij has been learning Chinese through instruction at a university, but once he travelled to China, he was able to practice the language in everyday situations. Conversely, he was exposed to Russian at home, if not through the speech of his mother and grandparents, then through hearing the language on TV, which his mother had turned on all the time.

A superdiverse linguistic repertoire of a transnational migrant varies from one person to another not only in the number, type and level of understanding of languages and vernaculars that an individual has in it, but also in a way how these languages have become parts of it. It can happen by a conscious choice of an individual or their parents or by necessity of knowing a certain language for functioning in a particular society. Learning of the language can have a form of formal instruction, as well as being exposed to the language through being in an environment where the language is spoken, or a mixture of both. These different combinations of what languages, to what extent, how and why they have been learnt, make a linguistic repertoire of a transnational individual superdiverse.
4.3.3 Language use in specific domains/relationships

Nadya speaking Russian to her mother and grandmother, but preferring English when talking about her work or to her boyfriend is an example of a plurilingual person who needs to figure out which languages are the most effective to be used in certain domains or relationships. Within a network, a transnational individual creates not only a suitable configuration of the new media to maintain relationships, but also a configuration of languages. In their networks, each of the informants uses several languages, but in each of the relationships, Nadya, Bobby and Genadij employ either a specific language or a certain combination of languages.

Bobby, Nadya and Genadij refer to the presence of code-switching and code-mixing in their lives, which is typical for plurilingual individuals with wide linguistic repertoires. Code-switching is “the mixing of words, phrases and sentences from two distinct grammatical (sub-) systems across sentence boundaries within the same speech event” (Bokamba, 1989, p. 278) and code-mixing refers to “the embedding of various linguistic units such as affixes (...), words (...), phrases and clauses from two distinct grammatical (sub-) systems within the same sentence and speech event” (ibid). Although Bobby tries to stick to one language when speaking with his parents, he mixes languages with his siblings. Nadya also points out occasional use of Dutch words in Russian speech, when talking to her Ukrainian friend, who also speaks Russian and Dutch. In Genadij’s life, code-switching and code-mixing are present both in his family, where they speak in a mix of Slovak, Russian and Ukrainian, and in his relationship, where he mentions speaking in their own mix of Russian, English and Chinese with his fiancée.

Therefore, the daily language practices of the informants include specific choices within particular relationships. These choices are enabled by the existence of wide linguistic repertoires, allowing the transnational migrants to effectively communicate within various domains and relationships. It can be contended that the choice of a language or their combination is made in order to ensure the most effective transfer of meaning and understanding on both sides. For example, Genadij would not use English with his Chinese friends, because even his limited knowledge of Chinese at some point provided them with better understanding of what he wanted to say than using English, which they have none to very limited knowledge of. In contrast, Nadya
makes conscious choices regarding her usage of French and German, where she communicates with people speaking these languages in those, in order to improve her skills.
5 What does it mean to be integrated?

The three informants of this research are transnational migrants, as throughout their lives, they have built networks, in which their country of origin and countries of settlement are linked together. They are able to maintain these connections through utilizing varied communication applications, as well as by employing their wide linguistic repertoires. Nadya, Bobby and Genadij do so in a nonrandom manner, when they have specific configurations of the new media - polymedia - and the languages within specific relationships. Permanency of their settlement in the countries where they live or have lived, is not clear.

Although Nadya currently lives in the Netherlands, has Dutch citizenship and does not want to go live to Russia, she does not rule out the possibility to move to another country, at least for a certain period of time. Genadij plans to return to the Czech Republic after his stay in China to do his Master’s degree, but that does not mean he will stay there forever. Bobby has recently lived in four countries, namely Tajikistan, the US, Turkey and the Netherlands. The migration trajectories, official statuses and experiences of these transnational migrants differ. Defining their lives in terms of their residency is not easy, as it may easily change in a short time. This is one of the features of the superdiverse context they live in.

Another feature is the availability of infrastructures of globalization, for example, educational institutions, means of travelling and the new media. Nadya, Genadij and Bobby make frequent use of those, what allows them to live and connect transnationally. On one hand, the superdiverse infrastructure enables them to easily move from one place to another for family, work and educational opportunities, but on the other hand, it also facilitates this migration by providing possibilities for communication within the migrants’ networks.

Each of the three informants has spent some time in more than one country; Genadij and Nadya also lived in more than one place within one country. Furthermore, they have spent varied amount of time in these locations. As a result of integration, they would be supposed to be incorporated into economic, social and political life of their host country (Boswell, 2003). However, several questions arise, for instance, which country or location that would be in the case of these three informants. Which languages should they know? Which society should
they understand? Which country’s political environment are they supposed to pay attention to? And why should they do all these things, when they stay only temporarily? One way to answer this question is to maintain that the idea of ‘complete’ integration applies only to immigrants, therefore, to people, who come “to a country to take up permanent residence” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2016). However, in the current superdiverse environment, as well as in the three stories in this research suggest, it cannot be definitely established, if the residence is going to be permanent, which makes the matter of integration increasingly complex.

Conversely, Nadya, Bobby and Genadij have their own networks, or zones which make up their lives. Their lives develop in “real synchronized time” (Blommaert, 2016) across these zones. Taking into consideration that their lives happen within these zones, where they have been able to establish and maintain contacts, it can be argued that they are, in fact, “integrated”. The new media and wide linguistic repertoires allow them to participate in diverse activities and engage in various contacts, which, together, make up their lives. For these transnational migrants, being able to be a part of their network can be recognized as the most important element of their functioning in various domains.

The current superdiverse context has an extensive impact on the traditional understanding of what integration is. The idea of this process as something that migrants are supposed complete within one country or location is not relevant anymore, as thanks to infrastructures of globalization, they are able to move from place to place, be settled somewhere only temporarily and for various reasons and communicate efficiently across borders. The concept of integration moves from being incorporated in various domains in a host country to rather being incorporated in individual’s own network of relationships and activities. The integration rules of countries may not reflect the actual situation that the migrants face, who are able to independently manage their contacts and activities without the need to undergo the ‘complete’ integration, “because there are instruments that enable one to lead a far more gratifying life, parts of which are spent in the host society while other parts are spent elsewhere” (Blommaert, 2016).

The view of integration as a process of becoming incorporated into a host society needs to shift to a more individual level, because under the superdiverse conditions, migrating people differ
greatly in their paths, motivations and experiences. The traditional view of an immigrant who settles permanently in another countries is becoming insufficient as well, because it is not clear-cut who will and will not fall under this definition. Instead, people engage in transnational activities wherever they are and that is what is relevant for them.

There can be an example of how the ‘complete’ integration may not an appropriate policy in the contemporary world. If Bobby decided to stay in the Netherlands after his studies to work in an international company, he would be incorporated in the local job market. However, he would not really need to speak Dutch, as his working language would be English and in his daily life, he could get by without Dutch as well. Can he be considered not integrated, when he would live a full professional and social life within his network, while at the same time, he would not depend on the social security system of the host country? According to the traditional view of integration, yes, but in his reality, no.

The opportunities for transnational involvement including the extensive use of varied communication and language resources change the process of migration in the current superdiverse context. Therefore, for the migrants themselves, it is becoming increasingly important to be able to be actively engaged in their own networks, than to undergo the process of ‘complete’ integration in the host society. The theory of how to become integrated differs from empirical observations of how the integration actually looks like from the point of view of transnational migrants. The technological advances and employment of linguistic repertoires facilitate “a more rewarding and harmonious lifestyle that does not involve painful ruptures of existing social bonds, social roles, activity patterns and identities” (Blommaert, 2016).

5.1 Implications of the findings

Globalization as a process both enables and is enabled by various infrastructures. These infrastructures allow mobility of people and resources, which, again, brings about more global flows and diversification of diversity. Therefore, superdiversity is a self-fulfilling prophecy, by providing the infrastructures, it facilitates expansion of variance, leading to creation of even more superdiverse environment. It is necessary to look at this process as a development, which is, on one hand, different from the past, but on the other hand, its future evolution is hardly predictable.
That is why it is essential to aim research efforts at exploring the current situation from the point of view of people who feel the consequences of the superdiverse environment themselves. By interpretation of the research results, it would by possible to adapt policies of various institutions to better reflect the actual circumstances, rather than to be directed by outdated concepts.

However, institutions are not the only entities unaware of the complexity of the contemporary world. It could be argued that people themselves do not realize how closely their everyday lives connect to lives of others through the global flows. Raising awareness about the intricacies of one’s personal connections could, in an ideal case, lead to more understanding between people from various backgrounds. One of the ways to make people aware of the concept of superdiversity and how it influences their lives, could be to create a web-based tool enabling them to chart their personal network in a similar fashion, as it was done in this research. People would see how wide and diverse connections are and what tools they use to maintain them. Although the internet connection is currently not accessible to everybody and the digital, as well as literacy divide is still present, the number of users is constantly growing, making the internet effective in reaching people from all around the world.

So far, superdiversity has been a concept used in social sciences to describe and analyze the diversification of diversity, present in the world of the 21st century. However, its implications are much wider, as it is actually the reality in which we currently exist. It can be said that we live the superdiversity. People understanding the global interconnectedness would be aware that the connections they have are central to economic and social prosperity of them as individuals, but also of the society as a whole. The concept of superdiversity could be one of the components creating a peaceful world for the future generations.
6 Bibliography


