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What to expect from technologies of communication? The media use by migrants[1]

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Exploring the "social construction of knowledge" in the digital age has to attend the material geographies, on the one hand, as well the social and individual conditions, on the other hand, which provide the contexts within these technologies of communication are embedded. More specifically, from the angle of the media user, the relation between technology and user is defined by user's expectations. In contrast to the concept of "imagined affordances" (Nagy & Neff 2015), I would argue, from the theoretical perspective of operational constructivism, that expectations (and not sheer imaginations) condition how people use media technology. This means also that media use effects expectations that can be stabilized, confirmed, and/or disappointed. The concept of expectation refers to addressing and ascribing meaning to something (Luhmann 1995). Through response, including response from technological devices, you know whether your expectation is confirmed or not. The term includes also choice, that there are always more possibilities for meaning constructions than actually done.

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For example, as a media user, you have to reduce the flood of media offers, to select these ones that correspond to your expectations. The more you get experiences the more you know what works according to your expectations and what not. The more experiences you get from media devices and online platforms you can adjust them to your purposes, and, therefore, expectations can be stabilized and secured. Here, the concept of expectation has a temporal, topical and also social dimension.

The presentation takes it's point of departure from an empirical study about how the use of media technologies, in this case the smartphone as a multi-functional device, impacts the resettlement of forced migrants in a new geographical place.

References

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