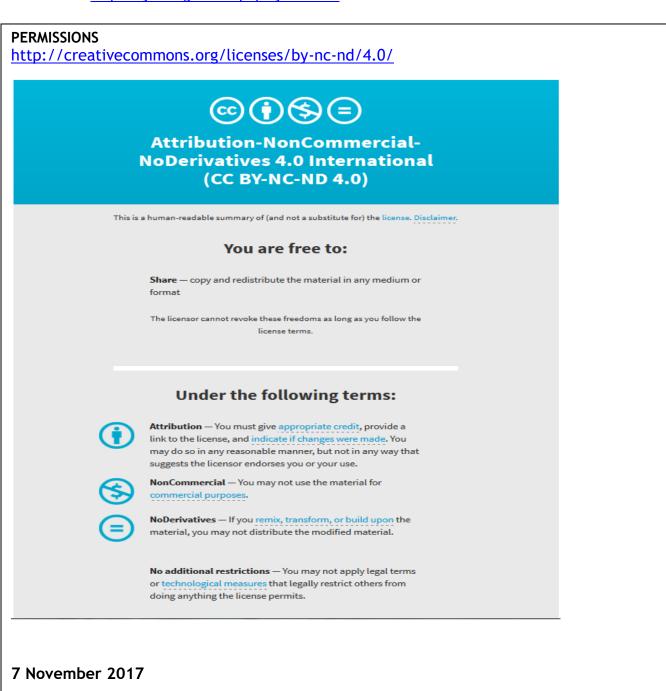# PUBLISHED VERSION

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Belonging-Security Across Borders:
News Media, Migration, and the Spaces of Production

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This article analyzes the relationship between migrants, news media, and feelings of belonging and security. It comparatively examines the role of news media produced in three distinct yet overlapping sociopolitical spheres—Australia, Iran, and the Iranian diaspora—in the management of "belonging-security" among Iranian migrants in Australia. The article investigates the experiences of Iranian Australians as they manage shifting understandings of identity, home, and community, all while engaging with a complex media environment that addresses multiple audiences and facilitates multiple overlapping communities. The findings demonstrate that participants apply their own evaluative frameworks onto media in an attempt to manage feelings of belonging-security and negotiate cultural and political borders.

Keywords: belonging-security, migration, news media, transnational, Iranian Australian

Introduction

This article analyzes the relationship between migrants, news media, and experiences of belonging and security. It provides a comparative examination of the role of news media produced in three distinct yet overlapping sociopolitical spheres—Australia, Iran, and the Iranian diaspora—in the management of "belonging-security" among Iranian migrants in Australia (Qureshi, 2007). Two central questions are at the heart of the article. First, how do Iranian Australians manage experiences of belonging-security in the context of multiple possible identities, communities, and homes to which they can claim belonging? Second, what is the role in this process of media that address multiple audiences, are produced in different sociopolitical contexts, and construct and define diverse yet overlapping imagined communities?

The concept of belonging-security is drawn from the work of Qureshi (2007) as well as Georgiou (2013), Silverstone (1994), and Giddens (1990). Belonging-security involves both a feeling of being at home, or at least being welcome in a certain place, and of ontological security, or a feeling that the surrounding social environment is understood and stable (Goergiou, 2013; Silverstone, 1993, 1994). Belonging-security is an experience, or feeling, that is increasingly dependent on symbolic material and is intertwined with processes of de- and reterritorialization (Moores, 2003, 2006; Morley, 2001). I am

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therefore concerned with the role of news media in relation to both "the destabilizing effects of globalization" and migration as well as "the simultaneous process of 'reterritorialization' . . . whereby borders and boundaries of various sorts are becoming more, rather than less, strongly marked" (Morley, 2001, p. 427).

These borders and the communities and places they demarcate are not only physical but cultural, social, and political, and are now both transcended and reinforced by a mixture of local, national, and transnational news media (Aksoy & Robins, 2000, 2003; Appadurai, 1996; Gillespie, 2007; Moores, 2003, 2006; Morley, 2000, 2001). Through electronic and digital communications networks, experiences of community, identity, home, and belonging-security are potentially lifted out of specific geographical locations and freed from the strictures of that seemingly dominant 20th-century form of community, the nation-state (Georgiou, 2013; Karim, 2003; Shields, 2014). At the same time, this opening up of the spaces of belonging-security, and the symbolic forms on which such experiences can be based, is met with constant attempts at closure and the reterritorialization of cultural and social experiences. Even transnational understandings of home and community are dependent on defining difference and excluding "matter out of place" (Morley, 2000, 2001).

Despite literature pointing to migrants as critical and omnivorous news media consumers, few studies of migrant media consumption provide a comparative and contextualized account of the way in which migrants engage with news media from different parts of the world (Aksoy & Robins, 2000, 2003; Christiansen, 2004; Dayan, 1999; Georgiou, 2005, 2013; Gillespie, 2007; Hopkins, 2009; Qureshi, 2007). Contrasting the use of different forms of news media allows an appreciation of the way migrants manage belonging-security in the context of transnational flows that are interceded with passionately defended borders and ideals of community (Anderson, 1991; Gillespie, 2007). Such an approach provides a stronger understanding of the way in which migrants negotiate their experiences of belonging-security while engaging with news media that imagine and speak to different ideas of community, home, and security (Hopkins, 2009; Karim, 2003). As this study will demonstrate, Iranian Australians place their own frameworks of judgment on news media, evaluating them based largely on where, why, and for whom they are produced.

The article begins with a discussion of the ways in which news media can inform experiences of belonging-security at local, national, and transnational levels. A key to this process is the news media's role in narrating local and global risks and facilitating local and transnational communities (Gillespie, 2006, 2007). The article then provides a discussion of the methodological approach before turning to an analysis of data from 19 in-depth interviews with Iranian migrants in Australia. Participants' interrelated attitudes toward Iranian state, diasporic, and exilic media and Australian broadcast media are analyzed in turn. It is argued that, whereas Iranian news media struggle with issues of trustworthiness, relevance, and proximity, Australian broadcast and print media both facilitate and undermine a sense of belonging-security for participants.

Belonging-Security and News Media

National broadcast and print media are considered central to the development of a national consciousness, national identity, and a sense of belonging in nation-states around the world (Smith & Phillips, 2006). Through the transcending of regional dialects, the sharing of narrative and symbolic materials, the promotion and construction of national myths, and the temporal structuring of nationally shared events and rituals, these media are charged with creating an imagined national community to which certain people can claim a legitimate sense of belonging (Anderson, 1991; Gellner, 1983; Scannell, 1996; Smith & Phillips, 2006). Importantly, it is news media that are implicit in much of the writing about mass media and national identity, from early newspapers in the work of Anderson (1991) and others to broadcast news in the work of Scannell (1996).

In the context of changing technologies and developing views of the complexity of audiences, research has expanded on the relationship between media and national belonging, looking at both the impacts of globalization on national borders as well as the formation of subnational identities facilitated by fragmented and specialized media (Morley, 2000; Smith & Phillips, 2006). As Hopkins (2009) argues, "national media comprise an area which is increasingly shifting from addressing a singular audience in the national public sphere to . . . a series of smaller, niche audiences which may exist locally, regionally, transnationally or globally" (p. 19). Thus, although national print and broadcast media continue to shape ideas of national identity and belonging, they do so increasingly by engaging with questions of national borders, global risks, and diversity within the imagined community of the nation.

The nature of national broadcast and print news media has therefore changed in the context of the twin processes of transnationalization and localization (Grewal, 2005). On one hand, a global or transnational news sphere has emerged on the back of international communications networks and in response to globalized crises and events (Cottle, 2009). As these events resist explanation by recourse to familiar national and local narratives, so, too, do the global news media emerge as an intertwined set of universal images, stories, and characters (Cottle, 2009). The world itself becomes a point of ontological inquiry and is seen as knowable in its entirety. In such a context, questions over information "sovereignty" become realigned around a global news media space based not on national domination but on "spheres of influence" (Volkmer, 2007, p. 63). The so-called international community emerges as a key factor in global news discourses, and images of an intrinsically linked world proliferate (Cottle, 2009).

This process of globalization also has its counter, as broadcast news media continue to engage with and manage the so-called risky flows of people, diseases, and criminal networks across borders, incorporating them into preexisting national frameworks and narratives (Gillespie, 2007). In an attempt to reconfirm the territorial sovereignty threatened by globalizing processes, foreign matter and global images are interpreted through a national filter and couched in familiar terms in national broadcast and print news, making them more palatable to a local audience (Gillespie, 2007; Moore, 2012; Phelan & Owen, 2010; Riegert, 2011; Smith & Phillips, 2006). This localization of the transnational can be seen as a form of border maintenance and expansion, whereby borders are more than static, physical points of demarcation, but are also fluid communicative networks that extend beyond the territory (Moore, 2012; Shields, 2014). In Australia, the media's continuing active role in discussions of national identity, global

risks, migration policies, multiculturalism, and the federal government's current off-shore processing of asylum seekers all construct symbolic and cultural borders that are fluid rather than static. Indeed, the federal government's production of advertising material for display in countries such as Indonesia and Pakistan, aimed at deterring possible asylum seekers from attempting to travel to Australia by boat, is an example of fluid, deterritorialized symbolic borders supporting the "upstream scanning and auditing of incoming flows," designed at "blocking or quarantining those deemed malicious" (Shields, 2014, p. 21).

It would be a mistake, however, to characterize Australia's mixture of commercial and public broadcasting as articulating a singular, exclusive space of belonging based on archetypal national symbols—ANZAC Day, settler society, a "fair-go"—and a networked border system in which all foreign material is excluded (Smith & Phillips, 2006). Australian national news media is rather home to "overlapping, evolving and contested themes" (Smith & Phillips, 2006, p. 825) regarding national identity and the national community. An early highly restricted image of national identity based on White Europeanness and enforced through the White Australia Policy, has more recently ceded ground to an official program of multiculturalism, complete with a globalized media system (Jupp, Nieuwenhuysen, & Dawson, 2007). Hence the coexistence of news media in Australia explicitly devoted to multiculturalism (Special Broadcasting Service), along with more parochial forms of commercial news (Smith and Phillips, 2006).[1]

Narrowcast, diasporic, and migrant media further challenge the dominance of national media in defining the nation and the criteria of belonging, and further deterritorialize the symbolic construction of borders and communities (Naficy, 1993; Turner & Tay, 2008). A wealth of literature points to the ability of diasporic and transnational media to facilitate communities across borders, wherein political, ethnic, religious, or cultural identities are disembedded from geographical location, enabling a self-perceived community to exist through a transnational network of communications technologies (Field & Kapadia, 2011; Hassanpour, 2003; Karim, 2003; Mandaville, 2001; Tololyan, 1991; Tsagarousianou, 2004, 2007; Werbner, 2002). These media provide alternative symbolic resources for the experience of belonging-security beyond the nation-state or within specific subnational communities. Diaspora, for instance, is often characterized as an experience of fluidity, hybridity, and "play" with identities, where old and restrictive forms of community and ideas of home can be fundamentally restructured (Budarick, 2014).

These trans- and subnational spaces of belonging, however, are not free from their own border politics, as migrant media consumers manage their own unique combinations of localized lives as well as complex relationships with the homeland and diaspora. Indeed, research suggests that diasporic and transnational media do not necessarily facilitate a transnational space of belonging and security for migrants (Budarick, 2014). Rather, attitudes toward these media are affected by issues such as the cultural proximity of migrants to the homeland (Aksoy & Robins, 2000, 2003; Budarick, 2013), the political ideologies of media producers, a lack of trust in the media (Cunningham, 2001; Gillespie, 2007), and an awareness of the way in which media producers imagine their audience (Khiabany, 2007). For

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[1] Even the Special Broadcasting Service, although officially mandated to serve Australia's ethnic minorities, has been criticized for primarily serving educated White Australians (Roose & Akbarzadeh, 2013).

example, Gillespie and Cheesman (2002) point out that migrant audiences in Europe approach news from their homeland skeptically and critically, as do Iranian audiences in Norway (Alghassi, 2009). The situation is such that migrant audiences around the world carefully and actively engage with an array news media in an attempt to locate themselves or their community within their wider social surroundings in the search for cultural and social understanding and empowerment (Alghasi, 2009; Gillespie, 2007; Qureshi, 2007).

The picture that emerges from the literature therefore suggests changing and emerging spaces of belonging and security for migrants, including within and beyond nation-states, supported and challenged by a diverse range of media. However, the literature also suggests that the pull of reterritorialization and closure is ever present, as both regressive forms of nationalism and more progressive transnational subjectivities manage the symbolic and experiential borders that define their communities (Kolar-Panov, 1997). In the context of this complex landscape of national and transnational media, risky flows intersecting state borders and transnational spaces, and migrant audiences searching for a sense of belonging-security within both local and global spaces, more comparative analyses of diverse forms of news media are needed. How do migrants such as the participants in this study manage a diverse media environment when searching for a sense of belonging-security? I now turn to a discussion of the sample, methods, and findings.

Sample and Method

In-depth, qualitative interviews were conducted with 19 people born in Iran and now living in Australia. Although this study is not intended to be representative or generalizable, the sample is diverse, including 13 men and 6 women, with 5 Muslims, 6 Baha'is, 2 Christians, and 6 participants who do not actively follow a religion. Participants also vary in terms of their date of arrival in Australia. Two arrived in the 1970s, six in the 1980s, six in the 1990s, and five after 2000. Several producers of Iranian media in Australia are among the interviewees, such as newspaper editors and radio producers and hosts. As well as interviews, I spent time consuming media with some participants in their homes.

English proficiency (measured by respondents answering that they spoke English "well" or "very well") is just over 80% for Iranian men and just under 80% for Iranian women in Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). All participants in the present study spoke English to a sufficient degree for the interviews to be carried out in English. Seventeen of the respondents have completed some form of tertiary education, either in Iran or elsewhere. I carried out, transcribed, and analyzed all the interviews. Interviews took place at a time and location chosen by participants. The interviews were semistructured, and questions were prepared according to guidelines and criteria established in previous literature on interviewing (Berg, 2007; Silverman, 2003).

Rather than focus on specific demographic factors when examining the data, I am more concerned with the broader patterns that emerge when participants engage with media that articulate diverse yet overlapping spaces of belonging-security. Thus, while issues such as religion and time of arrival in Australia are mentioned in the data analysis, it is not my intention to causally link the gender, religious, or political identifications of specific participants to their news media usage. Instead, I want to contribute to an understanding of the role of a simultaneously global and local media environment in

migrants' active negotiation of experiences of belonging, ontological security, exclusion, and anxiety across a series of local and transnational symbolic spaces.

Iranian State News Media

In terms of participants' relations to Iranian state news media, this study's findings support those of Gillespie and Cheesman (2002) regarding the critical and careful approach that migrant audiences take toward media from the homeland. Although media from the homeland play an important and productive role in the media consumption practices of many migrant groups (Aksoy & Robins, 2000; Christiansen, 2004; Gillespie, 2007), in this study participants' attitudes toward Iranian state news media are defined in terms of mistrust and disinterest (Gillespie, 2007; Qureshi, 2007).

The nature of media in Iran is more complex than many commentators give it credit for, consisting of a complex mix of state control, marketization, and "state-sponsored partial privatization" (Khiabany 2007, p. 499). However, state control over broadcasting and consistent interference in print media, including the regular closing down of reformist newspapers, is a reality in Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting and Islamic Republic News Agency control large sections of Iranian radio, television, and print news. The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting has also attempted to reach out to an international Iranian audience through services such as *Jam-e-Jam* and *Press TV*, the latter providing international news in English and featuring presenters and reporters from around the world. The service is in large part aimed at Iranian expatriates abroad. However, its ties to the state broadcaster are not lost on participants in this study.

The ability of Iranian state news media to contribute to an experience of belonging-security for participants is muted by political and ideological factors, including a significant lack of trust in these media and a perception that they are highly politicized, biased, and ideological, to the point that the media create anxiety for those with emotional, familial, or economic ties to Iran (Aksoy & Robins, 2003). These reactions are present for all participants regardless of gender, religion, or time spent in Australia, although the more recent arrivals in the sample use more Iranian state media to satisfy a desire to stay connected to their country of birth. Afsoon, a woman of no religion, discusses Iranian state media in the following way:

> I'm not interested because I know the government is—I've got a family in Iran actually, I've got two brothers in Iran—but I'm not following that news, because [it] makes me sad actually . . . because when you are not able to do anything about your community, your people and [you] just get angry and no, no reason I listen to that, because all of them is lie.

Additionally, Mahta, a 40-year-old Baha'i woman, stated that migration is hard enough without consuming news that can add to the challenges of a new social surrounding. When asked why she does not consume more Iranian news, she said, "Well, one thing is most of the time we hear the sad news . . . they [Iranians] have enough problem in here [Australia], difficulties in the lifestyle, [they] don't want to

be involved more in sad news." Indeed, as a group regularly persecuted in Iran, the Baha'is in this sample are particularly wary of Iranian state media.

Participants approach Iranian state news not as insiders or as part of a communal audience based on ethnicity and nostalgia for the homeland, but from within and across "many cultural spaces" and "from a critical distance" (Aksoy, 2006, p. 942). Although undoubtedly not their primary aim, services such as *Press TV* act to reconfirm borders by articulating differences between the Iranian state's sociopolitical ideologies and those of participants in Australia. Thus, while certain aspects of Iranian state media do provide an alternative to what are seen as biased or misinformed Western news media outlets, an understanding of the state-controlled nature of the news and its ideological basis in supporting the Islamic Republic severely curtails the extent to which Iranian state news are able to facilitate a sense of belonging-security. This situation applies whether the space of belonging is conceptualized as a localized community of expatriates held together through homeland media or at a transnational level through the mediated connection of a global Iranian community, revolving around the centripetal pole of the Islamic state.

News From the Diaspora

Similar to Iranian state media, media from the international Iranian diaspora often fail to overcome the cultural, social, and political distances between their points of production and the local contexts of reception in Australia. Their role in the management of experiences of belonging-security is restricted by participants' perceptions of the specific contexts of production and the aims of the media producers. When discussing media from the international diaspora, interviewees focus predominantly on media produced in California, home to one of the largest concentrations of Iranian media outside of Iran (Naficy, 1993). However, research suggests that media produced by Iranian migrants are localized, produced in specific sociocultural contexts, with distinct aims and audiences in mind, and with particular forms of financing and support that do not always lend themselves to transnational consumption (Budarick, 2013; Naficy, 1993; Sreberny, 2000). Naficy (1993) argues that media produced in California are significantly shaped by the exilic nature of Iranian American migrants, who are still focused predominantly on the homeland and concerned with how to return it to an idealized prerevolutionary past. Thus, these media often espouse particular ideological and political aims revolving around the displacement of the Islamic regime in Iran and the reinstatement of the deposed monarchy (Naficy, 1993). Despite some attempts at universalization through editing and exporting of media products, the unique context of the production of these media and their intended audience in California is evident (Naficy, 1993).

As such, Iranian media from overseas play a limited role in facilitating a sense of a community across borders. Participants rarely draw upon them for a sense of belonging-security. Rather, they are often seen as irrelevant to participants' more immediate concerns in Australia. For example, a respondent who accesses Iranian media from California in his role as a journalist and newspaper editor in Australia, explained, "If I stop my work tomorrow, I would disconnect it [the satellite dish] tomorrow." In expanding on this, he articulated his reasons: "Because the news is really biased, the videos are stuck in the eighties, the music and the movies are badly produced and have really corny story lines. Why would I want to

watch any of that stuff?" This attitude toward Iranian media from overseas, particularly California, is reflected by other participants.

As one Baha'i respondent claims when discussing these media, "It just doesn't have any relevance to me." Further, one young Muslim respondent articulated the problems with Iranian transnational media by comparing them to Iranian state news and to the ideological and political nature of their production:

> That's the thing, like we say that Iranian media's biased in Iran, it's not just the state-run media. Like you go to Los Angeles, like the channels and newspapers that are there . . . they're either like . . . extremely antirevolution, antirepublic.

The imposing of a more localized framework of judgment on media is further demonstrated in discussions of Iranian Australian media, which to a degree overcome problems of relevance, proximity, and trust. Literature suggests that diasporic and migrant audiences value media that address the local social environment and their attempts to negotiate it (Budarick, 2013; Tsagarousianou, 2001). At the time the research for this study was conducted in 2008 to 2010, at least five Farsi-language newspapers were in production, all of them based in Sydney with several circulated to other Australian cities. The papers vary in style, focusing on political issues in Australia, Iran, and around the world, while also addressing a specific audience through advertising and the promotion of local Iranian businesses (such as migration services), concerts, and cultural festivals in Australia. Radio programs produced and aired in Australia at the time of the research included Persian-language radio on Special Broadcasting Service on Saturday afternoons; one Baha'i and two Persian programs on radio 2SER in Sydney on Sundays; a program broadcast on Radio Adelaide by the Persian Cultural Association of South Australia; Iranian Radio broadcast through the ozpersia website (a discussion and file-sharing site for Iranians in Australia); Persian programs on Wednesday evening on 4EB in Brisbane, including a show targeted at Iranian youth; a program called *Shiftegan* on Melbourne's 3CR on Tuesday nights; and *Radio Andishe* on Sunday evenings on 6EBA in Perth.

For several participants, Iranian Australian media provide sites of interplay between the particular and the universal, the minority and the mainstream. These media address Iranian Australians specifically and provide a source of connection, on their own terms, between participants and the wider Australian society (Georgiou, 2005). It is in this sense that some of the most passionate discussions of Iranian Australian media center on their need to address life in Australia, to provide an Iranian or Persian view on Australian politics and culture (Sreberny, 2000).

Iranian Australian media also play an existential role. A key role of Iranian media for Iranians in Los Angeles, for instance, is in "reassuring the self that it will not disappear or dissolve" (Naficy, 1993, p. 118) in the host society. Iranian media produced in Australia play a similar role for several participants, with one explaining, "As crap as they are, you know with their newspapers, it's all misspelled and badly laid out and old news . . . but I'm very happy it exists . . . it's proof that we exist." These media are key resources in controlling, or attempting to control, the nature and intensity of cultural and social integration

into the host society (Naficy, 1993). To a certain extent, they provide a self-controlled set of symbolic resources for the management of belonging-security in Australia.

Australian News Media: Inclusion and Insecurity

Australian broadcast and print news media do not struggle with the issues of relevance, proximity, and credibility that plague Iranian state and global diasporic media. As locally or nationally produced media aimed at a national or subnational audience, Australian news are used by participants to understand and connect to the local social environment in a reassuring and empowering way (Moores, 2006, 2007). For example, a sense of belonging-security is enabled by Australian news media that offer a reminder of political freedom not present in Iran. This theme is particularly prevalent in the feedback of participants who take a keen interest in Australian politics and media and who often produce media themselves or are studying journalism. It is also a reassurance not available through the strictly controlled Iranian state news or the politically motivated Iranian media from overseas. The freedom of the media in Australia, particularly when compared with the restrictions placed on media in Iran, facilitates a sense of security in Australia based on an understanding of a relatively transparent political and social environment.

Additionally, Australian news media provide participants with a form of local knowledge and thus provide symbolic connections to the surrounding social environment (Moores, 2006, 2007). In a basic sense, then, participants use Australian news media to understand their social surroundings and to position themselves in the context of the wider society (Alghasi, 2009; Wenner, 1985). Javeed, a man who had been in Australia for four years at the time of the interview, highlights the importance of understanding the actions and views of those around him, and the way this comprehension allows him to better understand his own place within Australian society:

> I have to be in their skin sometimes to find out how they look [at] their own community, how they look [at] the world, how they see Iran, and this is important for me as an Iranian Australian. To see how Australians are looking [at] recent conflicts in Iran I have to be in direct touch and contact with Australian media because there is no other way to find out about this . . . I think knowledge is power, a lack of knowledge is weakness . . . My perception of this country, my perception of my environment, perception of my community, all comes out of Australian media.

A basic sense of ontological security requires "understanding how others think and feel so we are better able to predict how they may . . . act toward us" (Cohen & Metzger, 1998, p. 54). One of the best ways of achieving this understanding is by identifying with others, by seeing the world through their eyes (Cohen & Metzger, 1998). Indeed, Javeed's reliance on Australian media for a sense of belonging and security is evidenced when discussing how he would feel if he were unable to access his daily news media: "I panic because I feel that I'm left alone; this is giving me feelings of loneliness."

The shifting and fluid symbolic constructions of community and borders, however, mean that a sense of belonging-security is not stable or permanent. The national focus of Australian broadcast and

print media results in the construction of contested yet generalized and normalized notions of national identity that do not always include migrants (Gillespie, 2007; Morley, 2000; Qureshi, 2007). For participants, Australian news media also facilitate feelings of exclusion and insecurity in Australia. Respondents complained of stereotypical images of Iranians in the Australian news media as well as the failure to address Iranian issues. These themes spanned participants in terms of gender, age, religion, and time of migration to Australia. In discussing Australian media, Hesam, a 21-year-old nonpracticing Muslim, said:

> Australian media has made me feel more Australian, but there's two sides to the coin . . . there's shows like *A Current Affair* or Channel 9, which kind of creates stereotypes that I don't like and that kind of makes me feel a bit uneasy about, you know, what people are getting fed.

A Current Affair is a tabloid-style news program featured on Channel 9, a commercial-free to air television station. According to Smith and Phillips (2006), what they call "lowbrow" or tabloid-style media are more likely to promote an exclusive national community based on the promotion of rigid borders and a rejection of multiculturalism. Participants in this study regularly pointed to such media as articulating a national identity from which they felt excluded.

Another common theme is that the Australian news media fail to address issues that are important to participants (Christiansen, 2004; Gillespie, 2007). These issues are often transnational in scope, as experiences of life in Iran come to bear on the use of Australian news media in a way that challenges a sense of belonging-security. In discussing what is present in, and absent from, Australian news media, Dariush pointed to the interplay of the local, national, and transnational in news media:

> If I was in Iran, all the issues on the media would be Iranian-related issues, right? I don't ever follow cricket . . . I don't even know the rules to cricket . . . But in Iran what would you hear? You would hear weightlifting, you would hear about football—you know, soccer. So I miss that, I miss having my issues being the main issues. . . . Sometimes you're not in sync with the mainstream . . . that's when you don't feel like this is your home.

Participants are engaged in what Brubaker (2010) calls the "internal . . . politics of belonging" (p. 66). They are all officially and legally residing in Australia; however, there are still questions, often raised through certain types of news media, regarding their belonging *in* the nation. The informal and symbolic articulation of national identity is here exclusive, making Dariush feel as though he is out of sync with the surrounding social environment (Brubaker, 2010; Turner, 1994). Although this environment is increasingly imbued with transnational influences, by excluding certain cultural or sporting elements, commercial Australian news media have erected borders to belonging-security.

Rethinking Media and Belonging-Security

Continuing with the geographical metaphors of Aksoy and Robins (2000) and Qureshi (2007), this study demonstrates the importance of cultural, social, and political spaces and locations in the media use of migrant groups. The findings are important for understandings of the relationship between media, migration, and belonging-security, because they problematize several of the key elements necessary for the facilitation of ontological security: trust, routine, and familiarity. Through an active process of re-embedding, participants imbue Iranian news media from overseas with certain characteristics based on where, why, and by whom they are produced. Participants position Iranian media in a sociopolitical location defined by parochialism, nostalgia, illegitimacy, and bias. This is a location temporally, spatially, and politically distanced from the everyday lives of participants. This re-embedding thus renders Iranian state, diasporic, and exilic news media largely unable to contribute to a stable community or sense of security, and it undermines any claims to speak to, represent, or construct a transnational Iranian space.

For example, the positioning of Iranian media in a time and place that is at best irrelevant (nostalgic longing for a bygone era) and at worst unsettling (ideological images of Islamic Iran to which participants feel little sense of belonging) disrupts the potential reassurance of news media by undermining a sense of familiarity and trust in Iranian news products. This is hardly surprising, given that "broadcasting in Iran has never been a credible source of news" (Khiabany, 2007, p. 495), and the slow ingress of capitalism in the Islamic Republic's media structure is met with a reaffirmation of its anti-imperialist stance by the state broadcasters. It is also important to recognize the exilic and nostalgic nature of so much Iranian media from California, focusing as it does back toward an imagined, essentialized homeland rather than outward toward a diverse global diaspora. What is significant for understandings of transnational spaces of belonging-security, however, is the way these particular sociopolitical contexts of production fundamentally affect the use of, and attitudes toward, Iranian media by Iranians as far away as Sydney and Melbourne, to the extent that transnational subjectivities and stable experiences of belonging-security fail to emerge.

This focus on the contexts of production fundamentally affects the mediated routes between various geographically dispersed communities and locations, as well as the way those locations are themselves imagined. If, when imaginatively going home by watching Turkish satellite television, Turks in Germany are thinking through and reimagining the sort of Turkey they want to momentarily return to, Iranians in Australia are in large part rejecting the constructions of Iran offered to them through Iranian media from overseas (Aksoy & Robins, 2000). Such a process is akin to that discussed by Qureshi (2007), wherein television viewers in Europe control their perceived and real proximity to risks in part by carefully managing their news media use. In the case of Iranian Australians, however, respondents not only distance themselves from certain Iranian news media products to manage anxiety but actively push away Iranian news by refusing to recognize attempts at a mediated transcendence of cultural and social borders. Through this cultural distancing, Iranian news are neither ordinary nor mundane, but instead become matter out of place. Their localized or exilic nature is keenly observed by participants, ensuring a lack of credibility, familiarity, and reference to a recognized social space, community, or set of identities, whether deterritorialized or otherwise.

Additionally, the re-embedding of media emphasizes the digital and fluid nature of mediated borders by highlighting the difference and unfamiliarity that emerges through an engagement with Iranian news. The failure of Iranian news from overseas to reflect familiar subjectivities and social positions in anything but a temporary and fleeting way speaks to the articulation of difference and disjuncture rather than community. While networked and mediated borders are generally thought of as being pushed out from the nation-state toward "undesirables," they are here the (unintended) consequence of media produced by and for migrants, exiles, and an imagined diaspora. Rather than corresponding to any defined geographical area or an internationally recognized political entity, these mediated borders are the outcome of the intentions of media producers and the ideological nature of media products being misaligned with participants' subjective experiences of identity and community. Thus, when Iranian state, diasporic, and exilic media present identities, ideologies, and political allegiances that are out of step with those of participants, questions are raised as to where, and with whom, one belongs.

Such an observation encourages a rethinking of the dominant images of transnational and international media as crossing relatively stable borders. The cultural flows of transnational media, satellite television, and digital communications networks are as much about (re)confirming symbolic borders as crossing them. A more diverse and open media environment not only potentially multiplies spaces of belonging and facilitates the dissembedding of community but reinscribes boundaries and limits the symbolic material upon which a sense of belonging-security can be built (Alghassi, 2009; Gillespie, 2007; Qureshi, 2007). There is a danger in imposing the technological capabilities of media onto the actualities of their cultural, social, and political contexts of production and reception (Naficy, 2003; Sakr, 2008). Despite the technological ability of media to cross physical and political boundaries, issues of proximity, cultural relevance, political ideology, and trust are still persistent barriers to the effective transcultural flow of media images (Aksoy & Robins, 2000; Cunningham, 2001; Gillespie, 2007; Qureshi, 2007).

Such an observation also highlights the importance of the Australian news media's claim to the relatively familiar "local." Through this claim, Australian news are able to offer a more stable and at times trustworthy alternative. They provide the predictability and routine required for a sense of belonging-security located within Australia and incorporate threats and risks into a stable, preexisting framework that many participants find at least temporarily reassuring. The comparatively "sedentary" nature of domestic media is also important; Australian domestic news do not face the challenge of crossing cultural borders and reaching out to transnationals (Aksoy & Robins, 2000). Rather, they work to articulate and imagine a geographically and culturally defined audience. However, this close, facilitative connection to the everyday and the local often results in the construction of restrictive and exclusionary criteria of informal belonging (Brubaker, 2010). Once again, these criteria and the borders to belonging and security they form are flexible and fluid, with Australian news media playing a constitutive role in the shifting and evolving definitions of national identity and what it means to be Australian. The power of Australian media in this process can be seen most clearly when participants feel they are constructed as a threat to be controlled and potentially excluded, and are thus themselves used as the outsiders that define the imagined Australian community.

It is in the void left between exclusionary Australian media and irrelevant Iranian media that Iranian Australian media provide a potential viable alternative. Although this study does not focus specifically on these media, it is clear that, for many participants, locally produced Iranian media are able to avoid some of the pitfalls of news produced in Australia, Iran, and among the Iranian diaspora. As local and self-produced, these media have a clear connection to issues most relevant to Iranian Australians. They are also clearly aimed at an Iranian Australian audience—often one restricted to a particular city such as Sydney or Melbourne. Further, their contexts of production are better understood and, although still involving political and ideological disputes, are more manageable due to the accessibility of producers and the fact that audience and producer often share a similar, if not identical, cultural, economic, and political space.

Conclusion

This study has examined the news media use of 19 Iranian Australians and focused specifically on participants' discussions of belonging-security. The comparative approach employed in this article highlights the continuing importance of the cultural and political contexts of production and reception, even when concerned with media aimed at an international audience or produced by migrants. To restrict the analysis to one specific type of media runs the risk of reducing a complex range of practices and experiences to a single determining or explanatory factor and obscuring the way in which the local and the global contextualize each other in migrant media use (Georgiou, 2005; Hopkins, 2009). Analyzing different media forms in their relationships to one another and to the audiences they address, positively or negatively, guards against reducing the experiences of migrant audiences to their migratory status and focusing on transient experiences while assuming mediated borders to be relatively fixed (Georgiou, 2005). As this study has shown, Iranian Australians draw upon, avoid, and critique different forms of news media to negotiate feelings of belonging and security within local, national, and transnational contexts. Aware of the contexts of production of Australian and Iranian state and transnational media, participants are unable to find a stable sense of ontological security and belonging within any one type of media.

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