Videos as Global Networks in the Practice of Migration (An Iranian Case Study)

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Abstract: *Network society is an ever-changing robust system expanding new nods as long as they can communicate. Videos, as a source of information and communication, are one of the most strategic nods in this architecture. The present study is a scholarly attempt in investigating the effects of videos on facilitating the process of migration for the Iranian students. To this end, our case studies participated in semi-structured interviews. The participants in these interviews included 36 students from the University of Tehran and the Tehran University of Art. Our qualitative methodology perceived the role of the informative and inspirational nature of videos in three basic stages of pre-immigration: an initial period of motivation; a phase of decision-making; and a state of preparation and arrangement. Furthermore, our findings revealed the implications of videos for migration plans as expectations built in the gap of virtuality and reality, detachment from social values, and redefinition of identity among our participants. These themes extracted from the interviews explained the mediated network tools' distinct role in shaping the migration-related comprehension, conception and behavior of these Iranian students. Overall, the findings of our case study contribute to and support theoretical discussions implying that the digital technology of the network society operates a dynamic activity in the migration process.*

Keywords: *video, media, migration, networks, Iranian students.*

Introduction

Propagation of the media-centric world has developed a far-reaching international and intercultural connection among nations. Communication systems have stirred the flows of human movements either directly or indirectly to the extent that this era has been labelled 'the age of migration' (Castles, Haas, & Miller, 2015). Furthermore, experts have diagnosed digital networks as one of the most significant elements involved in the perpetuation of international movements in time and space (Massey et al., 1993). Networks gravitate the likelihood of migration by developing an ever-growing web of contacts (Binder, Sutcliffe, Utz, & Muscanell, 2014; Dekker, Engbersen, & Faber, 2016). These migration networks leave their marks on the actors' decision-making process through different channels (Dolfin & Genicot, 2010). Network theory considers information as the primary structure of these channels and their essential construction. By providing various types of data, networks not only survive but expand and are vigorously empowered (Massey et al., 1993).

In our approach, we regarded videos as a form of popular culture, a network tool to disseminate moving pictures as communication, entertainment and information. This definition considers popular culture as the measure of representation, composition and implication that shapes and exhibits ordinary life experience (Kidd cited in Fedorak, 2009, p 3) and observes all cultural matters, when transmitted through media, related to the public and popular culture. Thus, videos perform as the fabrication of popular culture that contains messages, presents a record of people and their lifestyle, offers shared events, and generates a type of social unity that is the foundation of all communities (Kidd cited in Fedorak, 2009, p 3). In this sense, videos have been a vital key to the cycle of networks, especially since the digital revolution, and have been widely adopted by various mediums. Today, videos are an integral

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part of the lives of young Iranians affecting their norms, values and choices either consciously or unconsciously and pinning them to the interconnected network of global community. In the last few decades, immigration has also played an active role in changing the social, economic and cultural contexts of society, opening discussions for scholars. Therefore, whether or not these communication forms can provide the grounds for determining and promoting the process of migration is an opportunity for research.

The present study aims to explore the creative linkage between two richly interdisciplinary domains of media studies and migration studies. Migration has been primarily explained in economic, demographic or sociological terms and linked to issues of employment, development, population redistribution, class formation and the creation of ethnic communities. However, as the power of the media is what triggers these functions (King & Wood, 2013), their role needs to be made more explicitly reviewed by multidisciplinary researchers in this field.

Hence, choosing a ready-to-migrate group of young Iranian students, this study seeks to investigate the consequences of videos as network agents on facilitating this process for these students based on network theory. Besides, a more profound conception of the various impacts of videos, as social media tools, on the process of their decision making as well as the role of these networks in the mindset of these Iranian youth and its counter effect on their lifestyle is addressed. Accordingly, a better understanding of the dimensions of videos in the elevating of migration flows is perused; how do video-based media expedite the process of immigration for this group of students? On what levels and aspects are they affected by the networked video-based agents? How do these Iranian students make sense of their possible multicultural lives through the experience of videos? These questions form the core framework of the insight into the highly visible and fast-growing phenomenon of the Iranian students' transnational migration and the under-studied role of the networked videos on this procedure. This research encourages readers to rethink these longstanding but fundamental questions.

Literature Review
The critical work of Castells (2009) on the 'network society' signified how communication technologies encourage numerous and distinct links across time and space. The concept of co-presence through media-based videos also built cross-cultural significance for explaining the ongoing process of international immigrations (Madianou, 2016). Earlier debates by Massey et al., (1993) connected this aspect of communications to the interpretation of migration flows in sight of decisions being systematically made on the availability of information. It is now widely recorded in literature that the development and improvement of communication technologies have provided insight into the rise of a modern social context of limitless correspondence. In this case, network theory illustrates that the landscape of moving crowds is continuously under the influence of 'mediascapes' and the representations of life shaped by these media (Appadurai, 1996). These images in their television, video, and cassette forms are believed to be principal parts of globalization flows, creating great and elaborate collections of illustrations, descriptions, and ethnoscapes to worldwide spectators (Appadurai, 1996). This procedure benefits from building a reliable chain of networks that could affect the perpetuation of migration (Massey et al., 1993).

Recent debates in this domain revolve around the advent of social media and virtual video-based networks, as they have fundamentally enhanced their users' lived dimension (Webb, 2001) and have consequently redefined the procedure of international movements. Fujita (2009) examined 22 young Japanese transient migrants to interpret the detachment they endure between the pre-existing expectations created by media exposure and the reality. Kim (2013) also drew on a wide range of perspectives to analyze the role of media in the inconsistencies of international identity reproduction of a group of Asian female migrants. Equally important, Dekker, Engbersen, and Faber (2016) considered migrant networks employment of online media for international interaction and the way personal features, accessibility of social network ties, and migration capacity are determining the possibility of non-migrants' management of online media. Dekker and Engbersen (2014) also debated that the role of

social media in global movements is more than just a modern communication practice because they are radically transforming digital networks into promoting immigrations.

Drawing on an ethnographic study of long-term separation between Philippian migrant mothers and their left-behind children, Madianou and Miller (2013) found out how the very nature of family relationships is changing by the emergence of new media communication. Komito's (2011) data also presented evidence that through the circulation of voice, video, text and pictures, social media sustain a mutual intercommunication between societies to foster further immigration. Besides, results of two survey studies by Binder, Sutcliffe, Utz, and Muscanell (2014) revealed that the practice of social networking sites including video-based messages was correlated with the users' online network capacity and their utilization estimated discrepancies in network extension obtained between migrant and non-migrant participants.

In addition, Baldassar, Nedelcu, Merla, and Wilding (2016) emphasized that the emergence of the concepts of ICT-based (Information and communications technology) co-presence through the application of social media among migrants and their families, has enhanced the circulation of the global diaspora. Van Liempt and Zijlstra (2017) investigated the manner in which digital communication technology influences and promotes transnational movements of 11 Afghan, Iranian and Syrian migrants through the process of decision-making, methods of travel, ultimate destinations, and financial matters. Their approach resulted in a more multifaceted perception of immigration. Xue, Grigoras, Lee, and Ross (2018) applied their case study to the utilization of WeChat among Chinese communities worldwide to evaluate the development of modern Chinese immigration flows through time. Moreover, Alinejad et al., (2018) presented a basis for explaining mediated structures of movements that consolidate technology-based communication practices with intellectual discourses of migration. Later on, Baldassar, Kilkey, Merla, and Wilding's (2018) findings allowed the required theoretical framework to interpret the influence of ITCs in managing migration flows and explore how the potential for connected presence in a polymedia setting builds a more stable and better-practiced order of relationship than was conceivable even a decade ago.

Methodology
Participants
In order to have a better understanding of this interdisciplinary field, we chose qualitative research as the main methodological approach to address themes and pivotal issues in a concise but comprehensive way. To this end, our case studies participated in semi-structured interviews. The participants in these interviews included 36 students, 20 (55.6%) females and 16 (44.4%) males. Of this sample, 17 (47.2%) were from the University of Tehran, and 19 (52.8%) were from the Tehran University of Art, with an age range of 20 - 35 years old.

In compliance with our concentration on the pre-migrant phase, we explicitly wanted to choose participants with stimulated objectives or arrangements to immigrate. We tried to apprehend and reason speculations on their current migration strategies and related video-based practices. Thus, two criteria were considered in the final selection of these case studies: 1. the feature of being a frequent user/consumer of videos, especially video-based applications and home-made videos as a network tool, 2. their initial inclination to migrate overseas. This group self-reported the mean of their weekly utilisation of videos 11.78 hours (M = 11.78, SD = 9.190).

Procedure
We used purposive sampling to find people with different background characteristics and academic majors who might have different perspectives towards the matter and reflect the diversity and breadth of the sample population. We also used snowball sampling to reach more respondents and to penetrate further into the studentship migration communities. All of the participants agreed to be interviewed for the study given assurance of confidentiality. The interviews were conducted in Farsi language and were semi-structured based on predetermined questions. Led directly and face to face, ample time was set aside for each meeting to give a better conception and a more in-depth view to the authors. Everything

was either carefully recorded on the paper or audio documented, depending on the case studies approval (only eight of them accepted for some parts of their interviews to be also visually recorded by the camera).

The survey consisted of three divisions including the demographic data, the Likert-based tests, and the detailed interviews. Analysis of the Likert-staged quizzes was completed using the SPSS software (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). All of the taped conversations were transcribed and alongside questionnaires, read, coded, reread and analyzed carefully in a sufficient amount of time. The descriptive section was undertaken using the hand-coding method and involved two main stages, starting with basic coding to identify overall themes. The first stage was comprised of the coding of phrases within each interview. Interview transcripts were carefully read, and critical issues were registered, using an ideographic case study mode. Each of the key phrases was then tagged following the motif presumed to represent. These themes were distinguished and coded. This first step was followed by another phase of coding as a more clarifying, in-depth, interpretative code with more specific trends and patterns. Taking a nomothetic approach, determining the connections among the emergent themes detected in the first stage was the second step of this analysis. Relationships among new concepts were noted, and they were categorized into superordinate themes. Transcripts were then reread attentively to ensure that such superordinate themes reflected the respondent's original intention. In each category, transcript answers were provided to grant adequate statements and theoretical analysis.

Results
Descriptive Statistics
Analyses of our case studies revealed that, based on a 10-point scale, the mean of life satisfaction among the participants was 5.7083 (M = 5.7083, SD = 1.72534). Regarding their view about the future in Iran, 44.4% were strongly pessimistic, 41.7% were partly pessimistic, 5.6% were neutral, and 8.3% were optimistic. While 77.8% of them had strong immigration ties with close family or friends abroad, 22.2% reported not having any immigration ties. In addition, United States with 41.7% and Europe with 33.3% were the participants' most desirable destination preferences, following Canada (13.9%), and Australia (11.1%). Also as shown in the table below, based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5), five questions evaluated the partakers' initial inclination for immigration. Results demonstrated the mean of their overall immigration tendency as 3.8111 (M= 3.8111, SD= .74825).

Table (1): Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I do not feel good that I live in Iran.	36	1.00	5.00	3.4444	1.52023
Living abroad is one my dreams.	36	2.00	5.00	3.8611	.96074
I crave for travelling overseas.	36	3.00	5.00	4.5278	.65405
If I can provide the preconditions, I will definitely emigrate from Iran.	36	1.00	5.00	4.2778	.97427
The Iranian who live abroad are happier than us.	36	1.00	5.00	2.9444	1.19390
Overall Immigration Tendency	36	1.80	5.00	3.8111	.74825
Valid N (list wise)	36				

Analyses of the In-Depth Interviews
The in-depth interviews were focused on the participants' impressions, pursuits, and determinations in the pre-migration phase, with circumstantial implication to the role and aid of videos in a broad sense. An interview design served to reflect on the subsequent issues:
  (i)   migration purposes and backgrounds,
  (ii)   the existence of video-based practices (e.g. enquiring knowledge and communications) related to migration ambitions and layouts,
  (iii) the role of videos in promoting awareness of and accessibility to global chances, and
  (iv)   The utilization of videos as network agents for immigration plans and concerns.

Role of Video-Based Exercises in the Pre-Immigration Phases
Respondents were required to contemplate and characterize the role of video administration in their process of motivation, visualization, consideration, and preparation for moving abroad. The findings validated that multiple video-based applications yield amalgamated and comprehensive advocate in most migration schemes and preferences. In several instances, this visual medium is regarded not only as a valuable guide but also as emotional support for connectivity to the motherland, and a fundamental requirement on which one is entirely reliant while exploring information about employment, scholarly prospects, and accommodation. In the respondents' opinion, the availability of various types of videos through multiple networks could give a broader vision and enhanced spectrum of choices to its following viewership, presenting them with a more comprehensive platform to assess their surroundings, and granting more reasonable adjustments which could eventually leave brand new perspectives for consideration.

The Motivation Stage
Numerous respondents expressed how the employment of videos can initially be of value in the motivation stage, dynamically developing the progression of migration aspirations and schemes. The visualization and clarity of video-based information during the investigation are integral in adopting a decision when ideas to move are still unsettled and ambiguous.

By showing different aspects of a new culture and society, videos can introduce them and intrigue one to migrate there. After watching them one can become curious and start investigating, and that may lead to a proper decision making (for migration) (Amin, 30 years old).

Videos are compelling and can influence one's way of thinking. Mine can be changed by watching a particular kind of video. It can make me think beyond the ordinary of life around me, and give me the awareness of what should be instead of what exists. This raises my expectations, makes me want what is out of my reach (Arman, 24 years old).

Videos are temporary migration forms. They are a medium to discover new worlds, cultures, adventures and lifestyles. Watching them makes you hungry for more and gives you tangible perspectives, dreams, inspiration, and futuristic plans. They are in fact quite persuasive (Mohsen, 28 years old).

Regardless of everything, in me, videos reinforce the desire to experience, see, think, and want to be more. They are an experience outside the bounds of belief, existence, social life, politics, and etcetera (Ahmad, 24 years old).

In the motivation phase, illuminating images of videos are accepted as repertoires of encouragement and support to go to the second stage and develop more robust decisions. Partakers of the study reported an expanded perception and enhanced understanding of new possibilities and provisions in remote, unknown, and foreign destinations.

The Decision-Making Stage
The interviewees regarded the advisory structure of specific networked videos in clarifying the obscure and unanswered questions about unfamiliar situations as a distinct mechanism to accelerate and facilitate the process of migration. From their standpoint, videos could be applied to provide an overall view of different countries and give spectators enough information for evaluation. This feature of these media had a prominent role in their process of decision making. To illustrate, participants considered the exchange of home-made videos from migrant families, friends or relatives a significant force in their final judgment to consider living abroad. The experience of this kind of video exchange with friends and relatives who were overseas could provide the much needed concrete evidence for them to make up their minds. Had these friends and acquaintances obtained some success or expressed content and happiness, their encouragement and curiosity would enhance accordingly. None of them denied the substantial impact (either directly or indirectly) videos, as network mediated tools, had upon them in this way.

Since relatives and friends have similar bonds and connections with us, watching their situation abroad through home-made videos helps me compare the situations, you know, more realistically and reasonably, and then make a better decision (Asra, 24 years old).

Another point repeatedly mentioned was the expectations made through the video-based networks for these Iranian students to migrate. It was also discussed by the interviewees that being in a university with such a well-known record of students who have emigrated, and the high interaction with them through the network society encouraged them to make up their minds and try to follow their lead. Different kinds of blogs, telegram channels, Instagram pages and other sorts of virtual communities have been established by these students to broadcast their experience.

From the moment you step into the university, everybody's concern is to go; there is even a competition. Everyone thinks they should go to a better university and a higher-level society. You join telegram groups and weblogs to access those (students) who have gone (abroad) and try to understand the ways. They post videos and images (of their current situation), it is really intriguing and you know for sure it points you toward making a chain of decisions for immigration (Mobin, 27 years old).

The level of expectations for us to prove our competence by going abroad is terribly high. Of course, these interactions with classmates and friends who have immigrated make the tension even higher and your resolution stronger. Their online posts especially videos are usually in the form of a documentary which is both really influential and informative (Fatimah, 25 years old).

These online student communities are growing like mushrooms. Every day you are added or invited to a new one with a bunch of fascinating videos and photos and comments by some old students who have made it there. I cannot resist anymore. I am intrigued. Who would not be? Apart from their fascinating aspect, there is this vast assembly of information attached which really helps you to arrive at a conclusion and commit (Sameen, 29 years old).

The Arrangement Stage

Among the respondents, videos are also utilized during the preparation stage of immigration, mainly in contemplation of proceeding the immigration decision. This form of media, including tutorial videos, is primarily used in arranging and managing various affairs, such as inquiring about the desired destination, taking international exams, filling application forms for jobs or higher education, and seeking proper accommodation. On the other hand, videos are also applied to psychologically adapt the individual and diminish tensions and concerns regarding the impending transit. This process is made possible by essentially familiarizing one with remote destinations prior to the beginning of the journey, which has a considerable role in facilitating current international movements.

Moreover, as networks are fundamentally restructuring the nature of time and space (Castells, 1996), their dexterities could eliminate location boundaries and shorten the distance at both ends of the communication. It could provide mental security of migration, trivialize issues including nostalgia, homesickness and loneliness, eventually, accentuating one's motivation for departure. The respondents focused on home-made videos and video-based applications, as the best examples, for network tools in this domain. They debated that the authentic nature of these forms of videos was the reason behind their power. Besides, this type of long-distance visual connection as an emerging environment of polymedia can be put into a new form of effect on migration. By creating a strong sense of co-presence, video-based long distance networks are becoming integral to the way relationships are enacted and experienced, and how immigration is perceived. This finding is in agreement with those of other studies that deduce that the advent of long-distance communication tools and technologies provides a virtual co-presence (Bacigalupe & Cámara, 2012; Madianou & Miller, 2013; Benítez, 2012) and prepares ways and means of bridging the distance between people (Diminescu & LoveLucK, 2014). These global-extent implements of knowledge, information and communication make migration more of a probable, possible and acceptable practice (Oiarzabal & Reips, 2012). Such developments have reduced a great deal of pressure that migrant populations had to endure.

Before you're about to move to another place, you're looking for tangible ways to familiarize yourself with the environment. You use every possible medium at your disposal, you know. Videos of the internet, your old friends' or relatives' home-made videos, the residents' of that city's viral videos and posts or any visual connection with that place is of great assistance for me to plan ahead and visualize my future status (Mina, 26 years old).

Well, actually, without the video tutorials, I myself would have never been able to get IELTS, be in touch with the professors and apply. Now that I think about it, this whole thing entirely depends on a massive body of informative videos (Sara, 29 years old).

I was always afraid of being away from my family maybe that was the main factor that I was hesitant and indecisive about immigration before. But now with the help of video-based applications such as Skype, I can always visit home, and now it has gradually made me more secured and determined to go out in the world (Leila, 32 years old).

Usually, I'm stressed out before a journey, and this journey is a life-changing one. So it's obvious I don't want to make a mistake. Videos, I mean the internet in general, is what helps me avoid or reduce such errors and worries. I mean I have already rented a room in Montreal based on the videos the website had provided, so I'm all set in that sector (Ali, 28 years old).

So many of my friends have applied and are now in the USA and Australia. The videos that they send me from their universities and classes and the way their professors teach are very influential. So I know what to expect when I get there. It's great that we can have this type of visual connection (Hamideh, 27 years old).

Thanks to the graphic and genuine nature of videos, my wife and I were able to rent an apartment in Adelaide. I am now confident that at least our accommodation is prepared when we get there. This is some kind of relief (Behnam, 35 years old).

The Implications of Videos for Migration Intentions

As mentioned above, part of the time of analyses was dedicated to categorizing the material, labelling concepts, defining and developing themes based on their properties and dimensions. Each category has thematic relativity with migration; shared ideas are clarified and illustrated by using quotes from the interviewees.

Videos and the Gap between Reality and Virtuality

By drawing and governing the images of networked media, videos play a vital part in broadcasting meanings, notions, and definitions (Solík, Višňovský, & Laluhová, 2013). The transferability of these impressions between the online and offline settings could develop an anticipation gap among users and lead them to dissatisfaction and disassociation from conventional norms and values of the society. Scholars take the notion of expectancy, built through the difference between the real and the virtual world, as the link between these two domains to create the basis of discontent (Triberti, Durosini, Aschieri, Villani, & Riva, 2017).

In response to the videos' impact on their level of satisfaction, the participants considered the debate a challenge. The discussion was mostly over how developing a comparative perspective created by videos had changed these students' perception of their society and thereby had formed a critical view towards their community. They measured videos as an influential factor that could make one re-evaluate his/her views resulting in confusion and eventually dissatisfaction. The crack within the real and virtual representations of expectation, value, and identity is the key to illustrate the process of getting the video consumers induced towards discontent and frustration.

The attractiveness of worlds within this type of visual media, their stimulation, and penetration are powerful. It stays with us, entangles us with a kind of comparison that affects different aspects of our

lives, our thoughts, our expectations, you know, our plans and decisions in a general sense (Manna, 25 years old).

Usually, when I'm on YouTube or Instagram and keep looking for videos of other places, you know, sometimes just for entertainment and out of curiosity, I face the kinds of lifestyles that I really envy and yearn. So basically, it raises my expectations and even drives me towards some sort of depression (Susan, 21 years old).

I am convinced that there's a massive difference between what I need and what is accessible to me. Most people get used to it, but I think the youth are getting more and more dissatisfied and at some points, you know, frustrated and angry. We are tired and just want to leave for a better life (Asal, 25 years old) New information summons new outlooks and new modes of life. The high amount of information delivered by new media and especially videos, and their diversity have only baffled people, making choices difficult and making life difficult. I think we eventually became dissatisfied of our reality and tried to make a difference through immigration (Mehran, 29 years old).

Videos and Detachment from Social Values

 The Values Theory regards values as fundamental policies, in-demand trends, and trans-situational purposes and directions in life (Schwartz, 2006). The accelerated development of various forms of media is transforming the characteristics of transmitting sense and value (Solík et al., 2013). Therefore, the aptitude of media as a directory for value generation and consumption fashions our understanding of the world (Gong & Stump, 2016). In this regard, Seraj (2012) has employed in-depth interviews and Netnography in service of the chief elements of online centers that provide their participants with three levels of values; intellectual value, social value, and cultural value. Videos could also be a portal for comparison of values and living standards between societies. The interviews revealed that the impacts of networked-videos on personal and social values were evident to most of the participants. In their opinion, this influence -like other forms of these media effects- had both positivity and negativity, but they were more inclined towards the positive side rather than the negative aspects.

Watching videos always makes me feel somehow alienated with my community, my standards and values, but not usually in the most malicious way. They make me wonder and ponder about the background of these values, their necessity and their reality (Negar, 33 years old).

Whenever a relative dissatisfaction is rising, especially among the youth, powerfully mediated tools such as videos are warmly welcomed to broadcast new ideas and values. Opposition from the government or any particular class of society, especially the religious ones, will cause more severe reactions from those interested in change (Ameneh 28 years old).

Widespread use of videos to disseminate new ideas and thoughts has helped a great deal in fading out old prejudices and outdated values. Think about women's right and participation in society. What I mean is that they have made impossible social or cultural activities to become possible ... or at least considerable (Mojgan, 25 years old).

Videos and Reconsidering the Concept of Identity

Identity seemed to have an implicit presence as one of the consistent themes in our procedure. Giddens (1991) stated self-identity as a self-referent fulfillment that needs to be formed, developed and reflectively maintained with regard to expeditiously evolving conditions of social life, on a minor and major scale. Scholars rate media-based practices as a critical factor in the process of identity construction (Orsatti & Riemer, 2015) and regard social networks as virtual reservations that give users the opportunity to maintain their social identities (Riva et al., 2010). Therefore, we could say that the most significant social contribution of the mediated network tools is the production of new identities. Among our participants, the perceived fixed and eternal meaning of identity also seemed to be in the process of transformation.

Change in the pattern of relationships (transition of traditional face to face relations to the network mediated connections) has affected the type and the state of identity and culture in Iran too. Traditionally, contacts were numerously limited to friends, relatives and those in proximity while the new pattern makes it possible, not only for the friends and acquaintances in the distance but for two complete strangers to get to know each other and start connecting online.

The network system and the communication tools especially video-based ones have formed a new wave of cross-cultural experience among the peoples of the world. Individuals and societies are progressively interconnected through the adoption of new technologies and the networks generated by them (Nessi & Bailey, 2014). Having access to different websites and blogs from all over the world combined with the ability to interact and communicate electronically allows individuals to live in a virtual multicultural context with the freedom to have an arbitrary interpretation of their identity (Aresta, Pedro, Santos, & Moreira, 2015).

What is always fascinating to me is how new technologies like this accessibility to all sorts of videos have made the emergence of new forms of identities possible. Whether it is an ethnic, religious, and class, or racial, and sexual, or any other social identities, it can be represented openly and freely nowadays (Naheed, 22 years old).

I found and connected with my current employer in Germany through LinkedIn. My contact list is filled with people of different backgrounds and origins. I mean It gives me a global sense of being, as I belong to a larger world and I need to explore it (Khosro, 28 years old).

The spread of digital networks in my life is mind-blowing, and I feel every change helps me redefine and modify myself. I am more and more intrigued to play a leading role in the fast-forward global society (Maral, 26 years old).

Watching videos benefits me by making me open-minded to various situations that I didn't even know existed. I am now more knowledgeable about pressing issues of the world; I mean other nations, races, genders, sexualities, etc. Thank god I've become less ignorant and naive and more understanding and sensitive (Masoud, 23 years old).

I can say that the idea of friendship and relationship has changed for me. I have good friends on Instagram and Facebook that I have never met but we send each other pictures or videos and texts, and they are really dear to me. I feel more like an international personage nowadays than a local girl (Zahra, 31 years old).

Discussion and Conclusion
Although networked videos continuously affect all sorts of spatial communication and movement, research into the relationship between video employment and immigration needs more focused attention. As people's views regarding immigration and their conclusions remarkably rely on stabilized data and connection, it is critical to study their movements more thoroughly in relation to videos as a source of information. Our qualitative research was a scholarly attempt to decrease this academic gap. Based on the assigned pre-migrant steps classified by Hiller and Franz (2004) in their examination of the Internet-based functions in international movements, our methodology perceived the role of the informative and inspirational nature of videos in three basic stages: an initial period of motivation; a phase of decision-making; and a state of arrangement.

We also explained how the visually communicational network agents facilitate immigration by eliminating time and location boundaries. This aspect could trivialize issues such as nostalgia, homesickness, and loneliness and eventually provide the necessary mental security for long-distance migration; an issue easily solved through Skype, IMO, Periscope, Instagram and so many other video-based apps.

At the confluence of videos and the migration, themes discovered in the content of participants' statements contained different aspects of social, cultural, economic and even implied political meanings. This study showed that videos had the ability to affect these aspects in various forms and promote external and international movements through their network expansion. The statements extracted from the interviews explained the mediated network tools' distinct role in shaping the migration-related comprehension, conception and behaviour of these Iranian students. We discovered that video-based practices are associated with invigorating most of the participants' views and schemes to move abroad. Furthermore, our themes indicated that formulating the perceptions of networked media makes videos integral particles in distributing ideas and interpretations of the world. This feature could consequently lead to a set of expectations built based on a conceptual gap between the virtual and the real world. For instance, communication through home-made videos and video applications with students who have already migrated has created a high level of anticipation for their friends or classmates back in Iran to immigrate as well. This web of networks has eventually turned into a robust community to exchange information and experience, making different kinds of blogs, telegram channels, Instagram pages and other forms of social media connectivity. This competitive atmosphere brought about an extraordinary degree of expectation amongst the students to try to migrate for either higher education or more notable life achievements.

We also debated that the real and virtual duality created by videos could generate a gateway of measurement for values and lifestyle criteria between societies. Our discussions suggested how the ability of media as a repository of value creation and consumption crafts the quality of perception of our surroundings and ourselves. This could even result in a certain level of cultural estrangement and self-estrangement among users/consumers of these types of media. Detachment from values and redefinition of personal and social identities were discussed as associated themes to the stages of pre-immigration. On the other hand, through this new pattern comes a new form of freedom that can help people be more involved in the international discourse, break the social and political taboos as they see fit, and have a more arbitrary narrative of their identity than before. It has substituted national attachments with a unique concept called the 'global identity' which makes understanding people from different cultural backgrounds easier. Accordingly, the variety of online relationships in the network society has significantly influenced the development of a universal vision and heightening intercultural tolerance and leniency. In consequence, through this global flow, international processes, such as immigration, have become more convenient. These young Iranians' urge and enthusiasm to move overseas is a product of such virtual adventures for which videos are partially responsible.

It is evident that a new form of cross-cultural knowledge is expanding, allowing Iranians to experience a virtual multicultural context in the world. These elements have been giving our world a network-based structure, turning it into a highly robust, expansive system capable of developing without boundaries, combining new nods as far as possible (Castells, 1996). We confirmed that videos could be regarded as one of the most strategic nods in the architecture of the network society, extending information and communication. Overall, empirically grounded and theoretically insightful investigation of this research indicated that network theory is a practical approach to analyzing the behavior of international migration trends of the Iranian students.

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