

# Iranian Diaspora: With focus on Iranian Immigrants in Sweden

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## Abstract

Based on international data, nowadays, one of the every thirty-five people is living away from his/her homeland. In this respect, the United Nation has called current century an era of greatest human displacement in the history. In the last decades Iran was one of ten top migrant's receiver and sender society. Although there is no precise statistics about Iranians abroad, but according to formal speech, three-five millions of Iranians are dispersed around the world (Diaspora). Thus, studying those social problems by local researchers of social sciences is quite essential, because most of internal researches related on motivations and tendencies (potential immigrants), with a general focus on elites. There have been few studies on the Iranian immigrants and their social issues. This research employs Mixed Methods that integrates questionnaire, narrative interviews, observations, and participant observations. This paper mainly focuses on social problems of Iranian immigrants in Sweden, including employment, marriage, divorce, promoting education after immigration, immigration timing and reasons, satisfaction of life (family, income, and job) and immigrant's attitudes about the behavior of the host society toward them, adaptation, feeling as outsiders, and willingness to return to homeland.

**Keywords:** Iranian Diaspora, Iranians in Sweden, Immigrant's social problems

## 1. Introduction

The diaspora, given that many of the best and brightest, as well as wealthiest, members of any country or community live outside their natal areas, the diasporas, or community of those living outside (Kuznetsov, 2006). Considering migration as an important feature of 21th century and the existing evidence indicate that it continues to offer both challenges and opportunities for the host and immigrant communities (UN, 2000:54). According to a UN report, nearly 200 million people are now living in a foreign country. Over the past two decades, more than 10 million people have migrated from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran, and resided in other countries. Several millions of Chinese live all over Europe. U.S Immigration Administration warnings show that massive wave of Mexicans are flooding the U.S., so that possibly around 20% of Mexicans migrate from their own country and millions of Africans: 10 million skilled people have emigrated out of Africa during the past 30 years to U.S (Beine, 2009).

Same situation exists in Europe and minorities like Muslims live in most euro zone. This situation can be statistically depicted by the fact that about 20% of Canadian residents are born abroad. According to a formal report of the German government in 2006, about 15.3 million inhabitants of Germany, that means around 18.6 percent of the total population of this country, are foreign immigrants. The same situation can be found in the UK, France and Australia, and some even talk about Spanization in the U.S. (Huntington, 2008).

Immigration is an important element of globalization. Although international immigration has existed long before globalization (Saskaia, 2007), some authors consider women and immigrants as globalization servants (Parrenas, 1999). Migration flows are shaped by a complex combination of self-selection and out-selection mechanisms, of which are affected by the presence of a Diaspora abroad (Bienne, 2009).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

Gamlen distinguishes two types of diaspora mechanism: one which cultivates and recognizes diaspora communities, and another which draws them into reciprocal ties with their homeland (Gamlen, 2008). Although immigration is a major problem in contemporary Iran, its social, legal, and economic aspects has not received due attention. Immigration studies in Iran are mostly about elite immigration using theoretical push and pull framework with Lee's immigration model (Khajenoori, 2006 Rashno, 2002).

Immigration has always been associated with many consequences and problems (immigration to and out of country). While Iran is a migrant sending country, and compared with its population at the same time its immigration rate is very high, Iran in the last decades was a migrants destination: Since the oil boom of the 1970s in the Middle East and the subsequent increase in employment opportunities, Thousands of Filipino labor migrants, both male and female, have found their way to Middle Eastern countries. Iranians remember the presence of Filipinas in Iran in the mid-1970s when many of them worked as domestic workers, nannies and nurses (Zahdi, 2010:75) it still considered as a major host country as well. Only in 1980-1989, more than 2.900.000 Afghan immigrants moved to Iran and millions of them are still residing here after so many years (see table1).

Unlike previous decades, now, focusing on immigration has shifted from one-sided approach to an interdisciplinary one. In this respect, various scientific fields jointly deal with this topic. Patterns and trends indicate that migratory trends are not describable by emphasizing merely on a single level. Rather, its multi-dimensional nature calls for a complicated approach, which can cover various perspectives, theories, and levels (Kazempour, 2007).so migration can be studied from different perspectives. It needs investigation from historical, philosophical, social and cultural points of view (Mirzaee, 2005). In addition, different schools take different stances toward immigration. Immigration-related orientations follow two important classic approaches: functionalism and dependency. Besides, systemic theory of immigration (Zanjani, 2001) and interactive immigration theory have their own advocates. The most recent debates on globalization and immigration (Sassen 1999, Brettel 2008) are presented at table 2.

### 3. Iranian and Immigration

Although back into the history, Iranians were themselves immigrants to Iran plateau, for so many centuries they never experienced intensive immigrations until contemporary period. Now, over 100 years have passed from when the first Iranians immigrated for work and education, and in all these years this trend has continued, although with different characteristics at different times. Sometimes it has been a quest for employment. In other times, motivated by intellectual tendencies, Iranians- mostly children of elite and noble men- migrated to Caucasus, then to France and the U.S before revolution. After the revolution, some Iranians immigrated to Western Europe and Scandinavia as political defectors, and in the years not so far away, Japan has been the host to job seeking Iranians. However, more recently, Iranians from different social classes have migrated all over the world. In this era, education was the main goal. On the other hand, the West (developed countries from North America and Europe to Australia and Far East) was the most possible target. At present, Iranians are dispersed in all parts of world (Diaspora) and in my opinion, they have created what may be called the two torn parts of Iranian Nation, which despite some similarities like language, history, and cultural inheritance, are far in life style, and their mutual cultural and social influences are important. In recent times, overseas countries have always fascinated some Iranians and were attributed with some kind of grandeur. With a glance to contemporary history, we can identify three steps in Iranians immigration to foreign countries:

a) Sending students to France in Qajarid era (the start of foreign immigration with intention to return), then immigration of workers to Tiflis and Baku, and intellectuals to Delhi, Istanbul and Cairo. b) Immigration before Islamic revolution, c) immigration after revolution (this itself is divisible into smaller components).

First wave of immigration began with sending students in Sepahsalar and Qajar era, which marks the first contacts with a world called Farang (France). Later, a second wave of compulsory immigration started with runaway Communists and leftists who headed towards the Former Soviet Union. Some students who were sent in first and second Pahlavi period resided the in host countries. The next generation of immigrants that set out the third wave after revolution consisted of opposition forces and some people who wanted to avoid the problems associated with war and low employment in 1990s. The last wave was set by students immigration to Ukraine, India, Malaise and UK which itself calls for independent study and due to its difference with conventional meanings or immigration requires a more accurate approach.

The study of attractive areas for Iranians shows that first immigration in recent times was immigration of Armenian immigrants to Caucus, and Iranian workers to Baku, Kuwait, UAE and other Arabic countries for work (and business). North America, especially after Islamic revolution, has attracted many Constitutionalists. In recent years, immigration to Canada focuses on trade, investing and scientific services. Europe has served as a host to a diverse variety of Iranian immigrants and refugees followed by Japan (number of Iranians in Japan during 1990-1995 increased to 397.8% (Sassen, 2001), Thailand and Malaysia. However, we must note that Iranians live all over the world, from Japan to malaise and Australia, Kuwait, UAE, Norway, Ukraine, India, France, US and Middle East. Here we present immigrants statistics in other countries (see.table3).

Iranians immigrations are marked with a number of paradoxes. For instance, the two countries with more Iranian immigrants are the same countries that have a problematic relation with Iran. The first One is the US that is the most popular destination for Iranian immigrants. Based on formal statistics 370000 Iranians live in US but informal statistics put this figure as high as over 2 millions. Arabic countries along Persian Gulf coasts, especially UAE, are attractive for Iranians in. Geographical proximity and cultural similarities are main reasons for this process. The next popular Arab country is Kuwait with a remarkable number of Iranian immigrants. This country has attracted a different group of Iranians because the education level of Iranians in Kuwait is not high and only 25-35% of them have classic education. Iranians are first immigrants to UAE that followed by Indians, Pakistanese, Bangladeshis, Lebanese, Egyptian and Iraqis (Lahsaezade, 2004).

#### 4. Methodology

This research used mixed methods includes quantitative and qualitative approaches. Vahyuni (2005) introduced two approaches in studying immigration. One is study approach in native homeland and the other is in the target country. The procedure of immigrant's study in the target country is called tracing (Moshfeqh, 2007). For collecting data, we use questionnaires (101 people), observation and participation observation, narrative interviews, meta-analysis of previous studies and second data analysis, deep in interviews with Iranians (52 person).

#### 5. Host Society Migration Policies

The migratory policies of Sweden have undergone many changes. Before World War II, Sweden was an immigrant sending country especially to US, but after war, the economic growth and deep political changes turned this country into a host country and in 2007, it ranked as the most successful country of world in immigration policies. Put it simply, immigration to Sweden is divided into two periods: the first period is primary marked by labor force immigration while in second period we witness refugees' immigration to Sweden. The first period began in 1945 and lasted up to 1970. In this period, partly due to war destructions in its neighbor countries, Sweden economy developed fast. This fast development could not match with appropriate increase in Sweden labor force and therefore, attracting foreign workers was a necessity. This problem was solved in 1950 by the in-flow of skilled labor forces that acted as a supplement to local labor force, mainly from West Germany, Italy and Nordic countries.

This assimilation of labors immediately after war had positive effects on engineering industries and shipbuilding and led to increasing job opportunities in these sections until late 1970s. However, shortage of skilled labor force was still a bottleneck. A large portion of this skilled labor force came from West Germany, Denmark and Italy.

In 1960s, industrial section in Sweden experienced structural changes: a compact optimization process, along with using automatic devices, labor division, specialization and mass production provided job opportunities for unskilled workers. Women and foreign labor force, occupied vacant posts in assembly lines while native workers went to developing services section. In other words, these workers unlike their counterparts in last decade were alternatives for native labor force not supplementing them. While early immigrants caused economic growth, 1960s immigrants only created inflation. In fact, unskilled workers filled new vacancies because new industrial investments geared at increasing international competition and reducing costs (Lundh & Ohlsson1999). Again, engineering and shipbuilding industries took the lead in development and the immigrant workers poured in not only from Nordic countries but also from Mediterranean countries like Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey.

In late 1960s, immigrants' situation has changed. Commercial units saw immigration as a root of all misfortunes and negative consequences. Such effects slowed down the continuous supply of workers to replace the Sweden who went to service sections. Another aim of the supply of labor force was to decrease wages. So immigration was considered as safeguarding the traditional structure which otherwise should experience wide changes. Government responded to these changes by modifying regulations of immigrants' entrance. New regulations were enforced in 1968 and accordingly, applicants from non-Nordic countries had to apply for acceptance and determine their jobs and residence. This reduced labor force immigration significantly in next decades.

The economic growth of Sweden in early 1970s reduced because of oil crises (from 4% to 2%). At the same time, economy experienced a transition period with a slowdown in industry and boost in service sector. The industrial sector suffered depression after 1975 and employment increase in public sections that started from late 1960s continued. Economic growth of late 1960s increased demand for public services like baby-sitting, education, old cares, health care, etc. Therefore, wide development of public section and depression of industry in 1970s caused structural problems in economy with low growth rate and high unemployment, especially among low skilled workers. According to Schon (1996) the transition of industry towards scientific production methods started in immigrant accepting areas like Malmo in 1980s, a decade later than other large cities.

During this period, immigration of labor forces, especially Danish immigrants, decreased gradually due to diminishing distance in life standards in Sweden and countries like Denmark and Finland, and increasing demand of these countries for labor forces. Although immigration of labor force decreased, other kinds of immigration like refugees and immigration for family reunion increased significantly in 1970s and 1980s, and this coincided by the peak of immigration of Iranians to Sweden that completely transformed the composition of immigrants in this country through increasing the share of non-European immigrants, including Iranians, who had non-economic incentives (Bevalander, 2008). Last decades of the 20th century witnessed more limitation on immigration to Europe. Consequently, regulating European Union immigration policies, rather than immigration laws for each country, was the first priority for these countries. However, Sweden, because of its constitution nature (supporting endangered citizens) is host to many immigrants from Iraq, Bosnia and other countries.

## 6. Iranian migration to Sweden

The desire to leave Iran for Western countries is strong among Iranians as well. (Zahedi, 2010:78). Sweden, despite its huge geographical distance from Iran, is well-known in Iran and even Swedish advisors are responsible for the establishment of some modern institutions such as Gendarmerie. On the other hand, economic ties of Iran and Sweden, before and after revolution, were active and important. Therefore, some Swedish products like heavy machinery as Volvo, Scania etc are very common in Iran. Reputation of Sweden in humanitarian affairs, low population and its growing economy that inclined it to absorb labor, turned this country into a popular destiny of Iranian immigrants. Nevertheless, Iranians are one of youngest migrated groups (Darvishpoor: 140).

### 6.1 Demographic features of Iranians in Sweden

Sweden is one of Scandinavian countries and the fourth biggest country in Europe. This country has a population of 9.2 million, 12.6% of which are immigrants and 5% of all immigrants are Iranians. Regarding population policies, it is one of the successful countries in the world and has many attractions for immigrants. In gender distribution of Iranian immigrants, men have the larger share. This fact is justified by more facilities for men and their independence for immigration. In relation with education status, 11.7 percent are in first cycle, 42.2 with second cycle and 42.1% have university degrees, and this means a good educational status, because almost half of Iranian immigrants in Sweden have university degrees: They speak the Dutch language very well (e.g., 92% of the Iranian-Dutch participants of our Study used the Dutch version of the questionnaire), are on average highly educated and many of them are employed (Lindert, 2008:585).

Divorce rate is high in Sweden society, and among other nationalities, Iranians have the highest rate of divorce after Chileans. As shown in this table, almost 70% of Iranians are unmarried. Although because of high education and skills, Iranian are considered as immigrants with high rate of employment, as statistics of Sweden national Census Bureau shows only half of them are employed (55.1%) and considerable portion of them are unemployed (44.9%). This trend has increased in recent years because of low occupation opportunities and intention of immigrants to use social services (see table 7).

The study of Iranian immigration rate to Sweden in recent years indicates that the most significant reason for their immigration during 1994-2006 were education and seeking better life conditions, followed by family re-union, and marriage (for political asylum and escaping from war situation) in 1980s. Self-employment is a major feature of Iranians and unlike Turks and Arabs, is mostly individual, rather than collective. Similarly, because of high level of education, their employment in public section is considerable (42 percent), a privilege that is less accessible for other immigrant groups.

Iranian concentration is in Stockholm, Gutenberg and Skane in south, which conforms to general distribution of all immigrants. It is natural that large cities are more attractive for the economical (job opportunities) and social opportunities they offer, easy acceptance, anonymity and large number of foreigners. The exceptional cases are the immigrants who concentrate in smaller towns due to their special skills or the unique features (for instance, nearness to border like Mexicans in U.S). Ethnic distribution of Iranian immigrants based on a survey in Sweden in 1993 is 79.2% Fars, 6.1% Azeri, 3.5%Kurd, 0.9% Turkmen, 9.6% Armenian, 0.4% Assyrians and 3% others (Hosseini,1997:187).

## 7. Research Finding

A total of 102 respondents Iranian immigrants (50 women and 52 men) in the present study is generally conforms to total statistics of Iranians in Sweden, although we cannot expect full conformity, and the ratio of men (53.5%) is higher than proportion of women (46.5) Data shows a significant change in people with high education level and education as an instrument for social mobility and a gate for entrance to host societies.

Therefore, education has a special status in Iranian culture(see.table,9).So both Iranian female and male have improved their education after immigration to Sweden, but this change is very remarkable and approximates Swedes for female.

Immigration trend to Sweden among respondents indicates that the majority of immigrants (54.8%) entered this country in 1980s after 1979 revolution, 19.8% came there in 1990s, 18.8% in recent decade, and 3% in 1970s.The immigration process, usually follows a spiral to ascend to final purpose, and in immigration that is sometimes associated with illegal procedures, this trend is most striking. Half of respondents first resided in another country and then moved to Sweden and before coming to Sweden were in countries like Turkey, Emirate, Pakistan and Germany. Geographical mobility of immigrants with changing job index is attributable to the fact that their information regarding the privileges of different cities accumulates gradually and they find better employment and residence opportunities. Therefore, move between cities and towns. Only 32 percent of immigrants have not changes their geographical location and 78% have experienced changing their city once or more.

People usually migrate with different motivations and reasons. One classification of immigration is based on immigration purpose. Accordingly, compulsory immigration (53.5%), education (17.8%), marriage (16.8%) and employment (4%) have more frequencies. to comparison, for 38% percent of Iranian that they have immigrated to UAE for employment, and second (18.7%) for better life and freedom and following family (Lahsaezade, 2004: 363).

The reason for choosing Sweden an destination (if it is voluntary to choose immigration target) shows high share of immigration chain and following relatives, which is evident even in internal immigration from rural areas to cities in Iran and it was observed in author's studies about immigration to city suburbs and illegal residence (Naghdi, 2007).

Migration network can identify number of relatives in Sweden. Because in immigration process, first immigrants try to bring their relatives and families to target country and new comers prefer to migrate where their families live. This helps them to decrease the nostalgia and stresses that are attributable to living in a foreign country. Then we asked about family networks, which were various. An interesting case was immigration with all family members, which was reported exaggeratedly as high as 50 family members were. Deep interviews and observations of author during survey in Sweden confirm this family network of Iranians.

The immigration shock resulting from immigration from third world countries to developed or other countries with apparent cultural difference may be called cultural shock. The first and foremost point, which captures their attention when they enter here, is high discipline and order. In author's opinion, it has two reasons. First, Sweden really has high order and discipline. Second, Iranian immigrants come from a very different setting with weak discipline and order and this doubles the feeling of order and discipline here.

### *7.1 Family, Marriage and Life Satisfaction*

The study of immigration effects on family relations (Darvishpoor, 2001: 108) is an important issue in immigration sociology. In Iranian culture, family occupies a very high status, and it is more vulnerable in immigration process. Divorce rate between Iranians in Sweden is high. Chileans, Iranians, Polish, Lebanese, Norwegian, Iraqis, Finns and Turks suffer high rates of divorce, respectively. Basic reasons of divorces (immigration in time not in place) among immigrants related to migration crises and imbalance of power between men and women, characteristics of migrants finally effects of Western culture (Darvishpoor: 109). In the selected sample, we observe the same high rate and more than 34% have experienced divorce. We asked respondents about the number of divorces he/she experienced, because sometimes they have experienced divorce more than once. Iranians are among migratory groups that are open to cross-national marriages and therefore, marriage with other races and nationalities, especially with the people of the host countries has a high rate among Iranian (see.table10).

This study has different findings about satisfaction level of Iranian immigrants from marriage and family affairs, children, employment and job, income and city of residence. Despite high importance that Iranians attach to family, they have moderate satisfaction in this regard. Iranians are among successful groups in employment. Thirty seven percent have high job satisfaction and 19% are dissatisfied with their job. One important aspect of satisfaction is satisfaction form city of residence. Half of the Iranian immigrants are satisfied with their city of residence and the other half are not satisfied with it. There is no considerable difference between them.

Income satisfaction was one of the measured aspects, with dissatisfaction rate of 60%. Satisfaction from children, as another component of total satisfaction was measured based on satisfaction from importance of

parents-children relations, high dependency to family, interest in children future and following parent's attitudes in Iranian culture, and indicated significant dissatisfaction. Ultimately, we asked the respondents how much they were satisfied with life in Sweden. Results show average satisfaction. We can compare this result cautiously with results of national survey of Iranian values and attitudes.

Groups of immigrants like Turks in Germany or Afghans in Iran send considerable amounts of their income for their families in their homeland. In this respect, despite their higher cash flow and better-paid jobs, Iranians do not rank so high. One third of Iranian immigrants claim they give financial aids to their families in Iran. In addition, I met some Iranians who invested in Iran's Real estate section due to rapid growth of prices in this section: an investment that is not possible in European countries and is further reinforced as well because of the high tax rates imposed on bank deposits.

### *7.2 Immigrants Attitude about Host Country (Sweden)*

In immigration policy making and management, adaptation has special importance for both immigrants and hosts. Iranians are usually more open towards the host culture. More than 73 percent of Iranians claimed they are in harmony with new society and observation and field studies confirm this claim. Nevertheless, some suggest that this attitude is rooted in their group-mindedness and their tendency to follow this motto: while you are in Rome, do as Roman does (Bastani, 2001: 35). The sociocultural adjustment scores of Iranian refugees were above the midpoint of the scale, especially their knowledge about how to organize their lives in the Netherlands (Lindert, 2008: 580).

The level of satisfaction with the host country is a function of several variables but here, in addition to economic factors like job and income, factors such as level of adaptation, mastery in language and harmony with target culture are effective. Seventy percent are satisfied from Sweden society. Level of satisfaction with the new society is high (83%) Women in this case like the other research results are more satisfied than men: Iranian women report more positive acculturation outcomes than men. Mean scores and standard deviations per subscale of Iranian women and men. Results of MANOVA indicated significant main effects for gender (Wilks' Lambda = 0.90,  $F(8, 216) = 2.88, p < 0.01$ ). The two acculturation condition subscales showed statistically significant differences between women and men in perceived discrimination. Iranian women scored significantly lower on the perceived discrimination subscale than men ( $F(1, 225) = 6.90, p < 0.01$ ) then Iranian women report more positive acculturation outcomes than men (ibid:583).

Generation gap appear in migration more than normal situation, first generation feels more satisfaction than new comers do, and young people are usually more satisfied with their host society than the old are. (Dissatisfaction from social- cultural aspects increases with the age). In this case, migratory regulations and government policies are very effective. Sweden has high rank regarding migratory policies among world's countries. When asked to choose a country for residence, the most selected options were Sweden, U.S, Iran, etc. Although in conversations and interviews that I conducted, they complained about differences, discrimination and lack of belongingness, but as the recorded data shows, assuming the acceptance of their status as foreigners, 44.6% are optimistic to future, which shows a significant hope for future, although the average level of hopefulness was 38.6. Regarding the household dimension, the percentage of families with one, two and three members is significant.

Regarding success domains, the Iranian immigrants are more successful in education, job, and provision of housing and less successful in family and children affairs (see.table11). One of annoying feelings, which is repeatedly reported in interviews, is this:"we do not belong here. Here is very good but for its own people. We are rootless here. Forty percent feel themselves foreigner. Iranian immigrants are reputable in most European countries and U.S, although not in an absolute sense. Nevertheless, because of their education, expertise and financial standing, this is the usual judgment about Iranians. We shall note that this requires careful measurement of host society's opinion. Although merely 7% of Swedes reported a negative attitude towards Iranian immigrants and 42.6% view them positively, there are some reasons to believe that this social capital (confidence, reputation and positive attitudes) will decrease in future.

### *7.3 Tendency to return home, and its preconditions*

A question that usually appears in most studies on immigration is: Will you return to your homeland if conditions and facilities were available there? This is a common question about all immigrants: Do these individuals who migrate, voluntarily or compulsory, want to return to their countries after experiencing life in other countries. It is the catch phrase among governments, and sometimes even offices and agencies are established in high administrative institutions like presidential offices to facilitate their return. One-fourth of Iranian immigrants did not want to come back and one-third made their return conditional, but 38% want to

return. The point, which I observed is that the desire to return to homeland becomes stronger as immigrants grow older, and the youth are less eager to return.

For comparison, we present Lahsaiezade's survey results about preconditions for returning, which was as follows: 54.2% improving economic conditions, 24.8% increasing freedoms, 13.3% security and improving relations with EUA. In Movarekhi's research about Afghans in Iran, they mentioned job opportunities, welfare and basic requirements like education, healthcare, electricity, gas, security, international aids and having a minimum capital among conditions to return (Movarekhi, 2005: 76).

## 8. Conclusion

This paper has conducted on Iranian abroad affairs. Iran, as a major host country to immigrants in the region and around the world, hosts 3 million Afghan and Iraqi immigrants. However, it sends approximately 3-5 million immigrants to Europe, U.S, Arab countries, and other areas. The majority of Iranian immigrants are economic, scientific and technical elites, and this composition explains its cultural, economic and political importance.

Migration is one of the more obvious markers of globalization (Skeldon, 2008). The 21st century is the epoch of large-scale displacements, voluntarily or compulsory and immigration patterns are regional, although trans-regional immigration continues (UN, 2000:54). Immigration has led to multi-culturalism in entire world, especially in cosmopolitan cities. Extensive immigration of labor force transforms many national communities and metropolitan societies from peripheral to global-multicultural centers through (Oxford, 1998: 233).

Generally, the results of this research and similar studies, and my personal observations suggest that Iranian immigrants have a better economic and scientific status than other groups in host society, mainly because of its young, educated, elite, and modern composition. The Iranians who have university education and reside in OECD countries amount to 25% of all Iranians who have higher education (Zakersalehi, 2007: 114).

Regarding family and marriage, Iranian women have high adaptation potential with European culture. Language learning as a key to a new society is easier for women, and this serves as a tool for competition with husbands and parents. The challenges between men and women, divorce, family disintegration, youth problems, and Iranian identity are among major problems of Iranian immigrants. Divorce rate among Iranian immigrants in Sweden (34%) is high (second place after chilies). Furthermore, the supportive laws for women are a great challenge to the traditional power structure in Iranian families. In general, immigrant women have good conditions due to the much higher attention they pay to the rules and regulations of the host country. Therefore, they are assimilated more and complain lesser than men.

Most Iranian immigrants (not our sample) immigrated in 1980s but a new wave of immigration for education and access to social advantages is emerging. The most important point that attracts Iranians is the discipline in the host country. Half of Iranians entered Sweden indirectly, and one-fourth, changed their city 2 times. The main reason for immigration is compulsion. Thirty two percent of Iranian immigrants have selected Sweden because a family member was already stayed there, (62% have relatives in Sweden): Family-linked immigration is one of the main sources of immigration. According to Swedish law, spouses and children under 18 years of age have a right to reunification with their family (Muus, 2003:16).

Adaptation with new society was high (84% moderate to high). Satisfaction of host country is very high (83%). Immigrants choose Sweden, The U.S and Iran as a re-selection. Among family, children, labor, city, life and income variables, the highest satisfaction belongs to job and employment. Outstanding features of Sweden for immigrants are social security and welfare. Respondents consider Iranian immigrants most successful in education, job and employment. Percentage of individuals who feel themselves as outsider is not high (12%). Thirty-four percent claim they give financial aids to their families. Only 6% feel that Swedes have negative opinion about Iranians. A significant portion of Iranian immigrants has improved their education. finally only 34% want to return, 25% never return, and 31.7% have specified some preconditions for their return. In comparison, Lahsaiezade's research on Iranians in Dubai found these preconditions for returning home: 54.2% improving economic conditions, 24.8% developing freedoms, 13.3% security and improving relationship with Emirate (Lahsaiezade, 2003: 364) and in Abbassi et.al study, Afghans pointed to access to education, employment and life facilities (Abbassi, 2008: 59). Findings of a study about Afghans (Movarekhi, 2005) indicate significant difference between Iranians attention to non-material conditions for return although Afghans emphasize on basic needs. As results support Iranian have high caliber to adjustment with new host societies, women more than men adapted.

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Table 1. Ten top migrants host countries in 1999-2001

1999	2000	2001
<i>Iran</i>	Pakistan	Pakistan
Pakistan	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Iran</i>
Germany	Germany	Germany
Tanzania	Tanzania	Tanzania
U.S	U.S	U.S
Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia	Yugoslavia
Guinea	Guinea	Congo
Sudan	Sudan	Sudan
Armenia	Congo	China
China	China	Zambia

(UN, 2003:30)• (Martin, 2008:17)

Table 2. Migration theory across disciplines

Discipline	Research question(s)	Levels/units of analysis	Dominant theories	Sample hypothesis
Anthropology	How does migration effect cultural change and affect ethnic identity	More micro/individual households groups	Relation or structuralism and transnational	Social network help maintain cultural difference
Sociology	What explains immigration incorporation?	More macro/ethnic groups and social class	Structuralism and /or functionalist	Immigrant Incorporation is dependent on social capital

(Brettell, et al 2008:5)

Table 3. Iranians distribution around the world

Country	Formal statistics	Informal statistics	reference
U.S	371000	Up to 2 millions	Camarota,2007:11
UAE	500000		<a href="http://alef.ir/content/view/42567/">http://alef.ir/content/view/42567/</a>
Germany	13500	More than 200000	<a href="http://kamangir.persianblog.ir/post/50">http://kamangir.persianblog.ir/post/50</a>
UK	42377		<a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/news/story/2005/09/050907_mf_bornabroad.shtml">http://www.bbc.co.uk/persian/news/story/2005/09/050907_mf_bornabroad.shtml</a>
Sweden	56000	Up to 100000	<a href="http://www.scb.se/ages/Search_261371.aspx">http://www.scb.se/ages/Search_261371.aspx</a>
Canada	85000		<a href="http://iranculture.ca/fa/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=68&amp;Itemid=34">http://iranculture.ca/fa/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=68&amp;Itemid=34</a>
Kuwait	73000		<a href="http://www.topiranian.com/news/archives/003362.html">http://www.topiranian.com/news/archives/003362.html</a>
Belgium	10000		<a href="http://iran-tourism.ir/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=2966&amp;Itemid=56">http://iran-tourism.ir/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=2966&amp;Itemid=56</a>
France	80000		<a href="http://www.topiranian.com/maghalat/archives/000500.html">http://www.topiranian.com/maghalat/archives/000500.html</a>
India	40000		High council of Iranians in abroad
Malaysia	60000		<a href="http://www.iranmalezi.com/123NewsDetail.aspx?NewsId=19761">http://www.iranmalezi.com/123NewsDetail.aspx?NewsId=19761</a>
Netherland	30000		(Lindert, at al2008 :587)

Table 4. Iranian statistics in Sweden in 2006

Men	29552	53.05
Women	26145	46.94
Total	55697	100

National statistic center of Sweden

Table 5. Iranian statistics between 20-59 years old by marital status

Married	14607	30.8
Unmarried	32837	69.2
Total	47444	100

Table 6. Iranian migration timing to Sweden

Period	Number	percent
Before 1974	6620	11.9
1975-1984	5108	9.2
1985-1994	9658	17.3
1995-2006	24769	44.5
Total	56000	100

Table 7. Iranian migrants 20-59 years old based on employment in public and private sectors in 2006

Section	Number	Percent
Public/government section	11213	42.9
Private section	14916	57.1
total	26129	100

Table 8. Education level distribution of respondents before and after migration

Literacy distribution	Before Migration	After Migration
Under Diploma	10.9	8.9
Diploma	52.5	31.7
B.A	24.8	23.8
M.A	4.0	15.8
Ph.D	2.0	5.0
Missing	6.0	12.9
Total	100	100

Table 9. Education distribution and improving in Sweden 1993-2003

Country	People with university education 1993		People with university education 2003	
	F	M	F	M
Swedes	29	27	43	38
Foreigner	22	23	32	32
Fenland	25	19	37	28
Denmark	22	20	43	44
Germany	25	29	36	37
Poland	29	28	36	30
Former Yugoslavia	8	9	15	18
Turkey	9	11	14	17
Chili	19	21	24	25
Iran	22	36	42	39
Iraq	26	41	42	47

(Bevalender 2008, 23)

Table 10. Iranian statistics based on sex and marriage situation

	Male		Female		Total	
Single	19996	0.74	10043	0.51	30039	0.64
Married	7024	0.26	9802	0.49	16826	0.36
Total	27020	100	19845	100	46865	100
Marriage with Iranian	6016	0.86	6016	0.61	12053	0.72
Marriage with Swedes	706	0.10	1336	0.14	2042	0.12
With other nationalities	302	0.4	2450	0.25	2752	0.16
total	7024	100	9802	100	16826	100

(Hosseini, 1997: 187)

Table 11. Success of Iranian Immigrants in Different Fields in Sweden from point of responders

subject	Agreement percent
Marriage success	21.8
Success in brought up children	60.4
Success in job	85.1
Success in education	94.1
Success in providing real state	69.3