NATIONAL NARRATIVES AND GLOBAL POLITICS: IMMIGRANT AND SECOND-GENERATION IRANIANS IN THE US AND GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

National Narratives and Global Politics: Immigrant and Second Generation Iranians in the United States and Germany
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This dissertation project examines the lived experiences of immigrant and second-generation Iranian immigrants to uncover the factors that shape their perceptions of belonging in two differ western nations. It is a qualitative methods study that utilized in-depth interviews. I address the limitations of past research by highlighting that Iranians' experiences of belonging and membership in western nations are greatly influenced by the national narratives of their host societies and the global politics surrounding Iran. My central research questions are: *How do America's and Germany's national narratives of immigration influence Iranians' sense of belonging*? and *How do Iranians perceive the global politics surrounding Iran as impacting their lives in the West*? Research on Iranians in the United States and Europe underscores Iranians' proclivity to become entrepreneurs in their new nation, the lack of solidarity and community among Iranians, and the discrimination that they experience due to their ethnic and religious identities. However, we lack comparative scholarship that examines Iranian immigrants' experiences in two nations where the national narratives are different. Moreover, there is an absence of research that addresses whether, and how, global politics influence perceptions of belonging.

The three empirical chapters examine the data from sixty-four in-depth interviews with immigrant and second-generation Iranians living in northern and southern California, and Hamburg, Germany. In the first interview data chapter, I examine the

motivations of Iranians' migration to the US and Germany, their settlement experiences, and their expectations of their lives in their new nation. Specifically in this chapter, I reveal that the lack of foreign policy considerations for post-Revolution Iranian exiles in the US and the institutionalized nature of refugee policy, and lack of it, in each nation helps explain the varying settlement experiences of immigrant-generation Iranians in the US and Germany. It is noteworthy that these experiences also helped shape Iranians' understanding of each nation's main values and characteristics.

In the second empirical chapter, I show that national narratives of immigration are important in shaping Iranian immigrants' understandings, expectations, and experiences of belonging and membership in the US and Germany. These narratives inform their interpretations of not just the prospects of belonging, but the indications of whether they have accomplished it. In the last data chapter, I explore how Iran's global political standing influences the lives of Iranian immigrants living in the US and Germany. In both the US and Germany, the dominant negative discourse surrounding a highly politicized homeland stigmatizes Iranians' identities, and makes them more subject to experiences of marginality and discrimination. Specifically, in the US, global politics puts a cap on Iranians' quality of middle class experiences, and facilitates the construction of social marginality and discrimination against them. In Germany, it helps solidify a boundary that is already there.

Ultimately, this dissertation research uncovers three important aspects in regards to perceptions of belonging among Iranians in the US and Germany: First, a comparison of Iranian immigrant experiences in two western nations where the narratives of belonging are considerably different demonstrated that the national narratives of an

immigrants' host society greatly shape and mediate perceptions and experiences of belonging and membership. Specifically in the US, Iranians perceive belonging when they can obtain opportunities for social mobility, when their ancestry is not marked or stigmatized, and when they can place themselves in the 'nation of immigrants' narrative. In Germany, Iranians perceive that they can come close to belonging once they are perceived as having culturally accommodated to German society, can access greater opportunity structures, and are perceived and accepted as 'good foreigners and immigrants'. Second, an examination of how global politics surrounding Iran impact Iranians' lives in western nations revealed that their identities are stigmatized; they encounter marginality and exclusion, and ultimately feel that they do not belong or have full membership in the US and Germany. Interestingly, Iranians in both nations hypothesized that an improved Iranian standing would help facilitate belonging and membership. What is more, their perceptions of how their lives would change, and how belonging would take shape, if they did not live with the stigmas created by Iran's global politics, were inextricably linked to the national narratives of their host societies. Third, there were significant generational differences in how the second-generation in each nation assessed belonging. In the US, the second-generations' ability to access the educational resources needed for professional careers, despite their perceptions of the existence of anti-Iranian prejudice, legitimized both the US national narrative and proved to them that they can secure a good quality of life and be a part of US society. In Germany, the second generation experienced generational lag with regard to belonging. Their ability to belong is not resolved by length of residence, German citizenship, German educational attainments, or their adherence German cultural norms and practices.

Rather, second generation believed that being marked as foreigners was perpetual, and not an identity that one loses after a few generations. Ultimately, among the US second-generation US sample there were more significant/powerful declarations of the ability to acquire social mobility and belonging, while those in Germany experienced a more generalized feeling of not belonging.

This research contributes to ongoing conversations regarding immigrant belonging and membership. It adds the comparative dimension of belonging and membership by examining evaluations of belonging in two western nations where the national narratives are different. Furthermore, it takes into account how the contentious and antagonistic political relationship between Iran and western nations has impacted Iranians' lived experiences, and ability to belong, in the US and Germany. Ultimately, the inclusion of national narratives and global politics contributes to our understanding of the sociological processes that facilitate, and disrupt, experiences of immigrant belonging and membership in their host society, and provides us with a deeper understanding of the layered and complex dynamics that shape immigrant experiences.

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To my parents,

“This is how sweet and free of fear I feel now in myself.
Beyond opinion and judgement, undistracted by guilt,
I am walking steadily home, not timid or uncertain,
with my eyes splendidly clear,
all one pearl of gratefulness, no fear.”
‘Mowlana’-Rumi

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CHAPTER ONE:
INTRODUCTION

Immigrants and newcomers to a new nation encounter an environment that differs from the one they left behind in their countries of origin. This new environment contains new laws and regulations, national ideologies, and political practices and policies regarding immigration and citizenship. It also contains narratives, social and cultural norms, and socially constructed ideals of imagined communities. The combination of these factors creates a context that immigrants inhabit, and, are ultimately, influenced by. The primary goal of this dissertation is to uncover the factors that shape and influence Iranians' sense of belonging in the United States and Germany.

Past immigration scholarship have shown, in different ways, how immigration, citizenship, and settlement policies of nation-states influence how immigrants are received and incorporated into their countries of settlement[1]. This body of research has furthered our understanding of how state policies and resources help shape how, and why, some immigrant groups fare better than others in their new nations with regard to their economic, political and social participation. This body of work has paid less attention to how the national narratives of immigrants' host societies and global politics surrounding immigrants' nations of origin influence perceptions and experiences of belonging and membership among migrants and their adult children.

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[1] The research by Alba, 2005; Arnold, 1991; Bloeemraad, 2006; Brubaker, 1992; Green, 2000, 2001; Grosfoguel, 1997; Howard, 2008; Joppke, 1999; Mitchell, 1989; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Simon, 2003; and Zucker, 1983 have all underscored the importance of the nation-state policies in shaping immigrants' settlement, labor market, and educational experiences. Their scholarship has also examined how citizenship is defined and accessed in various western nations, and highlighted immigrant experiences in regards to attaining residency and citizenship.

What is more, although researchers are beginning to explore more diverse issues within the Iranian community, there remains a dearth of scholarship regarding belonging and membership among Iranian immigrants in the West. Although Iranians are generally considered highly educated migrants, similar to some other post-1965 immigrants from various Asian and African nations, the context surrounding their migration and the global political position of Iran makes their experiences anomalous, and, to a degree, different from those of other post-1965 immigrants. My research examines issues of belonging and membership among immigrant and second-generation Iranians living in the US and Germany by looking at how national narratives help define and shape how Iranians perceive, expect, and experience belonging and membership in their countries of settlement. Furthermore, the impact that the continuous and precarious political conflict between Iran and western nations has on Iranians' lived experiences is also taken into account by this research.

There are two central dimensions to this project. The first examines how a nation's narrative of immigration, which contains ideological constructs of the national body and ideal forms of belonging, mediate expectations and experiences of belonging among Iranians and their adult children in their 'new nation'. Thus, a central question of this research is how American and German national narratives of immigration influence Iranians' sense of belonging. The second examines how the highly politicized relationship between the Iranian regime and western nations impacts the lives of Iranians in the United States and Germany.

This introductory chapter includes the following: my personal narrative, which serves as a backdrop for this project; and an overview of the three data chapters on

Iranians’ migration and settlement experiences, national narratives and belonging, and global politics.

Being, Belonging and Migration: A Personal Narrative

My parents are Iranian immigrants who left Iran in 1985, six years after the revolution of 1979, and five years into the Iran-Iraq war. We migrated to Germany when I was five years old. Germany was not my parents’ first choice, and they believed that they would ultimately find their way to the United States. It took them seven years of living in Germany, which they found to be largely unsatisfactory, to migrate to the US. Germany was different than Iran in many ways. Although I was a child and not yet aware of the dynamics that my parents encountered. I was conscious of the difference in our living standards, their level of unhappiness in Germany, and the changes in our living environment. I did not realize that we lived in refugee housing for the first two years, yet I knew that we were no longer middle-class, that our lives were not as comfortable as they once were. My father, college-educated, had to accept whatever work was available to support the family, my mother, also college-educated, was a nanny to middle-class German families, and I differed from the other children in school. This sense of difference became more acute when I accompanied my parents to various German bureaus, when I had to translate for them, when I encountered teachers and their assumptions about the learning capabilities of children with foreign backgrounds, and in public settings where they were not treated nicely due to their lack of German language fluency. This sense of otherness, of being marked, was also heightened when my classmates pointed out that I was different because of my dark hair, different name, and my non-German ancestry. These markers meant to signal the ‘inherent’ differences

between them and us. As a child it was difficult to grasp the dynamics of what I was experiencing, but there was a sense of not belonging to that space or that environment. This sense of not belonging increased when my parent's adamantly petitioned that I be placed in the Gymnasium[2] track of the German school system. This educational track was intended to lead students to the university system if they performed well academically. My classroom environment dramatically changed from the 4th to the 5th grade; I went from having classmates that had similar phenotypic features to being one of the only foreign, non-German students, in the classroom. A sense of alienation, extreme academic competition, and constant doubt about my ability to make good grades in order to stay in the Gymnasium ensued.

After making it through my first year of the gymnasium, my parents decided that they had enough of Germany. They did not see a future for us there and believed that the United States would provide for us a better lifestyle and access to better opportunities. Thus during the summer of 1992, after I had just turned 12, we moved to the US. Arriving in California in the middle of the summer was a shock to the senses. Hot weather, blue skies, hills and mountains awaited us. I remember my mother's statement that "this is what Tehran used to feel like in the summer, such heavenly weather." One would expect that life in the US would be positively better, especially in California, because of the multi-cultural characteristics of the population. However, this was not necessarily the case. We moved to a city called Pleasanton where my mother's brother lived, which was a suburban city without much diversity. Aside from a few Asian-

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[2] The Gymnasium is a part of Germany's educational track, which prepares students to enter the university if they finish 12 years of Gymnasium classes. Generally, grade school teachers recommend and choose students to enter the Gymnasium by the end of the fourth grade.

American, African-American, and South-Asian families, the city was primarily populated by middle-class/upper middle-class white Americans. My experiences from 1992 until I left for college at UC Davis can be described as alienating, hostile, confusing, and complex. I, for the first time, encountered explicit references to racial difference and experienced discrimination and hostility based on my Iranian and Middle Eastern ancestry. Clearly, moving to this small town just one year after the 1990-1991 Gulf War ended did not help my situation or the situation of many other Middle Easterners who migrated to the US during this politically volatile time period. My thick German accent did not help me fit in; neither did my name. Why had my parents named me Sahar? Did they not foresee that people would refer to me as a desert at some point in my life? I did not feel like I belonged, I felt racialized and alienated. Everything about me seemed to stand out. The only time that I felt a sense of stability, a sense of belonging, was with friends and classmates who were black, and Latino/a. An unspoken alliance and camaraderie was found among this small population of non-white, brown and black students. In this friendship circle I was surrounded by kids who shared similar experiences of exclusion, experiences of not being fully accepted by the mostly white student body. This group of friends offered some protection against the alienation and racial hostility that I felt at the time.

It has been 27 years since I left Iran. I have spent the majority of my life in the West, particularly in the US, and it is clear to me that living in these different environments have influenced my sense of self and identity, and how I've experienced belonging. My migration history and narrative has served as the foundation of my interests in this dissertation research, it has driven my curiosities about how the

environments that we inhabit and experience influence our relationships to those given spaces. Although my dissertation research is larger in scope than my experiences, my family and my lived experiences of being twice migrants have significantly shaped how I perceive and understand experiences of belonging, and how this project was conceived and carried out.

Objectives and Research Questions

This dissertation examines two specific research questions: how American and German national narratives of immigration influence Iranians' sense of belonging, and how Iranians perceive the global politics surrounding Iran as impacting their lives in the United States and Germany. This research adds to the existing scholarship on immigration by examining how perceptions of belonging are influenced and complicated by both national and global politics. Specifically, this research examines how and to what extent national narratives help shape how immigrants understand their position in their new nation. It demonstrates that Iranians' understanding of each nation's narrative of immigration produced a set of expectations in regards to belonging. These expectations combined with Iranians' lived experiences influenced how they assessed and experienced being and belonging in both nations. There is a lack of empirical research examining the relationship between perceptions of belonging among immigrants with regard to the national narrative of immigration in the nation where they reside. This comparative research aims to fill this gap and advance our understanding of how national narratives of immigration help shape and mediate how immigrants perceive and experience belonging.

Furthermore, given the importance of global politics in impacting migrants' experiences, as demonstrated by numerous research on Middle Eastern and Muslim immigrants after 9/11, it has become increasingly important to examine how the global politics surrounding Iran effect the lives of Iranians in western nations. By examining the role of global politics in shaping the experiences of immigrants, we can better understand how larger political conflict between an immigrant group's homeland and county of settlement affects immigrant belonging and membership. We also gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms immigrants employ to counteract or resolve the stigmatized, externally imposed, identities that are placed upon them as a result of their association with a highly politicized homeland.

Dissertation Chapters and Major Findings

Chapter two presents the literature review of this dissertation. During the developmental stages of this research, I searched for studies examining the lived experiences of Iranians living in western nations and found that the majority of relevant discussions on the subject have been embedded in the literature on Middle Eastern and Muslim immigrants. A small yet resourceful pool of studies focused on Iranians living in western nations. Thus the bulk of the literature review highlights research that more broadly examined the lived experiences of Middle Eastern and Muslim immigrants in the US and Europe. Specifically, this literature addresses immigrants' experiences of incorporation, racialization, and discrimination. Another body of literature examines the immigration and citizenship policies of the United States and Germany, which contextualizes each state's narrative about immigration and immigrants. Researchers have not yet considered how global politics and national narratives about immigration

influence immigrants' perceptions of belonging in their new nation. This absence of global politics and national narratives also characterizes the research about Iranian, Middle Eastern, and Muslims immigrants in the United States and Germany. My research aims to fill these gaps.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology for this project. I utilized a qualitative interview methodology. A total of 64 interviews, 32 in the United States and 32 in Hamburg, Germany, were conducted between June 2010 and May 2011. The interview questionnaire was largely informed by my research questions, and contained open-ended questions. This qualitative research methodology gave me an extensive and detailed account of Iranians' lived experiences in the US and Germany, which was critical for the examination of their perceptions and understanding of belonging.

Chapters four through six encompass the empirical data sections of the dissertation. Chapter four examines Iranians' stories of migration to the US and Germany, and their reception experiences upon immigrating. This chapter provides a context for understanding how, why, and under which conditions Iranians came to the US and Germany. It also highlights the expectations they had of their nations of settlement prior to their arrival, and what type of reception they received. This chapter also helps contextualize the nuances between Iranians who migrated to the US and those who migrated to Germany.

Chapter five examines how the national narratives of immigration influence immigrant experiences and perceptions of belonging. This chapter highlights respondents' understandings of national narratives of the US and Germany, describes

how national narrative shape Iranians' expectations of mobility and belonging, and how the national narratives are realized and experienced by Iranians in each nation.

Chapter six examines how geopolitical dynamics, embedded in the 34 year old political conflict between the Iranian regime and western nations, particularly the US, bares on Iranians' lives, and influences their sense of belonging in the United States and Germany.

This research has found that both national and global dynamics influence Iranians' perceptions of belonging in the United States and Germany. The perceptions that Iranians have of their new nation in regards to opportunities to belong, to attain upward mobility, and to become a part of mainstream society coupled with their lived experiences influence the ways in which they perceive being and belonging in their host society. In the US, the hegemonic 'land of immigrants' narrative, which promises open opportunity structures for newcomers as long as they work hard, combined with America's construction of itself as an ethnically plural nation, facilitates a sense of belonging for Iranians. However, counter-narratives in the US indicated that experiences with discrimination made some Iranians question the legitimacy and validity of the US national narrative and their ability to acquire belonging.

In Germany, Iranians do not assume that they can belong. Iranians' understanding of Germany's national narrative, coupled with Germany's national identity which is explicitly rooted in German ancestry, does not give them the ability to imagine themselves as belonging to German society. Iranians perceive that they are perpetual foreigners in Germany; they inhabit a sense of being without belonging. Furthermore, experiences of discrimination facilitate Iranians to feel like perpetual strangers who are

considered ‘bad’ foreigners, and further legitimizes to them that belonging is reserved for Germans only. Iranians attempt to resolve this conflict by becoming ‘good foreigners’ in order to lessen the severity of their foreigner identities so that they can lead more comfortable lives in Germany.

The other central finding of this research is that the global political affairs between the Iranian regime and western nations impact the lives of Iranians in the US and Germany in similar ways. In both contexts, their ability to belong is impeded by the negative associations and stigma that is externally placed upon because of Iran’s negative global standing. Iranians experience a sense of shame over their homeland, experience a loss of pride over their heritage and culture, are increasingly uncomfortable when they are asked about current affairs pertaining to Iran, and have experienced various forms of marginality and discrimination in their county of settlement. These experiences not only negatively affect the daily lives of Iranians, but also ultimately disrupt their ability to belong and see themselves as a part of their new nation. Lastly, this research has found that national context influences the extent to which the second generation experiences generational progress versus generational lag. In the US, there were significant declarations of the ability to acquire social mobility and belonging among second-generation in the US. While in Germany, there was a more generalized feeling of not belonging among second-generation in Germany.

CHAPTER TWO:
LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation examines two specific research questions: How national narratives of immigration in the United States and Germany influence Iranians' sense of belonging, and how the global politics surrounding Iran impact the lives of Iranians in the West. The literature review covers various topics. First, I present the main concepts that guide this research. Second, I review the sociological literature related to immigrant incorporation and highlight the main premises of the theoretical arguments. Third, I survey the literature on Iranians in the United States and Europe to highlight the main themes and issues that have emerged out this body of work. Fourth, I examine state policies in the United States and Germany regarding immigration, citizenship, and settlement. Fifth, I examine the global politics surrounding Iran, with a special focus on the Iranian revolution of 1979, the implications of September 11 for Iranians, and current debates around Iran's uranium enrichment program

Two central concepts in this dissertation are being and belonging, a distinction articulated in the work of Levitt and Schiller; they help explain how Iranians experience the United States and Germany. Being is a state of existence that involves individuals engaging in the social relations and practices of a given environment without their identities belonging to that space. This means that individuals can be entrenched in and take part in institutions, organizations, experiences, cultural practices on various levels, yet not identify with, or belong to, them (Levitt and Schiller, 2004). Belonging entails a higher quality of identification with a given environment or space; belonging is relational, involves both conscious connection and identification (Miller, 2003; Levitt and

Schiller, 2004). What is more, belonging is not solely conceived upon individuals sharing a culture, but also requires the right to participate in the development of a living tradition (Shotter, 1993).

Bound up in this idea, or construction, of belonging is the concept of citizenship. Citizenship is most commonly associated with having legal status in a nation, obtained either through birth or naturalization. This aspect of citizenship most commonly includes a set of social, civil, and political rights (Bosniak, 2000). Yet, another dimension of citizenship is identity citizenship. Bosniak (2000) conceptualizes identity citizenship to be “the quality of belonging-the felt aspects of community membership”(p.479). Being and belonging are variables used in this dissertation to examine Iranians’ ability or inability to access identity citizenship.

Another important concept of this dissertation is national narratives. Nation states have stories of how they came to exist, the values and attributes that inform their national identity, and their imagined community[3]. These stories, or narratives, manifest themselves politically in state constitutions, immigration laws, and laws concerning civic and civil rights. National narratives also show up culturally through the education system, and dominant cultural and religious celebrations. Lastly, nations that practice ethnic nationalism[4] construct their imagined collectivity based on phenotypically distinguishable traits (Bruner, 2011). National narratives and national identity are often constructed

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[3] Benedict Arnold (1991) coined the concept of an “imagined community” as a way to describe how nation-states are socially constructed communities by those who perceive themselves as part of that group. According to Arnold, imagined communities are “to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (p.6).

[4] Ethnic nationalism is based upon the idea that members of a nation are part of an extended family, ultimately united by blood or descent. Throughout the modern era, European nations and the United States have employed race/ethnic-based nationalism as a way to exclude non-European, and other undesirable, groups and populations from having social, civic and political rights. These rights included the ability to be citizens, or have the same rights that other citizens had (Bruner, 2011; Muller, 2008).

through a combination of these factors. They are the dominant ideological narratives and discourses of the nation, and one main aspect of this research is to uncover how these ideologies influence immigrant and second generation Iranians' experiences of being and belonging in the United States and Germany.

Lastly, the concept of racialization is directly connected to this project's examination of being, belonging, and identity citizenship. Racialization is a process through which racial identities and meanings are constructed, and physical and cultural differences are externally ascribed onto individuals and groups (Omi and Winant, 1986; Barot and Bird, 2001). Furthermore, racialization is a process of "categorization, a representational process of defining an 'Other', usually but not exclusively, somatically" (Miles 1989, p. 75). In recent years, the concept of racialization has been broadened to include processes of cultural racialization, which ethnically and culturally marks populations (Barot and Bird, 2001). This type of racialization is not necessarily grounded in racial or phenotypic difference, but rather cultural, ethnic, and religious factors. Post 9/11, the ethnic, cultural, and religious identities of Middle Easterners and Muslims have become highly racialized, because they have been inextricably associated with terrorism and terrorist activities (Gotanda, 2011). Although legal traditions do not address the racialization of Islam, and, by virtue, those from the Middle East, "the volume and level of hate crimes aimed at Arabs, Muslims, South Asians, and those 'who look' like terrorists speak to the acceptance of the racialized image of the 'Muslim Terrorist'" (Gotanda, 2011, p.186). Tehranian (2009) points out that the "reproblematization of the Middle Eastern population from friendly foreigner to enemy alien, from enemy alien to enemy race is a trend that has been accelerated by the events of 9/11" (p.7). Tehranian

(2009) links this construction of Middle Easterners as 'foreign enemies' to state policies such as Special Registration, and the USA Patriot Act. These policies have not only helped racialize Middle Eastern and Muslim populations, but also led to the widespread use of racial profiling and the violation of their civil rights. Racialization plays a key role in defining the being, without belonging, aspects of experiences of discrimination among Iranians in the US, and perpetual foreigner and stranger status of those in Germany. Racialization presumably leads Iranians to lack a sense of identity citizenship in the US and Germany. The concept of racialization also plays a role in constructing the imagined community of both the United States and Germany, which employ ethnic nationalism in various ways.

In the next section I will review literature that addresses immigrant incorporation in the US and Europe, and scholarship that highlights the experiences of Iranian immigrants in the US and Europe.

Immigrant Incorporation

Scholarship on immigration has been preoccupied with how, and to what extent, immigrants are integrated into their host societies. In this section, I will provide an overview of assimilation and segmented assimilation theories, and address the critiques that have been posed in relation to these frameworks, particularly regarding the position of second-generation populations outside of the United States.

Theories and Current Research

Questions surrounding the ability for immigrants to become Americans and adopt the culture, social values and behaviors of their host nation have been at the forefront of sociological research on immigration and race in the United States. Scholars such as

Park and Burgess (1921) theorized that through the process of assimilation immigrants would be "incorporated in a common cultural life" (p.735). They assumed that the assimilation process for immigrants was inevitable, progressing across generations until everyone was absorbed into the dominant culture. Gordon (1964) modified Park and Burgess' framework by arguing that the assimilation process would first involve immigrants losing their ethnic ties and heritages, which would give them the ability to move up the educational and occupational mobility ladder. His approach assumed that cultural assimilation would form a pathway towards structural assimilation.

The segmented assimilation theories of Portes and Rumbaut (2001) have added some critical dimensions to the classical assimilation theories by accounting for various patterns of incorporation, including downward mobility. Portes and Rumbaut's theory underscores the contextual factors of immigration that provide different mechanisms for incorporation in the US. For immigrants these factors include: the reasons they left their home country, the circumstances they find in the US, the social and human capitals they bring, the extent to which their capital is useful in America, the ethnic communities they find, and how they are racialized in the United States.

Unlike the classical model, segmented assimilation asserts that the cultural values and social networks of "some" immigrants are helpful for upward mobility and incorporation in the United States. Thus, Portes and Rumbaut's modifications in accounting for the varying contextual factors of recent non-white immigrants, through their segmented assimilation framework, have been fruitful for an understanding of immigrant incorporation and stratification.

Furthermore, Portes and Rumbaut also highlight the importance of race and phenotype by arguing, “a racial gradient continues to exist in US culture so that the darker a person’s skin is, the greater is their social distance from the dominant group” (p.47). So even immigrants who have attained middle class status cannot escape the salience of race. Recent scholarship by Richard Alba and Victor Nee (2003) has also reformulated the classical assimilation framework by accounting for factors that have allowed some immigrants, who were previously disenfranchised, to socially and culturally incorporate into the US. They argue that civil rights gains have resulted in extensive institutional and political rights for racial and ethnic minorities. Additionally, the elimination of cultural barriers is hypothesized to have sped up the assimilation process and helped racial and ethnic minorities to achieve upward mobility.

American and European scholars have in recent years begun to criticize the segmented assimilation framework, particularly the second-generation downward mobility hypothesis. Kasnitz et al. (2008) have rejected the downward acculturation dimension of the segmented assimilation framework. They argue the model does not necessarily predict the paths of those second-generation individuals, who despite growing up in poverty and segregation have been able to succeed.

Moreover, scholars engaged in studying the children of immigrants in European countries have criticized the segmented assimilation model for being too US specific. Scholars, such as Zolberg and Woon (1999) and Alba (2005) have argued that boundary-making frameworks are better suited at examining the incorporation patterns of immigrants outside of the United States. Specifically, Zolberg and Woon (1999) have argued that public debates around religion in Europe and language in US are related to

national identity issues, and incorporation is largely about boundary negotiations. They argue that Islam has emerged as the focus of immigration debates in Europe because European identity remains deeply embedded in Christianity. In the United States, national identity is not fixed to religion in the same manner; rather English language is seen as the unifying element of American society. For these scholars, the boundary negotiation approach is better suited at providing a more nuanced analysis of the integration process because it allows us to understand the role of culture in social relationships.

Building on the model put forth by Zolberg and Woon (1995), Alba (2005) argues that a framework of bright versus blurred boundaries allows us to understand the boundaries that are institutionalized between native and immigrant populations. For Alba (2005) blurred boundaries characterize the situation of Mexicans in United States, whereas in the European context religion is a bright boundary for Muslim immigrants. Furthermore, citizenship acts as a powerful tool of inclusion and as a concrete sign of belonging to the host society. The construction of immigrant-native boundaries are seen as path dependent and largely shaped by the socio-cultural, cultural, legal, and other institutional domains of the host society. Segmented assimilation theory formulated in terms of the bright and blurred boundaries would free the framework from US structural features, making it more applicable to second-generation populations outside of the US (Alba, 2005).

New debates have emerged in relation to how second-generation immigrant populations are incorporated into European societies. Simon (2003) argues that while social mobility exists to a degree among second-generation Moroccans and Turks in France, the social status of the first-generation is widely reproduced among the second-

generation. For Simon (2003) the reproduction of class positions and the mark of race/ethnicity from one generation to another largely determine patterns of integration among second-generation immigrants. Similarly, Crul and Doomernik (2003) found that compared to their Dutch peers, Moroccan and Turks suffer from higher levels of unemployment and discrimination in labor market. Institutional factors within the educational system and structural forces within Dutch society are key factors that have kept second-generation Moroccan and Turks from achieving upward mobility and parity with their Dutch counterparts. The research of Worbs (2003) also shows that second-generation immigrants in Germany, who mainly consist of children of guest workers, face structural challenges in education and the labor market. This is largely attributed to a German educational system that does not foster the academic advancement of children from underprivileged families, the high importance that is placed upon educational qualifications for attaining vocational training and access to the labor market, acts of discrimination, and the parental generations' lack of social and cultural capital. Crul and Doomernik (2003) argue that scholars interested in understanding the plight of second generation populations outside of the US must pay attention to national variations with regard to institutions, specifically differences in the educational system and the ways in which transitions into the labor market take place. They argue for an institutional approach to examining integration, which takes into account both the national context and the role of institutions.

The theoretical literature about the integration of immigrant groups has taken into consideration structural opportunities like education and employment. The classic model of assimilation also assumes cultural conformity to the dominant group. Segmented

assimilation effectively modifies the model by posing varying social class mobility patterns among immigrants and their children. This model has sparked a more recent body of work that refocuses the theoretical lens on the cultural characteristics of immigrants and how they might challenge the cultures of their host society. Lastly, boundary-making frameworks are theorized as productive foundations for comparative research on second-generation immigrants in various nations, because they are not rooted in the US national context or its structural features.

In the following sections I will survey the existing scholarship on Iranian immigrants living in western nations. I will begin with a brief overview of the three waves of Iranian migration to the West. Second, I provide an overview of the scholarship on Iranians in the US. And lastly, I will present research about Iranians throughout Europe, including Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden. This review maps out and presents the main themes that have thus far been investigated by scholars, and will show how an examination of factors, such as national narratives and global politics, can give us a more complete understanding of how immigrants experience being and belonging in the West.

Iranian Immigrants

For the last four decades the migration of Iranians has taken place within globally politicized relations between the Iranian regime and western nations. Iranian immigrants are a fairly recent immigrant group in western nations, and their migration has mostly been attributed to the social and political conditions within and outside of Iran since the late 1970s. In recent years, there has been more interest in documenting the lived experiences of Iranians, specifically in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands,

Sweden, and the United States. The scholarship about Iranians in the United States and Europe underscores the proclivity of Iranians to become entrepreneurs in their new nation, the lack of solidarity and community among Iranians, and the discrimination that they experience due to their ethnic and religious identities.

Background

The migration of Iranians to western countries can be divided into three distinctive waves. Changes to US policy immigration policy under the Immigration Act of 1965, which allowed people from Middle Eastern nations to migrate to the US, helped spur the migration of Iranians starting in the 1960s and 70s. This first wave mainly consisted of Iranian students who migrated with the aim of receiving a university education in the United States and Europe. A portion of these students went to the United States, while others went to Great Britain, Germany, France, and Italy (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Hakimzadeh, 2006). These students had the intention of receiving degrees abroad and returning to Iran, however the political instabilities of the Iranian revolution of 1979 and Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) caused large numbers of Iranians' to migration and settlement in western nations permanent. Furthermore, shortly before, and during, the revolution many pro-Shah supporters and religious and ethnic minorities such as Jews, Armenians, Assyrians, and Baha'is left Iran (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Hakimzadeh, 2006). In the aftermath of the revolution and the hostage crisis of 1981-1982 it became increasingly difficult for Iranians to legally migrate to the US. It would not be until the mid-1980s and early 1990s that the number of Iranians immigrating to the US would peak again (Modarres, 1998).

The second wave of Iranian migration began after the Iranian Revolution of 1979, and primarily consisted of those with liberal and socialist political affiliations. Many of these individuals were academics, professionals, and business owners, and their departure caused Iranian society to lose some its most high skilled and educated population. This brain drain is captured by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Higher Education's estimate that by 1982, two years after Iranian universities were officially closed, the number of professors teaching at Iranian higher education institutions had dwindled down to 9,042 from 16,222 in 1980 (Hakimzadeh, 2006).

The third wave of migration has taken place from the early 1990s until the present. It is comprised of both high-skilled, educated migrants and working-class individuals. The countries with the highest percentage of Iranian refugees include Germany, the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Canada (Hakimzadeh, 2006). A key distinction between current periods of migration compared to previous ones is that Europe, not the US, has become a key destination for Iranian asylum seekers and refugees, due to European nations' proclivity toward accepting expatriates (Hakimzadeh, 2006). Furthermore, contrary to popular depictions of Iranians' ethnic and religious identities, they are not a monolithic immigrant group. They are a religiously diverse group consisting of Muslims, Jews, Baha'is, and Christians, as well as ethnic minorities, such as Kurds, Armenians, and Assyrians. Most Iranian Jews, Christians, and Baha'is left shortly after the revolution with the establishment of an Islamic theocracy. The highest percentages of Iranian-Armenians, Jews, and Baha'is have settled in southern California. Furthermore, many Iranian-Muslims living in the West lead secular lives, and are less likely to practice Islam compared to other Muslim immigrants (Bozorgmehr, 2011).

Iranians in the United States

The earliest published research on Iranians highlighted that they have weak social ties and networks with other co-ethnics in the US (Ansari, 1977). This lack of solidarity and community was attributed to the low levels of trust and commitment among Iranians. Although they felt isolated and marginalized from mainstream American society, they did not form strong Iranian communities in the United States. This sense of not belonging to either American society or the Iranian community attributed to Iranians' sense of 'dual marginality' (Ansari, 1977). Similarly, in looking at the lives of Iranians in Iowa, Chaichain (1997) found that experiences of discrimination and marginality kept Iranians from acquiring a sense of membership. However, Iranians' sense of exclusion from mainstream US society impelled Iranians in Iowa to establish networks and community with other immigrants and ethnic minorities.

Recent research, specifically in southern California, has shown that varying factors influence Iranians' relationships with co-ethnics. Bozorgmehr (2000) attributes Iranians' upwardly mobile backgrounds, and high educational attainments in the United States as decreasing their need to form strong ethnic networks. Yet, the existence of ethnic networks is of primary importance for those whose businesses cater to the larger Iranian community. Dallalfar's (1994) research among Iranian women in Los Angeles has shown that they use their gender, ethnicity, and cultural resources to start businesses that cater to a largely Iranian clientele. Through utilizing their informal social networks, cultural insights, knowledge of Iranian products, and the larger needs of the community Iranian women were able to establish start-up home businesses. Similarly, Min and Bozorgmehr (2000) show that religious and ethnic minorities, such as Iranian Jewish and

Armenian entrepreneurs, primarily rely on co-ethnic resources in the establishment of businesses, which also help facilitate ethnic solidarity among them. Yet, among Iranian entrepreneurs who cater to a mostly white clientele, the reliance on class resources, rather than co-ethnic networks, is key to creating white-collar businesses (Der-Martirosian, 2008). The existing research surrounding the Iranian community has mainly shown that Iranians in the US lack ethnic solidarity, except in the case of religious and ethnic minorities, and those businesses that cater to an Iranian clientele. A second set of research on Iranians examines how they respond to experiences of discrimination, particularly post-September 11, and how the increasing racialization of their identities impacts their lives in the US.

The racialization and racial profiling of Iranians in the US has been mainly attributed to the geopolitical dynamics surrounding Iran and the US, and the larger Middle East (Mahdavi, 2006; McKinney, 2004, Tehranian, 2008). Mahdavi (2006) argues that experiences of discrimination and exclusion as a result of geopolitical dynamics have caused Iranians to lack community membership and belonging in the US. Depictions of Iranians as dangerous and posing threats to the western way of life after September 11th have led to increasing levels of marginality toward those of Middle Eastern descent in the US. The negative connotations of being Middle Eastern is reflected in the 'covering' strategies that various Middle Eastern groups, including Iranians, employ to downplay traits that identify them with the Middle East or other Middle Easterners (Tehranian, 2008). Marvasti and McKinney (2004) found that Iranians employed covering tactics as a way to help reduce, and, or, bypass the discrimination that

they experienced. These covering mechanisms include using humor, being educators, becoming confrontational, and attempting to pass as ambiguously raced individuals.

The scholarship on race and racial classification with regard to Iranians, located within the larger research on Middle Easterners in the US, shows that the official racial classifications of Iranians as white do not correspond to their actual treatment in the US. Tehranian (2008) argues Middle Eastern immigrants', including Iranians', experiences of racial discrimination are more similar to that of racial and ethnic minorities than those of white Americans of European ancestry. The importance of race and white racial classification among Iranians is highlighted in Mostofi's (2003) research. She highlights that Iranians, like past immigrants, believe that being perceived as white and American, which includes the incorporation of American ideological norms, produces status and privilege in the US. Iranians associate "whiteness" with being American, which impels them to utilize "whitening" strategies in order to blend into mainstream American society. Mostofi (2003) found that for Iranian-Americans "the whiter the body, the more attractive the appearance, the greater the ability for assimilation of the public face, which translates to success" (p.694). The restructuring of the body through 'whitening' processes, and accepting American ideological norms, like notions of meritocracy, helped Iranians adapt to US society, take on an American identity, and see themselves "as living the American Dream" (p.700). Other aspects of racial/ethnic identity, specifically conversations about the maintenance of ethnic and cultural identity, have also been examined in the scholarship.

Daha's (2011) study of Iranian-American adolescents has shown that Iranian ethnic identity and loyalty was developed and reinforced through taking pride in Persian

civilization and history, in not being ashamed of having Iranian or Middle-Eastern phenotypic features, resisting stereotypes about Iranian culture, and engaging with the Iranian community. Interestingly, the marginality that resulted from the negative stereotypes of Iranians put forth by the media and American politicians impelled Iranian youths to adopt and identify with being Persian instead of Iranian (Daha, 2011). A reaction to the increasing marginality and discrimination aimed toward Middle Easterners and Muslims has been an increase of political mobilization within their respective communities.

This mobilization can be seen within the various actions that have taken place in the larger Iranian, Middle Eastern, and Muslim community. First, the overwhelming backlash against Muslims and Middle Easterners after September 11th has led to an increase of political participation and engagement. Bakalian and Bozorgmehr (2005) document the steps that many Muslim-American organizations have taken to educate the public about Islam, and seek more political representation at the federal level. Second, in 2010 the "Iranians Count 2010 US Census Coalition" aimed to address the limitations of the racial classification system of the US Census. The ICCC's[5] (Iranians Count Census Coalition) goal was to get a more accurate count of the Iranian American population in the US, which has been historically underrepresented in the Census data. The nationwide ICCS's campaign, which included a heavily marketed comedy skit starring Maz Jobrani, a popular Iranian-American comedian, was successful in getting many Iranian-Americans to answer the ancestry/ethnic identity question in the Census. Estimates have shown that a total of 289, 465 individuals responded to the race question by marking "some other

[5] The ICCCS's aim, purpose, and the results of the 2010 US Census Campaign can be seen at www.iranianscount.org

race" and writing in Iranian/Persian. Ultimately, the ICCC's goal is to raise awareness surrounding the concerns and issues of the Iranian American community in the US.

The above outlined research has highlighted Iranians' relations with other co-ethnics and the larger Iranian community, Iranians' experiences with discrimination and the strategies they employ to cope with marginality, their approaches toward becoming a part of US society, the factors attributing to Iranians' development of ethnic/racial identity, and the rise of political mobilization within the larger Iranian community. Yet, what remains unclear, and unexamined, in the current literature is whether and how the national narrative of immigration and larger geopolitical dynamics between Iran and western nations influence and mediate how Iranians perceive their ability to belong in the US. The next section will outline the main themes and issues surrounding the lives of Iranians in Europe. This literature highlights the importance placed upon the national and ethnic identities of immigrants, Iranians' experiences in the labor market, the differing ways that Iranian women and men experience migration, and the changes to the Iranian family structure as a result of migration.

Iranians in Europe

Given the scarcity of research on Iranians in Germany, the research surveyed includes works from Great Britain, Netherland, and Sweden. Although the German context differs from these nations, given that all these nations contain sizeable populations of Iranians, and are located in northern Europe it is reasonable to assume that there are common themes within the larger literature about Iranian immigrants' experiences in Europe.

Research has shown that the ethnic and religious identities of Iranians influenced their lived experiences within various European nations (Safi, 2010; McAuliffe, 2007). Safi's (2000) research of Chilean, Finnish, Polish, and Iranian immigrants using the European Social Survey in a longitudinal study conducted in 2002, 2004 and 2006 showed that first and second-generation Iranians were the only group whose levels of life satisfaction did not increase over time or across generations. Experiences of discrimination affected Iranians' overall state of happiness (Safi, 2010). McAuliffe's (2007) research on second-generation Iranians in Great Britain revealed that perceptions of discrimination and racism were largely dependent on religious affiliation. Practicing Iranian Muslims and those with typical Middle Eastern features experienced discrimination and felt the weight of racism compared to non-practicing Iranians and those of Baha'i and Christian faiths. The existing literature also shows that discrimination affects the social and economic aspects of Iranians' lives in Europe.

Research in Sweden shows that Iranians' abilities to partake in the formal labor market have been impeded by discrimination (Hosseini-Kaladjahi, 1997; Khosravi, 1999). Hosseini-Kaladjahi's (1997) study highlighted that despite Iranians' high levels of educational attainment, discriminatory practices and racial prejudice hindered their ability to achieve upward mobility in the labor market, and socially and culturally integrate into Sweden. Khosravi (1999) found that Iranians' aspirations to be self-employed was related to the high rates of unemployment among foreigners, and their marginal position as result of being discriminated against in Swedish society. Among Iranians in Germany, Moallem (2003) found that entrepreneurship provided new opportunities for social and political agency among Iranians. Given the daily experiences of Iranians with discrimination,

entrepreneurship created opportunities for economic mobility, employment, and agency (Moallem, 2003).

Scholarship has also investigated how migration changes Iranian family structures, and how gender influences acculturation experiences among Iranians. Darvishpour's (2002) research on Iranians in Sweden found that Iranian women acquired language fluency and entered vocational programs at faster rates than Iranian men. Consequently, the social and economic gains of Iranian women have helped alter existing power structures, and traditional gender and family roles within Iranian families. Similarly, Ahmadi-Lewin's (2001) research in Sweden showed that Iranian women's' abilities to advance professional goals led to more positive views of their new society, helped them be less affected by potential identity crises, and increased their desire to integrate compared to Iranian men. Gender differences in regard to perceptions of discrimination and acculturation were also noted among Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands (Lindert, Korzilius, Vijver, Kroon, and Arends-Toth, 2008). Despite Iranians' relatively high levels of education and cultural accommodation they had experiences of discrimination. However, Iranian women were seen as being able to acculturate better, and cited more positive experiences than Iranian men (Lindert, Korzilius, Vijver, Kroon, and Arends-Toth, 2008).

Lastly, Gorashi's (1997) study on first-generation Iranian women activists in the Netherlands showed that the development of a strong ethnic identity was impeded by distrust and suspicions toward other Iranians. This lack of trust caused Iranian women to distance themselves from Iranian social/cultural networks, as well as religious practices and activities because those communities did not accommodate the social and political

identities of these women's' lives abroad. Interestingly, despite these women's' openness toward their new society, they lacked a sense of belonging and membership within the Netherlands, in part, because of their inability to re-create the types of political communities they had left in Iran.

The body of work that emerges out of the European context shows how Iranians' ethnic and religious identities, particularly for Muslims, hinders their ability to integrate into their countries of settlement. It illustrates that discrimination in the labor market keeps Iranians from achieving occupational mobility, and, as a result, some turn toward entrepreneurship to escape downward mobility. Furthermore, experiences of marginality create a sense of exclusion and outsider status among Iranians. This sense of marginality is not mitigated by relationships with other Iranians due to the lack of strong networks and sense of community among Iranians. The existing scholarship also shows that migration affects Iranian women and men differently. Iranian men are more likely to experience identity crises, feelings of low self-worth, and a sense of being outsiders compared to their female counterparts. This sense of not belonging within their countries of settlement, along with the discrimination that they experience in their professional lives, makes integration more difficult for Iranian men.

Summary

Both in the United States and Europe, research has shown that the lack of solidarity and community among Iranian immigrants adds to their perception of not having a sense of or belonging to a community. Also, despite Iranians' overall high educational and professional backgrounds, they experience discrimination in the labor market in both nation al contexts. This type of exclusion has forced some to turn toward

the creation of small-business ventures. Entrepreneurship in both the United States and Europe is seen as a way for Iranians to alleviate the discrimination they experience in the formal labor market, and as a pathway toward independence. Iranians, regardless of whether they live in the US or Europe, experience hostility and marginality as a result of the tensions arising between western nations and Middle Eastern ones. Iranian Muslims and those with "typical" Middle Eastern features are more likely to report instances of discrimination and negative treatment as a result of the stereotypes and biases that are assumed about their ethnic and religious identities. These instances of discrimination have increased since September 11th impelling Iranians to not only question their place in their host nation, but also experience a heightened state of marginality.

The reviewed literature has shown the adverse effects that racialization and discrimination has on the lives of Iranians. Furthermore, the strategies that are employed to deal with marginality are also examined. Moreover, the importance of professional and personal networks in the lives of Middle Easterners was underscored. Yet, not much attention has been given to how national narratives help mediate and shape how immigrants perceive and experience belonging in their countries of settlement. Moreover, empirical research that documents the lived experiences of immigrants associated with a highly politicized homeland is scarce in the scholarship. We lack an understanding of how the everyday lives of immigrants are impacted by the antagonistic and uncertain geo-political relations between their homeland and nation of settlement.

State Ideologies and Policies: The United States and Germany

The ideological components of a given state are often comprised of master narratives that tell newly arriving immigrants and existing groups of how their nation of

settlement came to exist, what its dominant values and characteristics consist of, and the norms and traditions that members of dominant society should live by. In the United States this master narrative is about being "a nation of immigrants", which is an important aspect of America's national identity. Even though actual US immigration policies have vacillated between hospitality, hostility and exclusion, the "liberal myth of immigrant America" is the dominant narrative used to describe American sentiments towards immigrants (Aleinikoff and Rumbaut, 1998; Behdad, 2005). As Kohn (1957) convincingly argues "the character of the United States as a land with open gateways, a nation of many nations, became as important for American nationalism as its identification with the idea of individual liberty and its federal character" (p. 26). The myth of immigrant America is synonymous with its national identity, and was an integral part of the state building project. What is more, once immigrants have successfully assimilated into mainstream society they are seen as "Americans" (Aleinikoff and Rumbaut, 1998). The link between America's immigration narrative and processes of assimilation is further highlighted by Behdad (2005) when he argues, "the notion of cultural and political assimilation has always accompanied the myth of immigrant America, as newcomers have been 'domesticated' and forced to lose their old national 'skins' to become American citizens" (p.31). Furthermore, the "discourse of national identity in the United States is a linear narrative that begins with difference but ends in sameness, thus reaffirming the thesis of American exceptionalism" (p.32). Immigrants are seen as having successfully become Americans when they culturally and politically assimilate to America's national identity, character, and values. Ultimately, America's

national narrative promises immigrants belonging and membership once they have successfully become “Americans”.

In Germany, Volkisch Nationalism has historically been an important aspect of national identity. The importance of a homogenous society was important for German nation-state building. Language and ethnicity were the main components for the construction of exclusive citizenship and naturalization regulations, and this was intended to create a collective and overarching sense of national belonging (Brubaker, 1992; Kurthen, 1995). In the words of Brubaker (1992), the “politics of citizenship…are politics of national interest” (p.188), and the construction of citizenship are crucial to the nation-building process. Citizenship is meant to be internally inclusive and externally exclusive, which means that the institution of citizenship produces closure against non-members. Germany’s explicit ethno-racial conception of citizenship and belonging has long excluded populations, such as guest workers, who were not imagined as a part of larger German society. Thus in Germany, an important component of the construction of German-ness is the inseparable link between race and nation.

The following sections will examine the similarities and differences between the US and German immigration and citizenship policies, specifically with regard to the racial/ethnic components within both nations’ immigration and citizenship policies. They will also examine how the immigration, refugee, and settlement policies of states impact the incorporation experiences of immigrants. Ultimately, this analysis shows that the combination of state ideologies and policies of nation states produce an important context for the experiences of immigrants.

Citizenship, Immigration, Settlement Policies in the United States

The powerful 'land of immigrants' narrative of the United States creates the perception that it has always been open to migrants and that it did not enact exclusionary citizenship, naturalization, and immigration policies. However, up until 1965 immigration and naturalization policies were highly racialized and discriminated against all migrants who were not from Western Europe. Historically, exclusionary naturalization policies coincided with restrictive immigration quotas and laws, which were embedded in ethnic nationalism. The naturalization laws of 1790 and 1795 were predicated upon individuals being "free, white persons" (Perea, 1998, p.54). Native Americans were excluded from becoming citizens until US congressional acts in 1924 granted them citizenship (Perea, 1998). Furthermore, immigrants' nations of origin and their racial, ethnic, and religious categorization in the US profoundly affected their chances of becoming citizens (Tehranian, 2008; Majaj, 2000). The racial construction of citizenship is clear when examining Supreme Court decisions from the early 1920s, which pronounced that various Asian groups, including Japanese, Filipinos, and those who were Hindu were "nonwhite and hence ineligible of citizenship" (Kerber, 1997, p.843). US courts determined eligibility for citizenship based on whether groups were white in the eyes of the law, and this qualification was arbitrary and not fixed (Tehranian, 2008). During the era of restrictive naturalization, immigrants who fell into the category of 'not quite white' policies used various mechanisms to petition the state to prove their 'whiteness' to the court. Greater restrictions on foreign-born immigrants, ethnocentric immigration policies, and the rise of nativist policies are argued to have helped exclude

Syrians and other Arab groups from white racial classifications (Cainkar, 2006; Gualtieri, 2001; Tehranian, 2008). The issues surrounding whiteness, and how one became part of the white racial category, was of key importance for those seeking citizenship, property, and civil rights in the US.

Ambiguity about who was white, who could become white, and whether skin color or being classified Caucasian was enough to prove whiteness was fervently debated throughout the early 1900s. In 1909, Syrian immigrants were ruled ineligible for naturalization based on a 1790 legislation, which limited citizenship to "free white persons." It would not be until 1915, with Dow vs. United States, that Syrian and Lebanese immigrants successfully petitioned and as a result were placed in the white racial category. The ruling of Dow vs. US was predicated upon the rationale that Syrians were Semites, Caucasian, and demonstrated the ability to assimilate (Gualtieri, 2001). The central bases of these rulings were "assimilationist policy considerations that dominated the jurisprudence of whiteness," which led the courts to "dole out white status on the basis of how effectively Middle Easterners 'performed' whiteness" (Tehranian, 2008, p.61). What is more, overwhelmingly the early 20th century waves of Arab immigrants to the US were of Christian faith, which also helped them be placed in the white racial category (Cainkar, 2006; Tehranian, 2008). In 1952, naturalization restrictions were finally lifted for non-white immigrants and they became eligible for citizenship regardless of their national origins. As a result of these changes, immigrants who have attained permanent residency can become naturalized citizens, and those who are born on US soil are citizens.

As with citizenship, prior to 1965, US immigration policies were also exclusionary. In 1924, Congress established race-based national origins quotas with the intent to curtail immigration from the 'less desirable' nations of southern and eastern Europe and Asia, and increasing immigration from northern and western Europe. Although restrictive immigration policies were modified in 1952, an unbiased immigration policy was not established in the US until 1965. Furthermore, citizenship and immigration policies during the early 20th century reinforced one another; race-based criteria were utilized in the formation of both immigration policies and naturalization laws. Hence, the imagined community of the US, which stated who belonged and thus was civil and political rights, has been overwhelmingly informed by race and nationality. However, in spite of this history, the United States has a powerful "nation of immigrants" narrative, which has helped create the illusion that it has always been open and welcoming to new migrants, regardless of their racial/ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Important aspects of immigration policies are those guidelines that specifically address settlement resources. Scholars have argued that state policies concerning resources for immigrant settlement, including language classes, housing, and healthcare, affect the ways and extent to which immigrants integrate into their host countries. Bloemraad (2006) comparative research in the US and Canada showed that expansive programs for immigrant and refugee resettlement increase migrants' abilities to socially and politically blend into, and establish a sense of membership in their new nations. Grosfoguel's (1997) examination of various colonial migrants showed that they were incorporated differently based on the development of welfare and the public policies of each nation. Grosfoguel (1997) attributed the plight of Puerto Ricans in the US, which

was the worst among other colonial migrant groups, to structural inequalities and the limited welfare system, which not provide much for immigrant settlement. The structure of the welfare state and public policies aimed at assisting immigrant and domestic populations are important for migrants' economic opportunities. Furthermore, political relations between immigrants' countries of origin and the US are important in determining whether immigrants are welcomed or viewed with suspicion.

Mitchell (1989) and Zucker (1983) have argued that state support for settlement in the US has primarily been tied to foreign policy considerations, which gave some groups generous provisions as refugees while excluding other groups from receiving state settlement support. An excellent example of how foreign policy considerations culminate into important state settlement assistance provisions for immigrants is illustrated by the experiences of Cuban migrants. Portes and Manning (1986) have shown that Cuban immigrants from earlier waves of immigration, those considered political refugees, received tremendous federal assistance, which helped them comfortably settle in the US. The earlier waves of Cuban imigrants were primarily made up of the elite and professional classes, who were overwhelmingly opposed to Fidel Castro's regime, and sympathetic to the foreign policy objectives of the US government (Portes & Manning, 1986). The favorable reception and assistance that earlier waves of Cuban immigrants received combined with the resources they brought with them faciliated their settlement (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990). However, not all Cuban immigrants received similar types of state support. The Mariel refugees who came in the early 1980s were mostly ineligible for financial and relocation support, because they were defined as economic migrants (Portes & Manning, 1986; Zucker, 1983). The Mariel refugees did not receive the

settlement resources that Cubans who arrived earlier did; nor did the Regan administration welcome them (Portes & Manning, 1986; Zucker, 1983). The experiences of Mariel refugees show that unfavorable state reception coupled with low human capital produces drastically different settlement patterns. The case of Cuban immigrants in the US illustrate that high human and social capital with state assistance is conducive to the incorporation of immigrants.

Citizenship and immigration policies are equally important to the settlement experiences of immigrants. The United States imagines itself a nation of immigrants, and current US immigration policy is not restrictive in regard to national, racial, and religious backgrounds. Citizenship is determined by whether one is born on US territory (jus soli) and immigrants who are permanent residents can become naturalized citizens (Joppke, 1999). Furthermore, immigrants who receive federal assistance for resettlement are granted special refugee status, which is not commonly given to immigrants. Most newly arriving immigrants to the US receive no state support for settlement. In sum, foreign policy considerations, the structure of the welfare state, and state programs for newly arriving immigrants all respectively influence the settlement patterns of immigrants in the US.

Citizenship, Immigration, Settlement Policies in Germany

In Germany, we encounter a national narrative that does not differ from its actual immigration and citizenship policies toward non-Germans. Ethno-racial criteria are present in both Germany's national narrative and identity, as well as its citizenship policies. Up until 2000, Germany had an ethnically exclusive definition of citizenship and national belonging. These policies became problematic for Germany in relation to its

economic and political objectives as well as European and global norms. The following sections will outline Germany's immigration narrative and history. This analysis will highlight how national narratives of immigration, along with domestic political dynamics, have influenced the citizenship and immigration policies of Germany. I will also examine how various political parties in Germany facilitated the 1999 citizenship reforms, which eliminated race based criteria from Germany's citizenship law. Lastly, I will illustrate that current welfare provisions for immigrants are tied to the mandatory cultural integration of non-German immigrants.

It has been widely argued that Volkish nationalist ideology in Germany was crucial for the state-building process. The homogenization of German society was seen as furthering the advancement of the German state. The construction of exclusive citizenship and naturalization regulations were vital in molding a collective and overarching sense of national belonging (Brubaker, 1992; Kurthen, 1995). During the early 19th century, prior to the founding of the German state, the idea of "an exclusive Volkstum (ethnic community) gained hegemony…What held the nation together was not the political state but rather the cultural state, which was a common culture composed of language, literature, and artistic and musical creativity" (Muller, 2011, p. 621). Furthermore, until the Prussian law of 1842 residence determined citizenship, however after 1842 descent-based criteria for citizenship began to seep into German law. Yet, the principle of residence and descent coexisted in Germany until the Prussian-German unification of 1871 (Howard, 2008).   Brubaker (1992) argues that late German unification made blood based citizenship advantageous for the state, because it relied on factors such as culture, language, and ethnicity as national symbols for unification and

state building. By 1871 the concept of the "Volk" (the people) began to define German nationhood. Increasingly, the case was made that German society could not permit non-Germans the right to be members of the nation (Howard, 2008). It was in the state's interests to define citizenship through common cultural elements, such as language and ethnicity, so that it could eliminate all foreign elements in German society for the sake of national advancement (Kurthen, 1995). By 1913, citizenship based on descent or blood was crystallized into law through the Nationality Law of the German Empire (RuSTAG), and would not be reformed until 1999 (Howard, 2008).

On January 1, 2000 Germany recognized both birth-based (territorial) citizenship and the naturalization of non-Germans regardless of ethnic background. Domestic and international factors and major German political parties contributed to this reform. In part, these reforms were meant to address the position of the sizeable non-German, Turkish immigrant population that had begun to migrate there after World War II.

A number of domestic factors created the possibilities for reforms to Germany's citizenship law. First, after World War II Germany recruited guest workers from Turkey, Italy, and Yugoslavia for state rebuilding projects. The assumption was that these migrants would eventually return to their home countries, however many remained in Germany. By 1999 the children and grandchildren of the initial guest workers had lived their entire lives in Germany but were not citizens and did not possess political and civil rights (Joppke, 1999). This population was a key motivation for the changes to the citizenship law.

Second, the asylum crisis[6] during the early 1990s, which led the German state to accept high numbers of asylum applications, drastically altered the demographic composition of German society causing more public discourse on the "Äuslanderproblem" foreigner problem (Green, 2001). Discussions surrounding the exclusion and lack of integration among immigrants became more prominent in the media and political debates. Third, the reunification of Germany in 1990 highlighted contradictions in the rights of "Aussiedlers" persons from Eastern Europe and "Übersiedlers" immigrants from East Germany, who were granted automatic citizenship based on their German descent, and non-German immigrants who had lived in Germany for several generations were denied these rights (Green, 2000; Howard 2008). Automatic citizenship for individuals who had not lived or been socialized in German society illustrated the nation's ethno-cultural bias and prejudices (Green, 2000). In some ways, it evoked the imaginary of the Nazi legacy, which Germany had attempted to escape, and made ethnocentrism in the countries policies undeniable (Anvil, 2005).

Fourth, there were international pressures for Germany to reform its law. German citizenship did not match larger global and European norms. Thus, reforming citizenship laws could be a means to altering Germany's image in the wider European and global community. Fifth, there were international economic interests. Businesses in Germany had difficulties in recruiting high-skilled labor to settle in the country due to exclusionary citizenship laws. In this sense, more tolerant laws might increase the population of high-skilled workers in Germany (Anvil, 2005). While the domestic and

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[6]Germany's asylum laws were quite generous compared to other European nations, which led the state to accept very high numbers of asylum seekers during the early 1990s. The increasing number of non-European immigrants in Germany created contentious public and political debates. As a result Germany changed its asylum policies.

international motives for the changes in the citizenship law were important, the role of political parties was crucial. Without the influence of liberal political parties, such as the SPD (Social Democratic Party), it is very likely that citizenship reform would not have occurred.

Citizenship policy was reformed in 1990 and 1993; however, it would not be until September 1998 when the SPD and the Green party won the national elections that a more serious reform would occur (Anvil, 2004). The new coalition government, under the leadership of Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, put forth an ambitious plan, which involved a right to citizenship based on birth, easier naturalization criteria for foreigners who resided in Germany, and the right to dual citizenship (Green, 2001; Howard, 2008). Most non-German immigrants supported the more liberal parties, such as the SPD[7] and the Green's, who were seen as supporting immigrant rights. With the passing of this law, the SPD and the Greens could virtually be certain that these new voters would support their parties.

As outlined above, domestic and international motives set the stage for the reformation of Germany's citizenship law. These reforms forced Germany to recognize that it was becoming a nation of immigrants and that it had to forgo its ethno-racial definition of citizenship. With the elimination of descent as the only criteria for citizenship, the social and political rights of non-German immigrants were expanded. Furthermore, these reforms presumably helped broaden the definition of community and belonging in Germany. Yet, questions remain whether and to what extent these changes

[7] The SPD (Social Democratic Party) and the Green's are Germany's major liberal political parties. They are commonly associated with supporting the political and civil rights of immigrants in Germany.

to Germany's citizenship law have influenced how immigrants and foreigners perceive their ability to belong in Germany.

Examining state settlement provisions and resources for immigrants in Germany illustrate how these resources are tied to existing immigration and citizenship policies. Leise (2007) argues that that the Immigration Act of 2005, which includes a new National Integration Plan, is meant to integrate immigrants by institutionalizing various requirements that non-German nationals must complete before they gain permanent residency, universal welfare, and become eligible for naturalization. Some of the mandatory requirements are language classes, and civics courses aimed at familiarizing immigrants with German norms, history, values and cultural traditions (Carrera, 2006). The rhetoric of some lawmakers, politicians, and anti-immigrant groups has helped create the perception that immigrants receive unlimited amounts of universal welfare provisions without the obligation to socially and culturally integrate into German society (Carrera, 2006). These concerns have led Germany to predicate social welfare benefits on whether immigrants successfully pass mandatory integration requirements. Scholars question the degree to which cultural competency and an understanding of German history and norms will translate into structural opportunities for immigrants. Carrera (2006) argues that integration policies are not aimed at the inclusion and equal participation of immigrants in sectors such as education, employment, and housing. Rather, current state policies are institutional tools designed to weed out immigrants who are perceived as 'undesirables'. Integration policies are couched in nationalistic discourses that are meant to defend the culture, ideologies, and values of the German state (Carrera, 2006). In this sense, welfare provisions and current residency and naturalization policies are predicated upon the

mandatory cultural, if not social, integration of non-German immigrants into German society.

As Leise (2007) convincingly argues, the German state has not yet instituted comprehensive policies that address the institutional deficiencies of the education system, which would allow immigrants to enter higher paying employment and high-skilled work. While an understanding of the political and social dynamics of German society may be important for immigrants; without more inclusive policies aimed at integrating immigrants into higher-wage employment, better housing and living conditions, and improved educational opportunities these policies are largely symbolic (Carrera, 2006; Leise, 2007).

While Germany has recently adopted birth-based citizenship, its longer history of blood-based citizenship to insure the preservation of German culture still informs policies. Current state policies predicate universal welfare allocations and eligibility for residency and naturalization on the immigrant's successful completion of mandatory social and cultural integration courses. Universal welfare and settlement provisions are contingent on receiving an education in German history, norms, and values. Generous settlement resources are directly connected to the social and cultural integration of immigrants, signaling that Germany has not fully eliminated nationalistic elements of its immigration and settlement policies. Although racialist language toward immigrants and non-Germans is obscured inside a supposedly benign discussion of culture, cultural arguments are nevertheless connected to a racialized conception of nationhood (Barker, 1981; Muller, 2012). This means that Germany's politics of exclusion, which are heavily influenced by its national identity and character, remain to be based on the differences in

religion, culture, way of life, and behavioral patterns of non-Germans and Germans (Muller, 2012). The question remains of how these national racial and ethnic dynamics, which heavily rely on cultural differences between immigrants and the native population, influence immigrants' abilities to belong and see themselves as a part of the nation.

The following section will examine the geo-political relationship between Iran and western nations. The scholarship shows that the tense and precarious political relationship between Iran and the West, particularly the US, has led to a mostly negative, stigmatized, and politicized image of Iran in the West. Ultimately, this analysis highlights that western nations' relations with Iran, and depictions of Iran in the West have produced a highly negative politicized context for the Iranian Diaspora. This context makes Iranians more prone to being targets of US state policies aimed at terrorist prevention, and experiencing racial/ethnic profiling and discrimination.

Global Politics

The global politics between the United States and Iran are complex and informed by a series of events that affect current relations between these nations. Although, the literature focuses on U.S.-Iran relations, it illustrates how Iran is positioned globally in relation to the West.

A number of historical and current conflicts have helped shape the existing relationship between Iran and the US. US involvement in overthrowing the democratically elected Prime Minister Mossadegh in 1953, the revolution of 1979 and the ensuing hostage crisis, US financial and military support of Saddam Hussein during the Iran-Iraq war, the Iran-Contra affair, President Bush's naming of Iran as a member of the "Axis of Evil", Iran's uranium enrichment program, and the heavy sanctions imposed on

the Iranian regime in 2010 have influenced current US-Iran relations (European Council Center, 2008; Kozhanov, 2011; Mahdavi, 2006; Tarock, 1996, 2006).

The Iranian revolution of 1979, which ousted the Shah and the Pahlavi regime, was a pivotal event that changed the nature of American and Iranian relations. The establishment of the Islamic Republic was centered on an anti-colonial nationalism that was extremely critical of US foreign policy and interference in the Middle East and the Muslim world (Tarock, 1996). Furthermore, the Iranian hostage crisis, in which 52 Americans were held hostage for approximately 444 days, further crystallized the belief that the Iranian regime was hostile, irrational, and posed a danger to the West as well as its neighboring countries. Thirty-four years have passed since the revolution and the hostage crisis, yet Iranian and US relations have remained precarious. This sentiment is captured by the words of former director of the CIA James Woolsey who stated in 1995 that nations like Libya, Iran, Cuba, Iraq, and North Korea are synonymous with a "jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes" (Tarock, 1996, p.149). Iran is seen as one of the last rogue states that are capable of threatening the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The attacks of September 11th exacerbated the social and political issues affecting Iranians, and more generally Middle Easterners, around the world. In the aftermath of September 11th various Middle Eastern, and non-Middle Eastern, individuals were singled out for special investigations by agencies of the US government. Deportations, detainments and discrimination against Middle Easterners, Middle Eastern looking individuals, South Asians, and Muslims after September 11th are common knowledge. The American Civil Liberties Union's February 2004 report notes "in December 2002 up

to 700 men and boys from Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Syria were arrested in Southern California by federal immigration authorities after they voluntarily complied with the 'call-in' program" (p.7). Mahdavi (2006) argues that this racial profiling of Middle Easterners and Muslims is directly linked to ongoing US foreign policies with Middle Eastern nations.

Current global debates among western nations, particularly the United States, have been centered on Iran's desire to acquire nuclear weapons and its supposed affiliation and support of organizations, such as Hamas[8] and Hezbollah[9]. Increasingly, the Iranian regime is depicted as supporting terrorism in the region. Tarock (1996) argues that much of the discourse surrounding Iran is based on demonizing the regime as irrational, dangerous, and a threat to global democracy. Yet, as Tarock (1996) convincingly argues, the reasons behind US hostilities towards Iran are primarily based on political and ideological objectives, rather than actual military threats. Compared to the Persian Gulf states, the state of Israel, or the United States, the Iranian regime does not possess the military strength or resources to pose a military threat to the region (Tarock, 1996).

What is more, current controversies, specifically those surrounding Iran's enrichment of Uranium have led many western nations to assume the Iranian regime aims to develop nuclear weapons. Iran's refusal to relinquish its uranium enrichment program has led the US and its western allies to seriously consider waging military action against Iran (Tarock, 2006). This standoff between Iran and western nations continues to

[8] Hamas is a political party in Palestine. The U.S. government has associated Hamas with supporting terrorism in the Middle East. Additionally, the Iranian regime has been argued to provide monetary support to Hamas for its political struggle against the state of Israel.
[9] Hezbollah is a leading political party in Lebanon. The U.S. government has accused the Iranian regime of providing monetary support to Hezbollah for terrorist activities in the Middle East region.

politicize both the Iranian regime and larger Iranian Diaspora. Furthermore, Iran's unwillingness to stop enriching uranium led the United Nations Security Council in 2010 to impose extremely heavy sanctions on Iran (Gordon, 2013; Kozhanov 2011). These sanctions have led some scholars to argue that members of the European Union and US are waging economic warfare against both the Iranian regime and Iranian people (Dabashi, 2009; Gordon, 2013). Iranian immigrants do not represent the Iranian regime; however, it is likely that they are associated with the negative stigma of it. This larger context of precarious, and at times hostile, geopolitical relationship between Iran and western nations presumably stigmatizes the identities of Iranians and negatively impacts their ability to belong in the United States and Germany.

The scholarship has shown how immigration, citizenship, and settlement policies of nation-states influence how immigrants are received and incorporated into their countries of settlement. Research has also furthered our understanding of how state policies and resources help shape how, and why, some immigrant groups fare better than others in their new nations with regard to their economic, political and social participation[10]. Furthermore, in recent years, scholars have called for researchers to pay more attention to the national context in which immigrants and their children live, because it greatly shapes social mobility outcomes (Thomson and Cruz, 2007). What is more, amidst scholarly debates around transnationalism and immigrant communities, Waldinger and Fitzgerald (2004) remind researchers that the nation-state and its various policies greatly shape the lives of immigrants. My research will help uncover the extent

[10] The research of Alba (2005), Arnold (1991), Bloeemraad (2006), Brubaker (1992), Green (2000, 2001) Grosfoguel (1997), Howard (2008), Joppke (1999), Mitchell (1989), Portes and Rumbaut (2001), Simon (2003), and Zucker (1983) have all addressed the importance of state policies in influencing various aspects immigrants' lives and lived experiences in western nations.

to which state and global politics matter in the perceptions of belonging and membership of immigrants. This cross-national research on Iranian immigrants will also allow us to explore how different national contexts with their corresponding ideologies, and constructions of imagined communities influence how Iranians experience being and belonging.

This research will help us understand how immigrants come to perceive, and expect experiences related to, being and belonging based on the national narratives of their country of settlement and global political dynamics. This project gives us more insight into how the lived experiences and perceptions of belonging among immigrant and second-generation Iranians are mediated by both their generational status and national context. An understanding of the relationship between the above dynamics and belonging will give us a more complete picture of the sociological processes that contribute to immigrants' feelings of being and belonging in their country of settlement.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The aim of this research is to provide understandings of how being and belonging is experienced by Iranian immigrants living in the US and Germany. Specific objectives related to this aim include: identify and describe the reasons for why Iranians migrated, detail their visions and expectations for their lives outside of Iran, describe their settlement experiences, examine how living in different national contexts with their respective national narratives of immigration and citizenship regimes influence Iranians' perceptions of belonging, and document how global political conflicts surrounding Iran affect Iranians' lives.

Research Design

This project addresses two main research questions: How do the national narratives of the United States and Germany influence the sense of being and belonging among immigrants in each nation, and how the global politics surrounding Iran impact the lives of Iranians in the West. The first question seeks to understand how a nation's narrative of immigration helps mediate and facilitate perceptions and feelings of being and belonging among immigrants. This analysis gauges whether and how immigrants internalize the larger national narratives, values, and characteristics of their countries of settlement, and how this process mediates their perceptions of the ability to belong. .

The second question aims to understand how geopolitical dynamics embedded in the 34 year old political conflict between the Iranian regime and western nations, particularly the US, impact the lived experiences of Iranians in the United States and Germany. The global politics surrounding Iran and the unstable relationship between the Iranian regime and Western nations have led to questions regarding the position of

Iranian immigrants in the West. Past research on Iranian, Middle Eastern, and Muslim immigrants in the US and Europe has shown that these populations are increasingly racialized and discriminated as a result of both state policies enacted to combat terrorism, as well as mainstream suspicion and prejudice toward Middle Easterners and Muslims following September 11, 2001[11]. Furthermore, although Iranian immigrants are not responsible for the actions of the Iranian regime, they may feel affected by the negative and highly politicized discussions and constructions surrounding Iran. It is reasonable to assume that Iranians in western nations are likely to see their migration and settlement experiences as influenced by the global political conflicts that surround Iran. This dissertation investigates how the externally imposed, stigmatized and politicized, identities that are placed upon Iranians in the West affect their everyday lives, and their abilities to belong in western nations.

The idea for this project began with an assumption that immigrants' lived experiences in their nation of settlement influence their perceptions of being and belonging. Looking at past literature and scholarship on immigrants, immigration, and race/ethnicity, I became interested in documenting how national and global context has the potential to influence how immigrants perceived and understand their place in their new nation. Specifically, a project detailing the lives of Iranian immigrants, whom some scholars[12] consider economically and professionally successful would produce further

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[11] Scholars such as Bozorgmehr and Bakalian, 2005; Byng, 2008; Mahdavi, 2006; Marvasti and McKinney, 2004; Tehranian, 2008 have documented the racial profiling and discrimination that individuals of Middle Eastern background and those of the Muslim faith have faced as a result of the events that followed September 11, 2001.

[12] The research by Bozorgmehr and Pyong, 2000; Bozorgmehr, 2007; Der-Martirosian, 2008; Mostashari & Khodamhosseini, 2004 have all shown that first-generation Iranian immigrants are one of the most highly educated, high human capital immigrant groups in the US.

knowledge about how immigrant groups, whose homeland is politically stigmatized, experience being and belonging in varying national contexts. I was especially interested in understanding if and how national context with its respective citizenship regime mediates and shapes how immigrants perceive being and belonging. This research is inductive, and aims to know what an examination of Iranians immigrants' lives in the US and Germany can tell us about the processes immigrants undergo, and the challenges they face, in order to belong to their new nation.

The use of qualitative inquiry is deeply connected to a desire to understand the experiences of immigrants outside of their homeland. A qualitative research design allows for the intricate study of social and human life, and provides an opportunity to deeply understand the various ways that individuals and groups experience migration (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative inquiry deals with human lived experience, and qualitative research methodologies have the ability to reveal, describe and map the lived experiences of others (Denzin, 1991; Gubrium & Holstein, 1997). Furthermore, qualitative researchers "attempt to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). The objectives of this study are best addressed by conducting in-depth interviews, which help build a comprehensive understanding of Iranian immigrants and their adult children's' experiences in the US and Germany. As described by Johnson (2001) in-depth interviewing helps the researcher go beyond commonsense explanations for understanding a given phenomenon, activity, or practice and "explore the contextual boundaries of that experience or perception, to uncover what is usually hidden from

ordinary view or reflection or to penetrate to more reflective understandings about the nature of that experience" (p. 106). Furthermore, interviewing allows us to "learn what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions. We can learn how events affect their thoughts and feelings…we can learn about all the experiences, from joy through grief, that constitute the human condition" (Weiss, 1994, p.1). Engaging with qualitative inquiry and conducting in-depth interviews was one of the most effective ways through which I could understand and examine the lived experiences of Iranian immigrants.

The interviews were semi-structured with open ended questions, and were developed around the following issues: Iranians' migration and settlement experiences, how Iranians visualized their nation of settlement and their expectations of their lives abroad, how Iranians understand and articulate the national narratives of their nation of settlement, and how the global political relationship between the Iranian regime and western nations impact Iranians living in the US and Germany.

Respondents

A total of 64 individuals were interviewed for this project, 32 first and second generation Iranians in the state of California, and 32 in the city of Hamburg, Germany, evenly divided by generation and gender. The respondents for this research were selected based on the following criteria: first generation respondents lived in Germany and the United States for at least seven years. These criteria were based on several reasons. First, in Germany, one must have a residency permit for at least seven years before applying for permanent residency. Second, although this differs in the US depending on the circumstances of one's migration, the least amount of time required to attain permanent

residency is seven years. In choosing this sample I expected that those who have lived in the US and Germany for seven years have had enough experiences in the educational and occupational spheres of these nations to develop their feelings of being and belonging. Those who were born in the US or Germany are considered the second-generation, and from this population I interviewed those who were in their mid-twenties. The rationale for limiting the second-generation sample to post-college aged individuals was based on their engagement in acquiring resources in the labor market, and the effects that these experiences have on their perceptions of being and belonging.

I drew participants from the state of California in the US, because this is the state with the largest Iranian population. Iranians are racially classified as white in the US Census, which makes it difficult to have an accurate estimate of how many individuals of Iranian ancestry live in the US. Historically, the figures that have been available through the census have only included the Iranian foreign-born population. However, in 2010 the "Iranians Count 2010 Census Coalition"[13] started a campaign by asking the Iranian-Americans filling out the census to mark "some other race" and write "Iranian/Persian" as a way to have a more accurate count of Iranians in the US, and to raise awareness that placement into the white racial category does not necessarily represent the experiences of Iranians in the US. According to the Census Bureau, a total of 289,465 individuals responded to the race question by marking "some other race" and filling in "Iranian/Persian". Of the 289,465 individuals, the majority of the write-in responses came from the State of California (157,255), followed by Texas (20,440), and New York (12,095). The combination of the 2010 US Census report and the "Iranians Count 2010

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[13] This information was attained through the iranianscount.org website.

Census Coalition" campaign resulted in the 2011 US Census American Community Survey's estimation that a total of 470,341 individuals in the US reported that they are first or second generation Iranians. However, it is widely assumed that this figure is an undercount of the Iranian American community (Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans, 2012). What is more, when examining descriptive statistics from 2010-2012 American Communities Survey (see Appendix A) we see that Iranians in the US are middle-class, as indicated by their educational attainments and professional occupations.

When I started this project, the 2010 US Census report was underway and had not been released, however the statistics from the 2000 US Census had made it clear that the majority of the Iranian population in the US lived in the state of California. I interviewed 16 respondents from the larger Los Angeles region, which has been coined as "Tehrangeles" due to the number of Iranians who reside there. In northern California, I interviewed 16 individuals from the greater Bay Area. The rationale for selecting northern California was based on the perception that those who have settled in this region have characteristics that slightly differ than those who reside in southern California. Also, by limiting my US sample to the state of California, I controlled for local and regional context. This has allowed me to assume that people who live in the state of California face similar social, environmental, economic, and political circumstances. Furthermore, my Iranian networks that reside in both northern and southern California aided me in locating respondents for my research.

In Germany, I drew participants from the city of Hamburg. The number of foreign-born Iranians currently living in Germany is 53,920. These estimates do not include Iranians who were born in Germany. This makes it difficult to provide exact

estimates of the Iranian immigrant and second-generation population in Germany. Furthermore, citywide statistics on the size of the Iranian population in Hamburg are unavailable, thus I cannot state exactly how many Iranians live in Hamburg or describe their social, political, and economic characteristics. However, my preliminary research trip in Germany during the winter of 2009, and prior knowledge of Hamburg indicated that Iranians had established a stable and visible community in the city. Upon arriving in Hamburg my initial thoughts about the population were supported. Not only was there a sizeable population of Iranians in comparison to other German cities, Iranians' neighborhoods were recognizable as was the community's business district and its social, political, and religious organizations.

Given scarcity of statistics on Iranian immigrants, I am relying on descriptive statistics on foreign population in Germany to show general educational and labor market characteristics of foreigners in Germany. Appendix B provides a breakdown of highest level of education among those who have foreign background along with own migration experiences[14], and migrants who did not. It also gives some statistics on labor market participation. It should be noted that as of 2010 48.1% of population of foreigners without a migrant background were between the ages of 10-20, while 27.5 % were between the ages of 20-35. This means that almost half of the second-generation

[14] It is important to note that "person with a migrant background" refers to: persons who have immigrated to Germany after 1949, all foreigners born in Germany, *and people born as Germans in Germany* with at least one parent who immigrated or was born as a foreigner in Germany. Definition of persons with migrant background for foreigners and immigrants generally comprises people of the first to third migrant generations. The term Germans born in Germany refers to children of ethnic German repatriates.

foreigner population is too young to have completed university education or fully participated in German labor market.

Recruitment and Data Collection

I started my data collection in northern California in July 2010. First, I posted my call for research participants on a website called "Iranian.com", which is a community site for Iranians worldwide. Through that call, I interviewed a total of four interviews. I also relied on my professional, friendship, and familial networks to help me find research respondents by circulating my call for participants via email and social networking sites. These networks yielded me approximately five interviews. I also spent a considerable amount of time attending various social and community events hosted by various Iranian student organizations at multiple universities, including UC Berkeley, UCLA, Fullerton State University, DeAnza College, and San Jose State University. The student organizations at these institutions often allowed me to introduce my project and myself and posted my call for research participants on their email listserv. Furthermore, through the connections of a family friend, I audited two beginner Persian language courses at DeAnza College, which helped me recruit three second-generation individuals. Lastly, I contacted an Iranian scholar whom I knew from past conferences and workshops that allowed me to interview her, and also connected me to a handful of second-generation individuals through her writing group in the Bay Area. Most of the interviews with the first-generation were conducted in Persian, while the second-generation was more comfortable with English. Almost all of the interviews were conducted at coffee shops, and a handful took place at the research participants' homes per their request. All of the interviews were taped with a digital recorder, and ranged from 1 to 3 hours each. By the

end of January 2011 I had completed all 32 interviews in California, and left for Hamburg, Germany in February 2011.

In Hamburg, I found Iranian research respondents through various ways. Within the first few days, I familiarized myself with Iranian businesses in the downtown area of Hamburg and patronized them; most of them were Iranian restaurants and small grocery stores. A few of these businesses posted my call for research participants, and some of the owners of these establishments agreed to be interviewed by me. During these first few days in Hamburg, I was informed of an Iranian woman who worked with the German immigration and refugee office of Hamburg. Upon contacting her she immediately agreed to an interview, and became a key informant for my fieldwork. In the coming weeks, she invited me to various Iranian events, and introduced me to many first-generation Iranian professionals in Hamburg. Furthermore, another key informant was found at the University of Hamburg's Iranian studies program. The chair of this program was an important resource because he allowed me to post my call for research participants at the department, and audit his class seminars on Persian history and literature, which contained many Iranian students. He also invited me to numerous Iranian cultural and social events that he attended or hosted. I was also lucky that my stay in Hamburg coincided with the Iranian New Year, because I had access to many events that surrounded the Iranian community in Hamburg. Lastly, my friendship and familial networks in Hamburg helped me in finding interview respondents. Most of the interviews in Hamburg were conducted in Persian, and a few in German. Almost all of the interviews took place at the research participants' homes per their request, a handful of interviews were conducted at coffee shops. The interviews were all recorded on a digital

recorder, and they lasted from 1-3 hours. I finished the data collection in Hamburg by the end of April 2011.

The interviews were semi-structured and contained open-ended interview questions, so that participants did not feel constrained to respond in predetermined ways and could provide information that may not have been anticipated by me. My interview questionnaire explored the following themes with my respondents: belonging, inclusion/exclusion, experiences with discrimination and marginality, issues related to national, ethnic/racial and religious identity, and matters related to acquiring settlement resources, and citizenship. I asked respondents to tell me about their migration stories, including the reasons why they migrated from Iran, why they chose the US or Germany as their nation of settlement, what visions and expectations they had before migration, as well as their early experiences upon migration. These inquiries helped provide some context into why and under what circumstances Iranians left Iran. It also allowed me to examine some of the differences between Iranians who migrated to the US and Germany, and how these groups' experiences of migration and settlement may have influenced their feelings of being, belonging and membership. Specific questions were also asked about American and German national narratives, the main values and characteristics of these nations, and Iranians' perceptions of how immigrants are received and treated. I also inquired about whether the immigrants' nation of origin matters in how they are received in the US and Germany. These questions allowed me to analyze Iranians' perceptions of the American and German national context, the values they deemed important in order to attain employment and educational opportunities, the barriers to their success, the factors that facilitated their ability to belong, and the circumstances that led them to not

experience belonging. I was also able to gauge whether they saw contradictions between America and Germany's official declarations of how immigrants, racial/ethnic and religious minorities are received and treated, and Iranians' perceptions of immigrants' actual treatment. I also inquired about what Iranians enjoyed most about their lives in the US and Germany and the factors that made their lives difficult. This allowed me to gauge whether there were similar or overlapping factors with positive and negative impacts on the lives of Iranians.

Respondents were also asked about their experiences in the labor market, education and schooling, as well as acquiring resources for housing. These probes helped me to gauge how experiences of acquiring various resources influenced their sense of belonging and membership. I also investigated the extent to which Iranians were affected by the perceptions that "others" had about their group, about the politics surrounding Iran and how these perceptions affected their everyday lives. The combination of these inquiries helped me uncover the extent of Iranians' encounters with mainstream stereotypes about their ethnic group, how they utilize public dialogue about Iranians and Middle Easterners, Iran, and the region of the Middle East in their narrations of national belonging.

Data Analysis

After all the interviews were conducted, I started transcribing the interviews. I received funding from the Sociology Department to have 20 English language interviews transcribed by two graduate students in the department. The rest of the 44 interviews were translated and transcribed by me. The 44 interviews that I transcribed were conducted in Persian and Germany, as well as English. The transcription process started

in the fall of 2011 and ended winter 2012.

At the start of the Spring 2013 semester I began the process of inductive thematic analysis, which consisted of reading through interview transcripts, identifying themes in the data, coding those themes, and then interpreting the structure and content of the themes. The Dedoose Qualitative Data Analysis software program is a research data analysis tool that helped me code the interview transcripts. Coding revealed themes in the data that helped assess the research questions of this project. The themes of the interview questionnaire, as shown in Appendix C, for the first-generation sample were: Migration, Networks, Settlement, National Narratives, Discrimination, Iran and Global Politics, Residency/Citizenship, and Belonging. The themes of the interview questionnaire (see Appendix D) for the second-generation sample were: Growing Up, Schooling, Networks, Settlement, National Narratives, Positioning, Discrimination, Iran and Global Politics, Residency/Citizenship, and Belonging. I identified, organized, and coded the data according to the above interview themes, and also read through every transcript in order to see what types of other themes or factors, aside from those I asked, were important to the lives of Iranians.

During the early stages of coding, I had hundreds of codes, was coding quite openly, and I assigned codes to the data according to both the interview questionnaire and other ideas and patterns that emerged. I coded concepts of themes that were variations of other concepts, and also coded concepts that were less common. This practice of open coding helps the researcher to organize and make sense of the data, to identify as many ideas and concepts as possible without concern for how they relate (Benaquisto, 2008). After I allowed myself to code openly, I honed in and coded more specifically by looking

for particular links and relationships. During this coding process, I focused on significant codes that repeatedly showed up, began to notice relationships between codes, and discovered and employed broader categories. After a three successive stages of coding, particular themes emerged as more salient and central to understanding Iranians' lived experiences. The major themes reflected in the data are: belonging, migration stories, settlement experiences, national narratives, experiences of discrimination, Iran and Global Politics, Visions and Expectations of America and Germany, and Race/Ethnicity.

The data chapter dealing with Iranians' migration experiences coincides with the data that has been coded: migration, and settlement. The national narratives chapter uses interview data that has been coded: belonging, national narratives, and race/ethnicity. The Iran/Global Politics chapter coincides with the data labeled: Iran and Global Politics and discrimination. There are smaller codes that fall into the larger themes and codes mentioned above; for example, September 11th, traveling, and citizenship are smaller codes that exist within the larger code of "Global Politics". The coding and analysis of the interviews was completed by the end of April 2013.

Limitations

A methodological concern I had at the beginning of this research was my position as an 'insider'. I was aware of the positive and negative effects of this position and the issues of researcher subjectivity. As an 'insider', I knew I would have easier access to the Iranian community, I was sure that they would be more willing to share their stories with me, and that they would see me as one of them. In prior decades, social researchers frowned upon researchers using their membership or 'insider' status, arguing that it would make their research less objective. However, in recent years the lived experiences

and member status of researchers has become recognized as an asset. As Lofland and Lofland (1995) have argued there are advantages to study social phenomena to which one has ready or privileged access. In this regard, I am conscious to not assume or take anything for granted during the research process, yet I am also aware that my lived experiences as an Iranian immigrant were invaluable to how this project was carried out.

Another concern is that the US sample was solely derived from the state of California. Although there were methodological justifications for keeping the US sample to California, I wondered whether the racial/ethnic and economic characteristics of Midwestern, Southern, or East Coast states would produce differing experiences for Iranians. It is possible that sampling Iranians in the Midwest, South, and the East coast would bring forth varying narratives of belonging[15], but future research among Iranians across different regions of the US may potentially be able to speak to this.

Lastly, I made some noteworthy observations about my samples in the US and Germany. Generally speaking, the Iranian immigrants that I encountered in the US, specifically the first generation, were guarded and some expressed some concerns about being interviewed. Some individuals asked me questions about the recording of the interviews, and some wanted to know my personal history and the history of my parents' migration. Although all of these individuals were in the US legally, most were citizens, they still felt uneasy. This general sentiment of uneasiness and doubt among the Iranian community in the US may be linked to their fears of being potentially surveilled or targeted by the American regime. This sentiment was virtually absent in Germany.

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[15] The multi-cultural characteristics of California, and its reputation of 'liberal' political policies may produce different perceptions of belonging than in places where Iranians feel more ethnically and culturally isolated, and where the political landscape is more conservative.

Although most of the first generation immigrants in Germany had fled some political persecution and were political refugees in Germany, they had almost no apprehensions or worries about being interviewed for this research. Most of the Iranians sampled in the US were not politically active in Iran or did not come from political families, thus their anxieties or worries struck me as interesting. It is possible that Iranians in Germany may feel safer and more protected by the German state than those living in the US. It may also speak to how global politics surrounding Iran, and the larger Middle East, may cause Iranians in the US to have more anxiety surrounding issues concerning Iran compared to those living in Germany. All in all, these observations were noteworthy and eye-catching.

An ultimate goal of this research is to uncover the challenges that migrant populations, with increasingly racialized and politicized identities, face in their attempts to belong and become a part of their countries of settlement. This project will help uncover the extent to which the state and global political context mediate and influence perceptions of belonging among Iranians living in western nations.

CHAPTER FOUR:
MIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES

The migration of Iranians into western nations is most commonly characterized as consisting of international student migrants who were mainly influenced by their own desires for educational opportunities, before the Revolution of 1979, and those who migrated after the Revolution because of political and sociocultural motivations (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Hakimzadeh, 2006). Those who came to the West before the Revolution migrated during an era when Iran and western nations had friendly diplomatic relations, and were political allies. Iranian student migrants could easily attain student visas into western nations, and gain acceptance into western educational institutions[16]. During this time period, Iranians migrated and settled into their lives relatively easily. On the other hand, post-Revolution migrants had more complicated migration patterns, and sought asylum in western nations that admitted refugees and asylum seekers more easily. They generally left Iran suddenly and without extensive economic resources[17]. Furthermore, post-Revolution migrants are more heterogeneous in their educational and economic profiles than those who migrated before the Revolution.

It is important to note that Iranians' settlement experiences in both nations are also impacted by the extent to which each nation provides state settlement resources for

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[16] In a Migration Policy Institute report by Hakimzadeh (2006) it was estimated that "in the 1977-1978 academic year, about 100,000 Iranians were studying abroad, and of whom 36,220 were enrolled in U.S. institutes of higher learning; the rest were mainly in the United Kingdom, West Germany, France, Austria, and Italy." They also approximate that by the following academic year that figure increased to 45,340, and peaked at 51,310 in 1979-1980.

[17] Hakimzadeh (2006) argues that many who left before and after the revolution did not consider their migration to be permanent. She argues that "many locked up their homes, packed a few suitcases, and viewed leaving as a temporary sojourn from their lives back in Iran, which would resume when the revolutionary government was overturned."

immigrants and refugees. In the US, foreign policy considerations for political exiles are heavily influenced by foreign policy considerations; specifically those groups whose nations of origin are political allies to the US have generally received generous provisions for settlement (Mitchell, 1989; Portes & Manning, 1986; Zucker, 1983). In Germany, institutionalized refugee policy grants asylum seekers access to official refugee status, which includes state settlement provisions (Carrera, 2006; Green, 2001; Leise, 2007).

This chapter's central concern is to examine Iranians' migration and settlement experiences in the US and Germany. It also highlights the expectations Iranians had of their nations of settlement prior to their arrival, and what type of reception they received. In order to have a more complete account of Iranians' perceptions and experiences of belonging, it is important to examine the factors that facilitated their migration, and how they experienced settlement. I begin by examining the reasons why the interviewed Iranians migrated to the US and Germany prior to the Revolution of 1979; I will then turn to the factors that prompted their migration after the Revolution. The data shows that Iranians who migrated prior to the revolution[18] were for the most part international students who had various settlement experiences in the US and Germany. In some cases, the college or university organized their settlement, and in other cases, they would make their own housing arrangements. Furthermore, the circumstances surrounding the revolution and regime change in Iran were the primary cause of post-revolution migration. Settlement experiences were informed by the refugee policies in Germany

[18] The number of migrants in the sample were 32; 16 migrated to the US and 16 migrated to Germany. Out of the 16 that came to the US, five came as students before the Iranian Revolution and stayed; the others migrated after the Revolution. In Germany, five also came as student migrants and the rest came after the Revolution and sought asylum.

and family ties in the US. Additionally, it is important to note that the absence of refugee policies in the US also shaped the experiences of migrants.

Pre-Revolution Migration

The migration of Iranians into western nations prior to the 1979 Iranian Revolution mainly consisted of international students seeking a western education with the intention of returning to Iran after the completion of their degrees[19]. There were a total of ten immigrant generation student migrants in the sample, five in each the US and Germany, who had migrated as students prior to the Revolution. When asked why they left Iran, respondents commonly began to describe their educational experiences suggesting that accessing educational opportunities was the reason for migration. Cyrus, a first generation man living in southern California, described the following:

> I went to Sharif University 1969, and in the middle, maybe three or four months later, I suddenly decided to come to the US, and at the time all of my family was in Iran. I was sort of the black sheep that decided to come to the US. I had a friend and he was the same, we went to high school together and also same University in Iran, and his brother was telling us how America was and everything was fair, and it was great here, his brother lived here. Everyone here is so free and at that time there were a lot of issues with the government, we were at a strange time in Iran, with the situation of the gasoline prices going up and there were demonstrations and they were burning the buses, it was a tense moment at the time.

Cyrus came to the US for educational opportunities. In contrast to Iran's social and political climate, Cyrus perceived the US as a fair and free nation. When I asked Cyrus about his settlement experiences, he explained:

> When I came in September, I went to USC and got to the admissions. Then I got to the dormitory, got my room, and food card. The entire package, so now I was a part of the USC system… My parents paid for my education. I was not able to get grants or

[19] Bozorgmehr (1998) cites that by the mid-1970s approximately half of the student population that was abroad was in the US. Furthermore, the migratory circumstances and patterns of pre-revolution student migrants to western nations were intended to be temporary, yet the Iranian revolution made their migration permanent.

> scholarships. But I really enjoyed education; I was very successful at it. I remember by my second semester, I was getting all A's.

Cyrus' settlement was fully institutionalized, and he did not have to worry about securing basic necessities when he arrived. His international student status exempted him from receiving educational scholarships; yet his parents' support relieved him from having financial burdens in the US.

Before the revolution, many companies in Iran specialized in placing Iranian students at western educational institutions[20]. Michael was one of the people who partook in those services. He described the following about his migration in 1977:

> Before I left Iran I had all these acceptance letters and one was Glenside. I actually went to an agency in Tehran and they told me to pick. There were these companies and agencies that specialized in locating colleges in the US, and get you your papers and admission. So, I had my papers for Glenside, but I had to leave really quickly because I was supposed to serve in the military, so I was forced to leave really quickly. Went I got to Glenside I took some language courses. I had another acceptance letter for Detroit for summer session. I had no clue what Detroit was all about. So, I went to Detroit, and this is not what I expected and did not like it. So, I had a third admission letter for Stanislaus, because they had me choose a school in California. So, I got off the bus and headed for California, and that's the school I chose.

Michael came to the US with acceptance letters from three American colleges. Without much help or guidance, he visited each institution before choosing the one is California. When I asked him about his settlement experiences, he explained:

> I did it all on my own. I didn't know anybody. What I did was when I was in Detroit I contacted the dorm manager and made sure that he had a room for me. I had no family and friends there. And then when I got to Turlock, I took the bus, I could have flown but I wanted to see, I had time. The bus ride from Detroit to Turlock was a long one. And once I got there, I called the dorm manager and he came to pick me up.

[20] Given the scarcity of research on the lived experiences Iranians in the sociological scholarship, it is difficult to locate literature that addresses these organizations, which specialized in sending Iranians abroad for education. However, follow-up conversations with my respondents confirmed that the "Edaraye Pasireshe Daneshju" was an organization in Iran that specialized in preparing required college materials for Iranians wanting to go to western educational institutions.

Michael also came to the US to further his education. Michael had housing in the form of student dorms, so his settlement was institutionalized. Yet, he did not have much support from family or friends, and was forced to individually acquaint himself with US society.

Similar to Cyrus and Michael, Mary also migrated to the US in the hopes of attaining her Bachelors of Science. The theme of migrating alone and having no assistance is seen yet again in her story. She described the circumstances of her migration in 1978:

> I basically left Iran to go to school when I was 19. I had already taken 60 credits in Tehran in economics and I wanted to transfer those. I was ready to move away from my parents, I was the first female in my extended to go to another continent. So, I had to prove myself to my family that I was ready and equipped. So, um I went to Florida when I was 19 to work on my BS in economics and then my masters, and my intention was to go back to Iran, but 6 months later a bomb went off in Abadan, and 6 months after that the Islamic regime took over. I had to stay in the US and I didn't get to see my family for about 8 years, I was totally cut off from any relative, there was no one. I had to live by myself.

Lack of help and being cut off from family members is particularly central to the experiences of those who came to the US shortly before political unrest began in Iran. During the late 1970s Iran's political landscape changed quickly, and within one year Iran experienced a revolution, the hostage crisis, and was warring with Iraq. These political circumstances made Mary's migration to the US permanent. Furthermore, Iran-US relations quickly turned unfriendly after the revolution, making Iranians more susceptible to experiences of exclusion and discrimination[21]. When describing her initial experiences as an international student in Florida, Mary states:

> They had no idea about Iran beside the hostages and what was in the media. So, there was a lot of resentment with me at the dorms. It was in my second year where I used to get snide remarks, like when my roommate told me that she did not want to live with that Iranian and that she was going to ask for a transfer and all that. A couple of instances where there was some spray painting of the door. I was frightened and um, and

[21] Mahdavi (2006) argues that growing anti-Iranian prejudice in the US during the revolution and hostage crisis made Iranians targets of discrimination.

> amazingly I had already made some connections with a couple of girls in my street, they were Americans they offered a lot of support and one of them offered her parents house, I wanted to live off campus, and that opportunity was amazing. At the time there was a lot of deportations of Iranians and all these Iranian guys from engineering and computer department, and they were being shipped back to Iran. I was so afraid. My student advisor had told me that someone had contacted them with a list of Iranians and because of my grades I was a good student, I could maintain A's and B's despite the 40 hour work load, but he suggested that I be very careful about that and that he said the officers are coming back in ten days, so that gave me an unsettling state. One of the girls offered her boyfriend to marry me (laughing), so that's what I did; I didn't want to risk going back.

The hostage crisis helped facilitate an anti-Iranian climate in the US, which positioned Iranians to experience surveillance[22] and deportation. Although Mary had a student visa, the breakdown of diplomatic relations between the Iranian regime and the US posed problems for her. Consequently, Mary married her friend's boyfriend in order to be protected from deportation. Mary's experience is supported by reports indicating that the US government approved the deportations of Iranian students shortly after the Iranian Revolution[23].

Similar to those who migrated to the US prior to the revolution, the interviewed Iranians in Germany also migrated primarily for education. They represent a generation of young Iranians who embarked on their new lives by traveling to western nations for greater educational opportunities, yet would later find themselves unable, or unwilling, to go back to Iran.

Ali, a first generation Iranian professor at the University of Hamburg, said the following about why he migrated in 1978:

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[22] Bozorgmehr (2007) cites that the "Iranian Control Program" screened approximately 57,000 Iranian students to verify that they had legal status. Furthermore, each student had to register with the INS by mid-December 1979, have a valid visa, and provide proof of full-time school enrollment. Those who failed to comply with the INS were at risk for deportation.

[23] The Washington Post reported on December 28, 1979 that the US Appeals Court approved Iranian student deportations.

> When I lived in Iran and met this research group from the University of Hamburg that did the type of work that I was doing in Iran. Research work relating to taking measurements of the earth, like geophysics, determining the layers of the earth, what type of materials are underneath the earth, in these layers. They did that work too. When they saw my work, they liked and they insisted that I go to Germany. I was not in agreement, because I had gotten a scholarship to go to UC Berkeley for my PhD, because I was the number 1 student in my field in my University. Once they found this out, the supervisor of this research group got in contact with the German research organization to invite me over. They accepted his word, and they invited us to go to Germany and agreed that they would pay all the tuition and money that the Iranian government was going to pay the US, and also all the expenses like learning German, and for my wife. I went to Hamburg and from the beginning, you may not believe this, but from the beginning they placed me in this very office from the first day.

Ali was invited to study in Germany with funding. His unique skill set and expertise placed him in a position to receive an education and settlement package from the University of Hamburg. He described his early settlement experiences:

> So, in Blankenese, there was a family who wanted to rent out the second floor of their home to students, and the price and area was good… From the beginning they treated me well; maybe this is because the person who we rented the second floor from knew why we were there and what I did. And he explained to everyone that he encountered that I was there for my PhD. And this was very important for them that this person is here for his education, so their behavior was very kind and this was opposite and different from what I have heard from friends who have told me that they were not treated well, or treated badly, because of their dark hair or not looking German. This caused problems for them; we did not have these problems.

Ali and his families' migration and settlement to Germany were fully institutionalized by the University of Hamburg. He was offered the opportunity to live in a nice, residential neighborhood instead of living in university dorms. Furthermore, given that he had migrated for his PhD, he perceived that his landlord gave him a certain level of respect. Unlike his friends who encountered problems and anti-foreigner prejudice, Ali did not have such experiences.

The varying experiences of Iranian students in Germany can be seen in Kimia's story. She explained why she came to Germany:

> For education, to study. I left the beginning of 1978, and the revolution in Iran had just started to take shape and get underway. I had just gotten my High School diploma and about four months before the revolution I came to Germany with the intent of going to

> the US. It didn't happen, I stayed here for a while and then ended up staying six to seven months and was in Iran again for a month, then I went to Madrid, Spain because my intent the whole time was going to the US because my sister was in the US. She had gone there from Iran, she was able to get the visa, but my situation hit the revolution and I was not able to go. We were supposed to be in the US together. I tried to get a visa from Germany to the US, and they told me that I had to get it through Iran. I learned German here for a while. I was a young woman, I had come by myself, and the only person that was here was my uncle. When I saw that the US wasn't going to happen, I stayed here.

Germany was not Kimia's first choice country for migration. Instead, she set her sights upon the US. Kimia's migration coincided with the onset of the revolution, making it difficult for her to directly migrate into the US. After multiple unsuccessful tries of getting a US visa, Kimia remained in Germany and went to the university. When I asked her how her uncle helped her get settled, she explained:

> His role was to just make sure I was okay, to watch over me. To give a peace of mind for his sister, that everything was okay. I stayed with him for about 7-8 months, and then I got acquainted with a German girl and I became her roommate.

Kimia's settlement was not institutionalized through the university, yet she had her uncle's support. After she got acquainted with German society, she lived with other German university students.

Iranian students who migrated to the US and Germany prior to the revolution primarily came for educational opportunities, yet had varying settlement experiences. Some experienced institutionalized settlement through a college or university, like Cyrus, Michael, and Ali. However, other student migrants had no institutional help and secured their own housing. Furthermore, growing anti-Iranian prejudice in the US, particularly after the Hostage Crisis, complicated Mary's settlement. Lastly, in both contexts, there was an absence of family and friend networks for student migrants[24]. In the next section, Iranians' motives for migration, and settlement after the revolution are examined.

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[24] This lack of support networks for Iranian immigrants can be attributed to the lack of large numbers of Iranians, and a visible Iranian community, who are living in the US, and other western nations before the

Post-Revolution Migration

The lives of Iranians were significantly affected by the ousting of the Shah and the consequent regime change, which led to new a theocratic government. Iran's social and political environment during and after the 1979 revolution and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) facilitated the migration of many Iranians. Moreover, the hostage crisis, which led to the closure of the US embassy in Iran, severed diplomatic relations between Iran and the US. During this time period, Iranians had limited options of legally entering the US. Iranians who were unable to obtain a US visa often went to other European nations, like Germany, or applied for asylum in the US via another country[25]. Moreover, refugee policies in the US and Germany helped shape the settlement experiences of Iranian migrants.

Mansoor, a first generation Iranian man residing in southern California, describes the circumstances that influenced his decision to have his family leave Iran:

> I saw the situation in the schools for the children, the situation at my job, at the company, I had a couple of run-ins with the Islamic law, the oil industry, the aviation industry, there were problems after the Shah. There were a lot of problems, so our industry was one of the main focuses for them to concentrate on, especially with the war situation, it was military aviation and with the war it was very hard for us to turn the aviation over to them, and it was difficult for us to adjust to that. And that was where a lot of the troubles were, at work and the harassment after work, I could not be absent or take a day off without being under a magnifier of what I was doing.

Regime change affected all state-run institutions, including the aviation industry. Many individuals who worked for the government were immediately under surveillance, and some ran into problems with the new regime. When I asked Mansoor about the specifics of his migration he told me:

1979 Revolution. Before the revolution, most Iranians in western nations had not migrated with immigrant visas; rather they had arrived with student or tourist visas (Bozorgmehr, 2007).

[25] Bozorgmehr (1998) and Hakimzadeh (2006) cite the ways in which Iranians came to the US after the revolution. This process commonly entailed Iranians coming to the US through a third country, and filing for asylum after arriving.

> I left in 1980, eleven months after the revolution and came to Canada but without my family and I wanted to stay but they started to harass my family, I had a one-year old son and a wife. They were supposed to join me there, but they started to harass my wife, my brother, they wanted me to return back to Iran. So, that added to the problems that I already had. In 1986, for the third time, they summoned me and put me in jail for 3 months, they warned me. See, I copied and published a couple of books when I was sent to the Iran-Iraq war, I was not a fighter, but I was sent there to fly helicopters. I had many conversations with people in the war and when I got back in Tehran I was being watched for that, for those stories. The second time when I had a very tough conversation with a Mullah in charge of the unit I was working with, and they put me in jail for 3 months and warned me that this was the second time, there should not be a third time. So, when they summoned me for the third time, I had to get out and this time. I spent almost my entire life savings to get a passport, because we were not supposed to get a passport, our passport was a military and our passport should come from them, but I couldn't tell them that I was leaving the country, so I had to pay a lot to get a passport and pay the rest to get some for my family. I paid everything I had for that and for the middleman to get a visa for the whole family and get to Germany.

Like many immigrants who could not legally leave Iran, Mansoor obtained passports and visas through a middleman. In Germany, with the help of the international rescue committee[26], he applied for and was eventually granted political asylum in the US. When I asked what was required to qualify for this organization's help, he stated:

> For the US, in the 1980s there were four requirements, because we were not refugees, and we were not immigrants. They had four requirements, one, was to be a religious minority; two, having first class family member here; three, having work experience with Americans; and I don't remember the 4th one. In Iran, I did work with Americans, but I did not for them, I worked with them. So, when international rescue committee asked me this, I said I had documents issued by helicopter companies that were counterparts of Iranian companies that worked with Iranians.

Mansoor's previous work relationship with American aviation companies allowed him to make a case for official refugee status. The international rescue committee provided him institutionalized help, which involved housing in southern California, permission to work, and a path toward permanent residency. Interestingly, Mansoor's stay in Germany

[26] According to their mission statement, the International Rescue Committee "responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives. The IRC offers lifesaving care and life-changing assistance to refugees forced to flee from war or disaster."

gave me the opportunity to ask why he migrated to the US as opposed to staying in Germany. He explained:

> Germany is heaven for Germans, not for foreigners. I had friends there; you know as a foreigner, it was extremely difficult to get into my career, because they have priority there. If you came from a commonwealth country, like a European one, you would have priority.

Mansoor's decision to migrate to the US was influenced by his experiences in Germany, which included residing in refugee housing for three years, and other Iranians' experiences in Germany. Similar to Ali's account of Iranians' experiences with anti-foreigner prejudice, Mansoor experienced Germany to be unwelcoming toward non-Germans and non-Europeans. Moreover, he expected to not find employment in his profession, because of the aviation industry's preference for German and/or European workers.

Not all Iranians who migrated after the revolution had personal conflicts with the regime. However, some were unwilling to live under the newly established theocracy in Iran. RC explains her decision to leave Iran and the situations she encountered in her quest to come to the US:

> So, I left Iran in 1986. I went to Turkey; I didn't want to go to University in Iran. I just didn't like the environment and the whole hijab issue, and the whole environment. So I decided to get out of the country. I went to Turkey and I was accepted in the University, so I went and studied there. I actually tried twice to come to US, because I have a lot of cousins and relatives. But they didn't give me the visa.
> I: How did you eventually end up in the US?
> R: I almost finished my Bachelors, I had two months to finish my Bachelors, but I left Turkey because my husband didn't want to go to military service. He was a pacifist. We came to the US because we won a lottery. A green card lottery, so we had to come right away.

Social and political changes within Iran facilitated RC's move out of Iran, and the difficulties in attaining a US visa led her move to Turkey[27]. She went on to further explain her motivations for leaving Iran:

> We went through a lot of things, you know. I saw a lot of things. Some of my friends were killed, executed, jailed, so I wasn't politically active so nothing happened to me. But I saw a lot of things so I really wanted to get away from that and be in a democratic country. So that was a big motivation for me. That's what I came in and wanted to go to university. I was an A student, everyone expected me to go to medical school.

RC did not have personal conflicts with the Iranian regime, yet witnessed political suppression. RC saw the US as a democratic nation that would provide her access to educational opportunities. She eventually made her way to the US by becoming a permanent resident through winning a green card lottery[28]. When I asked RC about her settlement experiences, she explained:

> My dad's cousin and my own cousins live here. My dad's cousins are pretty wealthy. They've been in real estate for many years, so one of my dad's cousins gave me a place to stay. A duplex in Mountain View, then he transferred me to a section 8 the following year.

Although her settlement was not institutionalized, her family networks helped her settle into the US fairly easily. She did not have to arrange housing or apply for permanent residency; these things were taken care of for her. Furthermore, her status as a permanent resident qualified her for Section 8 housing, which is a form of institutionalized housing support.

Similar to those who migrated to the US, Iranians' migration to Germany was also facilitated by social and political factors. The majority of Iranians who came during this

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[27] Bozorgmehr (2007) cites that with the closure of the US embassy in Iran many Iranians migrated to other nations, including Turkey, in order to apply for a US visa. Furthermore, Iranians going to Turkey did not need a visa, and could stay there for up to three months.

[28] According to the American Iranian Council, countries that are legible for green card lotteries are those who send less than 55,000 immigrants to the US per year. Given the difficulties of attaining a visa into the US, large numbers of Iranians partake in the green card lottery every year.

time period sought political asylum. Unlike in the US, in Germany, refugee and asylum policy is universal, and refugee re-settlement is fully institutionalized. Most asylum seekers stay in state refugee housing until their case is decided upon. Among Iranians in my Germany sample, there were those that lived in state refugee housing, and those who avoided it because of their family ties. Heide, a first generation woman living in Hamburg, explained why she left Iran:

> I was very politically active in Iran, and I was in a leftist party. I had political affiliations that caused me problems in Iran, and I was jailed for 1.5 years. After I was released from jail, they sent me to a mental asylum, and after being there for 6 months; I fled to Germany in 1983.

Her political affiliation and imprisonment caused Heide to flee to Germany in 1983. Upon arrival, Heide started the process of filing for political asylum. She explained the asylum process:

> The system that Germany has, which now that I have experienced after being here for these years, is that Germany is truly a social state, a social welfare state. It is a country that is democratic, and the smuggler told me to go to a bureau and register myself there as a refugee, and that they would take it from there. They will get you a place to live, food, an income. Until your case gets approved, this is the process. This system still exists, the difference is that then it may have taken one to two years until the immigration office approved your first interview. And during that time period you could not apply for any type of permanent residency, you could not have a normal life. But after six or seven years after I came, your first interview would be held within the first 10 days.

Heide's settlement in Germany was fully institutionalized by the state; housing, healthcare, and food were provided for. Heide's settlement experiences clearly influenced how she regarded German society. For Heide, Germany was truly a socially democratic welfare state.

Among those who left Iran after the revolution were those who had no direct conflict with the regime, but left because of familial political problems. Nasrin explains why she left Iran in 1988:

> I left because of the circumstances surrounding the political environment of Iran, and the problems that I faced there. One of the things that I witnessed there was the arrest of my daughter, and they took her to the committee. She was at a party and one of her friends called the police and told them to raid the house because there were some suspicious activities going on… They kept my daughter until the nighttime and I told them that she was pregnant and that she should not be harmed in any way, and if you do I will curse them and their families. I saw in the streets that they would beat up kids who were wearing short sleeves; those were very tough times in Iran. It was these circumstances that made it unbearable for me to stay in Iran.

After the revolution, Iran's social and political climate was becoming increasingly repressive, and the private and public lives of Iranians were strictly monitored. These dynamics made it difficult for some Iranians to remain in Iran. Nasrin said the following about her settlement experiences:

> I had been lucky that my daughter had been here and that I did not need to go to immigrant housing. But many lived in the heims and I have seen the heims, and it was very hard to be a family, and have been independent and then have to come in those facilities…And it was very painful for them to be in those places. Family members of my son-in-law who came to Germany had to go to those housing places and we would go and visit them there. We saw how nasty it was, they lived on the fourth floor, and the floor below were Arabs, from below you could smell the disgusting smells.

Living in the 'heim', which refers to refugee housing in German, was uncomfortable for many immigrants, and those with family members in Germany avoided refugee housing. State housing is often described as a place that stripped Iranians of their independence. Furthermore, they were uncomfortable sharing common areas with non-Iranian refugees, whom they generally viewed in a negative light.

The crackdown on politically active individuals was common in Iran, and even those who were not politically active found themselves in precarious situations. Shahin described the circumstances that facilitated his migration in 1988:

> I did not have political problems in Iran, but my brother did. And because my brother was executed I was forced to leave, there was not much I could do. I was doing well in Iran, and had to leave it all, sell it all off.

Similar to Nasrin, Shahin's motivation to migrate was also caused by familial problems with the regime. He said the following about his settlement experiences:

> My sister helped me a great deal. Many of the people who came here, in order to get residency had to apply for asylum, and you had to give up a lot of power and independence. And they could take you anywhere and place you in immigrant housing. And it's quite dirty, and you have to share housing with people from all over; many different nationalities, and we were lucky that when we arrived we went directly to my sister's house.

State refugee housing is again depicted as an uncomfortable and dirty place that forces migrants to give up their power and independence. Like Nasrin, Shahin and his family did not have to go there because of the assistance his family offered him. Siavash, who stated that he left Iran in 2004 to 'live in a free society', described his settlement experiences:

> I was in a camp, in the North, the immigrant housing places and it was a mix of people from Asian countries. Because many of these people knew no one, and because they receive most of the support from the state, that's where we all get sent. And that place had its own situations. Unfortunately, that place, although there were some good people intermingled among them, many of the people that were there were from Asian and African countries were not looking for or did not have the capacity for democracy, and they would abuse freedom and democracy.

Siavash's settlement was also institutionalized. He had no other means or support networks, so he fully relied on the state. Siavash's settlement experiences were not particularly positive. He perceived most refugees he encountered as undesirable, and incapable of embracing the democratic principles of German society.

Among those who migrated to Germany due to social and/or political reasons were also those who had been western educated decades before. Hormuz was the only Iranian in my sample that had been western-educated, returned to Iran, and then left again after the revolution. He described his migration in 1981:

> I was a professor at the University and I was very happy there, because many of the students really wanted me to teach. I was teaching at the University of Tabriz in agricultural chemistry. But after the revolution, the Islamists weren't too happy with

> those were educated abroad… I stayed for two years and fought the University. They closed the universities for a while, and the professors that were there didn't want the Hezbollahi professors to teach there. They knew that they weren't trained, or didn't have the right background to teach.

After the revolution, Iranian educational institutions viewed western-educated professors, like Hormuz, with suspicion. There was a preference for educators who were politically aligned with the new regime. Some professors mobilized and resisted the changes that were being made to the Iranian university system. Ultimately, as a result of their ideological and political differences, western-educated faculty members were discharged. Hormuz said the following about his settlement experiences:

> When I first moved back, it was at my wife's families house…at first, we first thought that we would come to Germany until things settled down in Iran, until the Hezbollahi's would leave, and then we'd return. Then after three years being here, we saw that things weren't going to change so we stayed here.

Hormuz describes the first three years of his life in Germany as being filled with uncertainty. His decision to stay or return to Iran was tied to the political situations unfolding in Iran. Furthermore, his settlement was made easier because of his wife's family ties in Germany.

The above narratives illustrate that Iranians who left after the revolution did so mainly because of social and political reasons. Some Iranians were directly involved with social and political conflict, while others did not approve of the climate in Iran. Interestingly, the case of Mansoor and RC show that complications and difficulties of directly migrating to US after the Revolution caused them to migrate to a third country before finding their a way into the US. The settlement experiences of Iranians also revealed that the presence of refugee polices in Germany, and the absence of these polices in the US, helped shape the experiences of migrants. In the US, refugee re-

settlement support is rare and only granted under special circumstances, while in Germany refugee policy and re-settlement is universal. With the absence of universal refugee policies in the US, the family ties of Iranians become more central in their settlement experiences. In Germany, Iranians' settlement is fully institutionalized by the state, yet some use their family ties to avoid living in refugee housing.

The last group of migrants in my sample migrated because of familial ties. This type of migration was only found in my US sample. Those who came due to familial ties did not have political problems in Iran; rather, some came to attain better opportunities, while others came for marriage. The following section examines their experiences.

Familial Migration-US only

Given the difficulties of attaining an immigrant visa from Iran to the US in the 1980s and 1990s, some Iranians relied on their familial ties for migration. Among the respondents in my study, one migrated for marriage and the other overstayed her tourist visa. Maryam was one of the few Iranians in my sample who migrated because of marriage. When I asked her about her settlement, she explained:

> When I got here everything was already set up in regard to the housing, and life, that was all set up. But my English was not that great, I did not have a driver's license, so it was important for me to set all that up, and get that stuff together. There was an adult school in San Pedro that taught English to people in the afternoons, and my husbands would drop me off and then pick me up, it was very close to our house. So, I started off with the adult school, and in about six months, a little less than six months, I could actually get my high school diploma from the US. And once I got to the point of getting my diploma, I started to apply at the University and I had applied to Cal State Dominguez State for my Masters. They accepted my BA from Iran; they recognized the University that I had attended in Iran. They needed me to certify some things, and I did that with a lot of the help from my past teachers at the adult school.

Maryam's settlement was not institutionalized, yet having a husband with US citizenship and an established life made her settlement relatively easy. Although she struggled with

English fluency, she did not have financial issues, and accessed educational opportunities with relative ease.

Not all Iranians who had family members in the US had straightforward migration experiences. Siv did not arrive in the US with an immigrant visa; rather she came to visit relatives on a tourist visa. She explains the reason why she and her son migrated in 1998:

> I came to visit my sister for two months and then I decided to stay…My sister insisted that I stay, she wanted me to stay. And my husband was not happy in Iran. We didn't like the way that it was, we weren't sure about our son's future in Iran, so we thought that it would be a good idea to try to stay here.

Siv overstayed her tourist visa and consulted with an US immigration lawyer in order to file for asylum. She did not have problems with the regime; rather she wanted to provide better opportunities for her son. When I asked about the circumstances around her immigration case, she explained:

> They told me that if you want to stay you will have to come up with various strategies. Some said that if you become a Christian you can get a case that way, I didn't like that one, because I did not want to change my religion, just for you know, for a visa. I didn't like that, I told them I can't, and they said that was the only way. Even right now, the only way is to get married and stay and I could not do that or the other case if you change your religion. This is what the lawyers that I consulted with told me. I couldn't see myself going to church every day when I don't believe that. You have to show them this, you have to go to church, and really do it, it's not just changing the religion on paper. And you have to be involved in a lot of things, you have to prove it, you have to show them that you believe. The case they made ended up being on social and civil rights issues. They said that women come here and stay, because the condition of women is hard there. One of the lawyers put something together, some papers and said let's try.

Given the difficulties of receiving asylum in the US, Siv's lawyers cited civil and women's rights violations as the reason for her migration out of Iran. Siv's case gives us an explicit example of the difficulties of legally migrating into the US after the Revolution. Given the difficulties of attaining an immigrant visa, filing for social and political asylum was only way Siv could acquire legal residency in US.

Similar to Mansoor's description, Siv listed a handful of legitimate reasons that may grant immigrants the right to asylum in the US[29]. When I asked about her settlement in the US, Siv explained:

> I stayed with my sister for 6 months, and after that I lived with my husband's uncle. He was, his job made him travel a lot, but he had an apartment here that me and my son stayed at until my husband joined us.

Siv's settlement was not institutionalized, yet her family ties helped her in various ways. The absence of state institutionalized support for immigrant and refugee re-settlement makes it more difficult for those without familial resources, financial stability, or pre-arranged educational/employment opportunities to migrate and settle in the US.

Discussion

The migration and settlement experiences of the interviewed Iranians in the US and Germany have been influenced by the circumstances of their departure from Iran, their modes of settlement, the available resources for settlement, and the type of climate they encountered. Iranians' accounts of their migration to the US and Germany indicate that those who left Iran prior to the revolution did so for educational opportunities, while those who left after had social and political motives. Their settlement experiences in both nations were mixed; some had pre-arranged institutionalized help in the form of tuition assistance and student housing, while others had no assistance. The cases of Cyrus, Michael, and Mary in the US, and Ali in Germany, are examples of institutionalized settlement in the US and Germany. Lastly, Kimia was the only international student who had family that provided her extensive support; the rest of the student migrants did not have family or friend networks that assisted them.

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[29] Bozorgmehr (2007) cites that for Iranians who came to the US between 1980 and 1990s obtaining refugee or asylum status was the most common way to become a permanent resident.

After the revolution many left Iran because of the precarious social and political climate. Some were in direct conflict with the regime, like Heide and Mansoor, had to leave. Those working for state institutions, like Mansoor and Hormuz, found it difficult to work with the new regime. Their inability to conform to the social and political goals of the new regime placed them under surveillance, making it difficult for them to remain in Iran. Others like Nasrin and Shahin left because of familial conflicts with the new regime. Additionally, there were those who migrated because they did not like the general social and political climate of post-revolution Iran, like RC and Siavash. Lastly, a few post-revolution migrants came to the US because of their familial ties. This included Maryam who migrated for marriage, and Siv, who wanted to access better opportunities in the US.

The settlement experiences of post-revolution Iranians in the US and Germany differed in some important ways. Germany is a social democratic welfare state, and its refugee policies include institutionalized support for refugee re-settlement, and access to the social insurance system. State refugee housing is a part of the asylum process, and issues related to living there were apparent in the stories of Iranians in Germany. Those whose families helped them avoid living in state housing felt particularly lucky, because of the painful experiences of others who had stayed there. In the US, official refugee status is difficult to attain, granted only under certain circumstances, and re-settlement support is uncommon. The cases of Mansoor and Siv illustrate the conditions under which refugee and asylum status can be attained in the US. With the absence of universal state refugee policies, the family ties of Iranians in the US become more central to their settlement experiences.

Interestingly, interviews revealed that global political dynamics surrounding Iran

were seldom absent from Iranians' migration experiences, particularly during and after the revolution. The severing of diplomatic relations between Iran and the US after the revolution and hostage crisis impacted both American immigration policy toward Iran, and Iranians' sense of security in the US. With the closure of the US embassy in Iran, Iranians could no longer apply for an immigrant, student, or tourist visa. Furthermore, Iranians, like Mary, who lived in the US during the revolution and hostage crisis, were often profiled by the INS and subject to deportation. Mary's early settlement experiences and decisions were heavily shaped by the societal and political context of that time. Growing anti-Iranian sentiment in the US also led Mary to experience marginality and exclusion.

The interviews also, both implicitly and explicitly, described the national context and narratives of the US and Germany. The centrality of the individual in American society, and the importance of learning to be self-sufficient are apparent in the stories of Iranians who came to the US. Not surprisingly, the emphasis placed upon making it on your own, and becoming a self-made woman/man is connected to America's national narrative. Furthermore, the US was described as a nation of opportunities, whether for education or work. The interviews illustrate that Iranians' first choice nation of migration was the US, and those who ended up in Germany did so mostly because of their inability to go to the US. Mansoor, Kimia, and RC's migration stories all illustrate the desire to end up in the US as opposed to other nations, like Germany. The US is implicitly depicted as an archetypical democratic country that provides opportunities, and equality.

The German interviews provided two specific descriptions of the German national context. Iranians experience Germany to be a nation that provides ample social welfare

programs for foreigners and refugees, yet also exhibits anti-foreigner prejudice. Both Ali and Mansoor state that having a foreign background can lead to unfair treatment in Germany. Ultimately, Mansoor's experiences in Germany coupled with his perception that he would encounter barriers in the labor market facilitated his migration from Germany to the US.

The findings in this chapter confirm past research findings that pointed towards the importance of foreign policy considerations, and the structure of the welfare state in influencing the settlement patterns of immigrants in the US. Unlike earlier waves of Cuban immigrants that migrated to the US after the fall of the Bautista regime and received generous federal assistance for settlement, the interviewed Iranian immigrants did not qualify for such resources. Rather, the lack of foreign policy considerations for Iranian exiles after the 1979 Revolution significantly contributed to the non-institutionalized nature of their settlement.

In Germany, Iranians' settlement experiences reveal patterns that were described by past scholarship. Specifically, Iranians experienced the German state to be a refugee-accepting nation that provides immigrants with ample settlement assistance. The institutionalized nature of their settlement is a product of refugee settlement and integration policy implemented by the German state.

The question remains of how the hegemonic national narratives of Iranians' host societies influence their perceptions and expectations of belonging. In the following chapter it will become clear that the national narratives and context of Iranians' nation of settlement shapes their quality of life and perceptions and expectations of belonging.

CHAPTER FIVE: NATIONAL NARRATIVES AND BELONGING

In the previous chapter, I examined some key characteristics of Iranian immigrants who migrated to the US and Germany, and highlighted their migration and settlement experiences in both nations. In the review of the scholarship, I also argued that the concepts of being, belonging, national narratives, and racialization were important in understanding Iranians' experiences in the US and Germany. National narratives are the hegemonic ideological discourses of nation-states, and, as highlighted by Aleinikoff and Rumbaut (1998), Behdad (2005), and Kohn (1957), they are an integral part of the state building project and the construction of national identity. This chapter analyzes the extent to which national narratives influence Iranians' perceptions, definitions, expectations, and experiences of social mobility and belonging in two nations where the national narratives are different. What is more, I utilize the concepts of being and belonging, a distinction that was formulated by Levitt and Schiller (2004), to examine what factors Iranians consider to be facilitating, or limiting, their ability to access membership in their host societies. Lastly, I employ the concept of racialization as a way to analyze Iranians' experiences of marginality and discrimination, and to uncover how being racialized causes disruptions to belonging, or put differently, facilitates experiences of being without belonging.

The specific aim of this chapter is to uncover the ways in which Iranians understand and identify with the national narratives of the US and Germany, and how these processes help influence their perceptions of being and belonging. A comparative,

cross-national analysis[30] provides insight into how Iranians perceive and experience each place and how those experiences shape their sense of belonging. This chapter will examine Iranians' articulations of America and Germany's national narratives, provide a comparison of being and belonging in relation to national context, and discuss of how national narratives mediate being and belonging.

The United States

In the following section I will highlight how Iranians understand and experience the dominant American national narrative. Specifically, Iranians identified with various aspects of the national narrative, whether it was the American Dream, the national narrative of immigration, America's political principles, or its promises of upward mobility. Their connection with some or all aspects of the national narratives mediated their perceptions of their ability to belong in the US. What is more, respondents conceive that belonging is attainable when their national origins and ancestry are not a prohibiting force in their lives. Among the interviewed Iranians were also those who found the US national narrative to be contradictory to their lived experiences. These individuals' personal experiences with discrimination and exclusion delegitimized the US national narrative of mobility and their expectations of belonging. I will begin the following section by demonstrating Iranians' understanding of America's national narrative and how it influences their lived experiences in the US.

Articulations of the American National Narrative

The U.S. national narrative is composed of various themes and indicators. These themes include: hard work, open opportunity structures, accomplishment, individualism,

[30] The US and Germany are western nations which are often perceived as having drastically different immigration histories, receive immigrants differently, and ideals about opportunity structures.

and democracy. These indicators were narrated by some of the respondents in this project as the content of the American national narrative.

I asked a set of questions[31] regarding America's core values, its reception and treatment toward immigrants, and the relationship between hard work and belonging. These questions allowed me to gauge the ways in which Iranians make sense of their lives in the US, their understanding and internalization of America's national narrative, and, ultimately, how they define their belonging. It should be noted that all of the interview respondents in the US, except for three, held at least a bachelor's degree, some also held advanced degrees, and considered themselves middle-class. In this section I show how Iranians have come to understand and articulate America's national narrative, and how they relate it to their lives.

Nick, an immigrant generation man who was college educated in the US and living in northern California, was asked a scenario question that addressed issues of hard work, opportunity, and belonging in US society. The question asked "Person A: says 'America is a land of opportunity. With hard work one can become a part of this society.' Person B: says: 'America may be called the land of opportunity but in reality there is a lot of discrimination. Working hard doesn't mean that you will become part of this

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[31] These questions included: "1) What did you think American/ German society would be like before you moved here? Did your ideas come from what other immigrants told you? Or from other sources such as books, films etc. Could you give me an image of how you imagined your life would be? 2) Have your ideas about this country changed after you had lived here for a while? How? 3) In your opinion, what are some core values of American/German society? Have these values influenced your life here? How? (**Probe**)—do you see the core values of America/Germany as different from those of Iranian society? 4) At this point which core set of values do you see yourself more aligned with—or is it mixed? 5) Now, let's talk a bit about how you were received or welcomed here. How in general would you describe how you have been received in this country since your arrival? **Please elaborate**. 6) In your opinion how are immigrants received in this country? How are Iranians received in this country? **Probe if necessary**: does this differ from how other immigrants are received? 7) Do you think immigration law in U.S. / Germany makes it easy for people to migrate here? Does it favor some immigrant groups more than others? Is it the same for all? Why or why not?

society.' Which one do you agree with and why?" In response to the scenario question, Nick argued:

> I: I agree with A, 100%.
> R: Why?
> I: Because I am a prime example of that. I worked hard here, the number 1 goal as when I came to this country was to be proud and my parents to be proud and I worked hard at school, I got a scholarship because I worked hard. I went to Seattle University for free. Why, because I worked hard and they rewarded me for that. They wouldn't do that in Iran; they wouldn't do that anywhere else in the world. So, if you work hard, if you set a goal, you will reach it no matter what. There is no discrimination, they didn't discriminate against me because I was a different color, or from another country or I was disabled; as soon as they saw my grade point average they said you're the one.

Nick's statement reveals the following things: his belief that the US is a nation that rewards hard work. One works hard and in turn receives material rewards in the form of scholarships and educational opportunities. Within Nick's narrative there is an assumed, linear relationship between hard work and rewards. Furthermore, people are not discriminated against in the US, racial/ethnic ancestry and background does not pose barriers in the US. Everyone is treated equally and given the same opportunities to excel and succeed.

When Michael, also a first generation man who was college educated in the US and living in northern California, was asked the same question he replied:

> I definitely go with A, because I've lived it. I came here and didn't know anybody, had no connections, knew no people, all these years I had a good job, earned a living. If you do your homework, and put your effort in and work hard and respect other people, you will make it.

Michael echoes Nick's views of America's open opportunity structures and the relationship between hard work and accomplishments. Michael adds the importance of individualism to his narrative by asserting that he had no connections when he came to the US, yet he worked hard, had a plan, a respectable attitude, and ultimately became

financially successful in the US. Michael's narrative represents the self-made man; he embodies the idea of pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps.

Similar to Nick and Michael, Tony also stresses the idea that individual effort, hard work, and opportunity all combine into the American success story. In response to my question about America's core values Tony offered the following:

> when they say this is the land of opportunity, that all depends on you. There is ..it is truly-if you are a hard worker you can make a lot of things happen. If you're lazy, you are not going to get anywhere. So this is the place that you really need to be upfront, not be shy, and go forward. And keep your open mind, and then you get places. And that's what I'd be telling people, it all depends on you this is not true other places. Especially when you don't belong to that country, when you go there they respect you if you are coming from or working from another organization. But in Iran or other countries you don't have as much opportunity as you have here. You could really make it if you want to. There are tons of opportunities.

Tony stresses the availabilities of opportunities as a way to highlight that the US lives up to its reputation of being a land of opportunity. This is not mere theory; rather Tony's experiences have proven to him that there are ample opportunities in this country. If one has failed to succeed it's due to one's own shortcomings, lack of hard work and laziness. America is the land of milk and honey, and one reaps what one sows in the US. Furthermore, there is no other nation that will allow non-natives to succeed like the native population. Tony's point of reference is Iran, and he stresses that even as an Iranian he would not be afforded the same opportunities that he's had in the US if he remained in Iran. Similar to Michael and Mike, Tony was also a part of the waves of student migrants who came to the US prior to the revolution for educational opportunities. Tony, similar to Mike and Michael, believes that his ability to acquire social mobility is living proof that the US is a land of opportunity and equality.

A related theme that emerged throughout the interviews was a narrative theme about the US as a place of democracy, and a place of self-invention. This narrative was clearly put forth by a second-generation woman named Mitra who said the following about America's core values:

> a notion of democracy, which I don't even think exists. I think institutionally and theoretically its part of our value system. I actually believe that if you value that and hold on to it and actually attempt to emulate it someway it really does work, because there are institutional reinforcements. So, democracy is one, free speech is another which I think is exceedingly important. The idea of inventing yourself, I think is really powerful and also compelling in my own life. Opportunity, this idea that somehow you can and will find an opportunity to either invent yourself, better yourself, those are things that are endemic to both the culture and the institutional.

The narrative emphasis here is that the US may not have a perfect democracy, but it has institutional mechanisms that allow for democratic practice to be carried out. In theory and in practice the US is a land that values democracy and does its best to enact it. Mitra also believes that the US also grants individuals the right to speak freely, and the freedom to invent and reinvent themselves. The self-made woman and man is a reality for her in the US, a place where one is given the opportunities and materials to better one's life. These political principles are part and parcel of both American culture and its institutions.

In a related way, Mansoor, a first generation man living in southern California, also stressed the importance of freedom. He said the following about America's core values:

> It's hard to explain, and when I was in Iran they ask me how is the US, and it was hard for me to explain that, because even when you visit the US you cannot get a grasp of what the US is, you have to live it. The freedom of speech, the freedom of religion, you can become whatever you want, and that was what's more like a mentality. I don't want to be responsible for what my religion is, what my brothers beliefs are. I want to be me. I want to be free of anything, pursue what I want to pursue.

For Mansoor the US symbolizes absolute freedom. The freedoms to think, speak, act and live without restrictions. His point of reference, similar to Paul, is Iran. Compared to life

in Iran, he has an unlimited ability to be free in the US. Furthermore, the US is not ruled by a theocratic regime, compared to Iran, and he is not held responsible for anyone's faith or lack of faith. These freedoms have given him the possibilities and opportunities to be a self-made person without any external constraints.

Banafshe, a first generation woman living in southern California, also emphasizes America's political values. When asked about America's core values she asserted:

> the freedom, I think the freedom of…the freedom is you know. You know you can do, you know if you got involved in human rights or you get involved in your religion that's your choice or if you have this idea, I mean nobody comes and kills you basically. You are free to write what you want to write and to do political activity and wear whatever. And that people are mostly nonjudgmental here, that's very good thing. They're kind of laid back, and they are not racist the way sometimes the Europeans are. I like Americans a lot, they're very open people.

America places a high value on human rights, and provides people ample freedoms. Similar to Mansoor, Banafshe values an existence that is free of restrictions. She feels protected from being persecuted for her thoughts, actions, and beliefs. Banafshe also stresses that the existence of equality throughout American society enables it to be less racist, judgmental, and more open compared to Europe. America is an open society, which accepts everyone equally without racial bias.

The above narratives demonstrate how the sampled Iranians perceive American society. The US is conceived as a land that values individualism, has opportunity structures open to all, and rewards hard work through eventual success and upward mobility. Lastly, America lives up to its domestic and international reputation of being a land of democracy and freedom. The US is regarded as a nation that anyone can belong to regardless of national background. They perceive that the only factors that stand between achieving a feeling of belonging are the individuals' effort or lack thereof. They do not conceive of the US as a nation that erects structural barriers for anyone; one's

racial/ethnic background and ancestry do not pose a barrier to achievement. Rather, if one has the right foresight, a good plan, is not afraid of hard work one will eventually become successful. The US is a place of meritocracy, open opportunity structures, and equality. Michael, Mike, Mitra, Tony, and Banafshe all sounded themes consistent with dominant elements of America's national narrative as discussed elsewhere, and their lived experiences have proven to them that the American Dream is attainable. These interviews affirm that American ideological ideas of meritocracy, freedom, democracy, equality, and opportunity are confirmed in the lived spaces of America. These five cases are reflective of the 19 interviewees who had positive assessments of America's national narrative. However, counter-narratives did exist. Approximately 11 respondents interpreted America's national narrative more critically. For example, Nader, first generation man living in northern California said the following when I asked him about the core values of US society:

> the stuff in theory is that it is a free, and equal society. It's a place where everybody has an equal chance to pursue whatever it is that makes the happy, and that you're free you do pretty much what you want to do as long as you're not hurting anyone else. Um, of course the reality of it is that it's not quite like that. Its free-er for some than others, and that equality thing is something that is a work in progress, sure there has been strides made, but even now its not quite there.

Nader gives us a more complex view of America's core values; he articulates both a theoretical understanding of America's values, and one that is grounded in reality. Nader sees the US as a place that has degrees of equality and freedom depending on who you are. Another a counter narrative came from a first generation woman named RC who lived in northern California. She said the following response when I asked her whether her views about the US had changed since living here:

> you always think of U.S. as a perfect place and what I learned is that it's not perfect and it does have its flaws. And politicians are not perfect here. They are corrupt and they are corruptible, and the politics are not always going well. We always complain about Iran that it's having that problem, but here they also have their own problems. They have a lot of difficulty, and there is discrimination here. And you wouldn't think that they have people who would live, like people in Africa. But they do, the Native Americans on reservations, their life expectancy and their level of life and all the financial power. All of that is just third world, you wouldn't think this. I kind of realize it is not all perfect. We have this image that you're going to somewhere that everything is fine and dandy. From the movies you get that or from people who come and say, but there are realities here that you don't know when you're over there. When you come here you say wow.

Rc's narrative is telling and interesting. Her pre-migration views of the US changed based on her lived experiences. She imagined the US as a place of perfection, free of political corruption and difficulties. Yet, her experiences have shown her that political corruption and third-world types of poverty exist in the US. Lastly, her discussion of the plight of indigenous people in the US is meant to showcase that discrimination exists in the US, and not everyone is treated equally.

The above responses illustrate that there is a level of diversity among Iranians' responses regarding their understanding of America's national narrative. Nader and RC's lived experiences have led them to see contradictions within America's narrative, what exists in theory compared to how the national narrative plays out in reality. Although many interviewed Iranians possessed positive and idealize notions of the US and its national narrative, the existence of counter narratives shows that some Iranians question America's promises of equality, freedom, and opportunity. Interestingly, it was not educational or class differences that influenced Iranians' varying descriptions of the US national narrative and opportunity structures, but rather vivid experiences with marginality and exclusion that shifted their perceptions in regards to US national narrative and society.

The question remains of how these assessments of the national narrative relate to personal feelings of belonging in this society. What factors legitimizes belonging for Iranians in the US? What factors complicate belonging? In the following section I will examine how Iranians experience belonging in the US. Specifically, Iranians believe that belonging is attainable when their racial/ethnic identities are unmarked, and not prohibiting them from becoming a part of US society. Ultimately, Iranians' perceptions of belonging are mediated by both their understanding of America's national narrative and their personal experiences.

Belonging among Iranians

Being 'Unmarked'

Iranians described various ways of belonging throughout the interviews. For example, Maryam said the following about the US and becoming a part of this society:

> I would say it is a place of opportunity. It is a place where... someone doesn't necessarily need an education or those essentials to have a good income. So the level of income is generally higher. This society is a mixed society. It's... that's part of it, is you don't become a part. It's not like the European system where you have to be French to be part of our society; there you have to be European. It's not that. You can retain your own culture while participating in this group culture. So you don't have to change yourself to be part of this society – you can retain who you are.

Aside from her perceptions of opportunities in the US, Maryam argues that the US is a society that practices ethnic pluralism, a society that does not require immigrants to assimilate in order to belong. One can retain one's culture, one's ethnicity and still belong. Unlike many European nations, like France, which require cultural assimilation, Maryam understands the US to be a place that allows immigrants to maintain their culture; you're accepted by American society regardless of ethnic ancestry and culture. Assimilation is not required in the US, because the US is a mixed society that accepts ethnic and cultural difference, this is a part of America's identity.

This notion that the US is accepting of racial/ethnic differences is also vivid in Minoo's perceptions of how immigrants are received in the US:

> I think when compared to Europe, the US is much more easy going in accepting immigrants, because in reality all Americans are immigrants. It may be that some people think that they're very American, but in reality they're all immigrants, basically they were immigrants, so their roots are closer connected to immigrants than Europeans.

For Minoo, America's identity is predicated upon a history of immigration. She perceives that America and Americans do not discriminate or exclude newcomers because that would be a violation of its own ideals and principles of being a 'nation of immigrants'. Europe does not have a history of immigration and hence they have difficulties with people of non-European backgrounds compared to Americans who do not. In the US being an immigrant will not harm you; rather it can be an asset.

Within the US sample, some important differences arose between first and second-generation Iranians. In relation to the question of what made Iranians feel like they were a part of this society, what made them feel as though they belonged, the second-generation articulated narratives that significantly differed from the immigrant generation. Generally speaking, the second generation articulated higher levels of belonging than their parents. Some attributed this to spending their entire lives in the US, and having no other nation as a point of reference. This type of narrative was evident in Lyla's response. When I asked her what aspects of living in the US make her feel a part of society, she explained:

> I've lived here forever, so I've never not felt a part of society, but I guess not having an accent helps cause they know you're raised here. At this point I would say for instance you have a nice house or you drive a nice car that means that society in general knows that you're successful and that means that you're in. you've succeeded.

Lyla equates her lack of an accent, which denotes that she's from here, as an indication that she's a part of this society. Having no other point of reference also signals to Lyla

that she is from the US. Lyla also suggests that achieving upward mobility means that one has made it, that one has indeed succeeded in attaining the American Dream. Similar to Lyla, Farah echoes some similar themes about what it means to be an American. When asked what made her feel like an American, she shared the following with me:

> Well, I've obviously inherited the mentality, the ethics, the culture. I mean, my mannerisms. Everything about me is American, with like a dash of Persian, you know?

For Farah, being born on American soil makes one an American. Being born in the US means that one is, inevitably, exposed to American culture, mentality, and mannerisms. According to Farah, an immigrant may carry with them ‘a dash’ of their ethnic heritage and culture, but one is not hindered by it, one’s ancestry does not pose barriers to becoming successful in the US. Farah’s narrative is in line with America’s narrative as an ethnically plural country, a nation that is composed of many different immigrant groups with their own ethnic culture that ultimately form into one unified American identity.

The narratives of Maryam and Minoo demonstrate an understanding that the US is a nation of immigrants. Regardless of their ancestry and national origins, the US offers immigrants, like Maryam and Minoo, the opportunity to become Americans, because at its very origins America’s identity is an immigrant identity. Furthermore, ethnic background is conceived of being an asset, it can be retained it, practiced it, and celebrated without one being penalized or punished for it. Maryam and Minoo’s lived experiences have shown them that the US receives immigrants with open arms, and that they can become a part of society without having to change or ‘become Americans’. Based on their narratives, the racial and ethnic background of immigrants does not influence the treatment that they receive; very fact that they are occupying an immigrant identity makes them Americans, being an immigrant is synonymous with being an

American. And lastly, they believe that cultural accommodation is not a prerequisite for being a part of American society. Belonging is legitimized for Iranians, like Maryam and Minoo, when they perceive that their ancestry and ethnic identity is accepted in US society, like past immigrant groups that migrated before them, and when their identity does not negatively impact their daily lives.

Lyla and Farah, two second-generation Iranian women, demonstrated a deeper sense of belonging. Their narratives indicated that they felt more belonging than their parents' generation. A number of second-generation Iranians responded similarly to them in regard to what made them American and what made them feel as though they were a part of American society. This generational difference can be attributed to multiple factors. First, the second-generation does not have Iran as a point of reference; the US is the only country that they have lived in. Second, they are fluent in the English language and speak it without an accent. Third, they feel more acculturated than their parents' generation. And lastly, they've been able to gain more educational and occupational mobility than their parents' generation. These findings are similar to those found by scholars who have done work on second-generation immigrants and cultural integration[32]. The combination of these factors allows them to feel as though they can belong and be a part of American society with more ease and confidence than the first generation. This does not mean that first generation Iranians do not feel a part of this society, or that they lack a sense of belonging, rather the second-generation feel that they belong more than the first.

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[32] The sociological scholarship of Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Bean and Stevens, 2003; Kasinitz, P. Mollenkopf, J., Waters, et. Al, 2008 have highlighted the ways in which second-generation immigrants differ from their parents in regard to cultural accommodation and economic integration.

As demonstrated by the above respondents, belonging is secured for both first and second generation Iranians when they perceive that their ethnic identities and ancestry does not burden or hinder them from leading fruitful lives in the US. The dominant national narrative of the US as being ‘a nation of immigrants’, which contains a distinctive American immigrant identity, is realized in the lives of Iranians when they perceive that their background does not pose barriers to belonging.

The question arises, when are feelings of belonging jeopardized for Iranians? What circumstances delegitimize the national narrative and as a result make belonging unstable for Iranians? In the following section I will highlight the experiences that mark Iranians as ‘others’, instances that racialize them, which result in experiences of discrimination and exclusion. These experiences pose obstacles to belonging, delegitimize the national narrative for them, and place these Iranians in a state of living in America without belonging.

Being ‘Marked’

For Iranians, to be marked is to be racialized, and being racialized produces experiences of discrimination. These experiences were revealed when I asked respondents a number of questions regarding their lives in the US. One of these questions asked what Iranians found most difficult about living in the US. Siv, a first generation woman, told me the following:

> Um, there is still some, they say its not, but there is still some discrimination here. They say this is supposed to be a great country, there is no discrimination, but there is in a lot of places, even at work. Um, it took a long, long time for me to prove myself, to establish myself, my personality, in the beginning it was not like that. Little things would happen, here and there. Even with some patients, when you want to work with them, they prefer a white person compared to me, they don’t tell me this but after 10 or 12 years working there, you can tell, they can be like that. They wont say its because you’re not white, but its there. My husband notices that at work too, he’ll complain. And I say “maybe you’re imagining this,” but he’ll say, “no, they are discriminating against me.”

Before migrating to the US, Siv imagined and expected the US to be a great country, devoid of racial discrimination and exclusion. Yet, her racial/ethnic background is marked, and as a result of this she experienced discrimination in her professional life. The differential treatment she has received as a dental assistant in a private practice, which primarily caters to white patients, has proven to her that she is neither perceived nor treated like her white co-workers. She further points out that her experiences are not an anomaly, rather her partner deals with similar dynamics at his place of employment.

This sense of being perceived as an 'other' which result in differential treatment was echoed by Cyrus, a first generation, upper-middle class professional residing in southern California. After a lengthy account of his difficulties in securing employment, in spite of his professional and educational attainments, he said the following:

> I have used my name as Brian at work and realized that it worked for me better than my real name and the reason behind that I think is that everybody feels, the general population feels a closer relationship in terms of communication, who you are, and what we are than me having my real name. That name I always had to explain what it is, in terms of what I am, who I am. It would always come up.
> I: when did you become cognizant that you should or wanted to change your name?
> R: this was around the time I was looking for a job. I was looking for a job and I was having a really difficult time and then I realized that maybe that's one thing I could do, around 1993, I was leaving the oil business which was international so my name was irrelevant to them, but when I was moving into more domestic work I notice that this was something I may want to do. At first I was not getting a lot of callbacks and then that changed.
> I: are there, or do you know of any other professionals that do this?
> R: oh yeah, everybody, a lot of us do this. A lot of Iranians that I know, good number of them, they do this.
> I: what does changing the name accomplish?
> R: well, first of all you do not get trapped with a name like Mohammad, but then when you are a doctor, its like who cares that your name is Mohammad, he is a doctor, he has patients, they are all going to him, but if you are trying to find a job, that is very different.

Cyrus' story is one of racialization. His name is not associated with being an American, it does not sound western, his name signals to employers that he is not 'from here', and this

posed difficulties for him when seeking employment. A covering mechanism that he utilized as a result of being 'marked' was to change his name, a strategy that ultimately worked. Cyrus understands that he was being discriminated in the labor market without meeting his potential employers in person. Cyrus's name alone and the assumptions that it carries pose barriers to him gaining employment.

Nick tells an even more vivid account of racialization, which resulted in employment discrimination. He recounts the following story when asked whether his background has ever affected him getting a job or not getting a job:

> Well, a lot of the Americans to this day still think we are terrorists, and as soon as they find out we are from the Middle East, and our names are Hussein, or Mohammed, you are labeled a terrorist. Or if you are a Muslim you are a terrorist. The district manager that I worked for, and I shouldn't tell you this because I have a lawsuit currently. He was from Nebraska, he's a redneck, you can watch, before he even opens his mouth, you can tell he's a redneck. Anyway, he, um, there is a policy at a big company at any place you can't talk about politics, influence someone to vote, it's not like that. It was Election Day and he came to our store and he wanted to talk to the manager, and asked if I had time to talk. He sits down and asks me if I vote, and I said "yes I vote, I vote through the absentee ballot." "You didn't vote for Obama, did you?" I asked him "are you really asking me a question like this? Are you voting for Obama?" I said "I'm not going to tell you who I vote for; I will tell somebody else but not you, because we work together. You're my boss, for god's sakes." And he says, "well I'm not going to vote for that black terrorist." I said "black terrorist? How did you get that?" And he said "he is a Muslim, he's a terrorist and he's black." And I walked off the table, I got up, I went to my office, he got upset, he's my boss, and he came and he said, "why did you do that?" And I said "why did you say things like that to me? It offended me, I am Muslim, and I am Iranian, so by your words I am a terrorist. Did you just realize what you said to me?" That 15 minutes conversation kept us apart from each other, every time he would come into the store I would ignore him. His boss, the regional director, or whatever his name, he called me and said that "we want to transfer you out of this district." I said "I am not going anywhere. Either you fire me or I'm staying here." And they said, no. So, I quit because I did not want to work in a hostile environment.

Nick attributes his experiences of discrimination as stemming from how his Iranian and Middle Eastern background is perceived, an assumption that he is of the Muslim faith, and that those racial and religious identities are associated with acts of terrorism. Although he was not fired from his place of employment, his interactions with his

employer created an uncomfortable and hostile work environment for him, which led him to quit. The association between being Muslim and Iranian with terrorism stigmatized his identity and affected his ability to work. Although Nick does not directly argue that this situation destabilized belonging for him, he felt like an outsider and was treated as an 'other'. He was not treated equally, and was perceived as not being a full member of American society. Mitra, a second-generation woman living in northern California, describes how immigrants from different countries are currently received in the US. She said the following:

> I don't think it's terribly positive. I think it's more of a burden now than it used to be, and I think it's probably because the debates around immigration that have ensued as a result of large populations of brown and black people. So, I think the narrative of we're a nation of immigrants is not as comfortable as it once was. I also think the post 9-11 has also been a much more uneasy feeling around immigrants because basically Middle Easterners have not been terribly welcome since 1979, but especially since 9-11.
> I: How about Iranian immigrants? Is there are difference in how they are received?
> R: I don't think they're treated very nicely, I don't think it's a positive perception. Maybe certain high profile Iranians who spin the narrative about Iranian people or how the regime in Iran is, and I see people marketing that, certain public figures use that to their advantage. But as a whole the perception is not good.

Immigration and immigrants are conceived as posing a burden for the US; they are conceptualized as taxing the system. The narrative of the US being a 'nation of immigrants' is no longer viable as the number of non-white immigrants that have been coming to the US post-1965 is increasing. Furthermore, the events of 9/11 have marked and racialized immigrants from the Middle East and Muslim nations as 'others,' these groups are not in line with the image of 'typical' Americans. Hence these groups of people are not received well; rather they are viewed with suspicion. The images of immigrants coming from the Middle East and Iran contain negative assumptions and perceptions, which affects Iranians' abilities to fully belong.

Mitra raises a serious contradiction that delegitimizes the national narrative of the US as an immigrant friendly society that practices ethnic pluralism. She posits the US as a nation that is solely comfortable with its ‘nation of immigrants’ narrative for as long as it applies to white immigrants. As more non-white populations of immigrants continue to enter the US, America becomes increasingly uncomfortable with its narrative and national identity as a ‘land of immigrants’. Mitra critiques the feasibility of the national narrative of immigration as the racial demographic of immigrants entering the US is becoming more ‘brown and black’. Mitra asserts that immigrants receive different types of treatment depending on their racial/ethnic and religious backgrounds. In many ways Mitra highlights that complete belonging, which is inherent in the national narrative, is exclusively reserved for white European immigrants, and that, ultimately, belonging in the US is racialized.

Experiences with marginality and exclusion impact the extent to which the interviewed Iranians experience marked or unmarked belonging. Those who have had vivid experiences with discrimination in the labor market, educational and public institutions, and the public sphere feel that their identities are marked, and stigmatized. Being marked impedes their ability to experience both social mobility and belonging and delegitimizes the national narrative of immigration and belonging. Conversely, Iranians who perceive themselves as having unmarked identities did not provide explicit experiences with marginalization and discrimination, and hence their experiences mirror those that are promoted by the national narrative. They believe themselves as being able to or having acquired social mobility, and assume that having neutral, ethnic identities, which will allow them to blend in, belong, and become a part of US society.

The American National Narrative and Belonging

The narratives uncovered in the interviews reveal multiple themes: first, perceptions of belonging are connected to whether Iranians perceive their racial/ethnic background and culture as an asset, or neutral and harmless. This is ultimately an issue of whether they see and experience themselves as marked or unmarked, or put differently, whether they are racialized or not. Being unmarked propels belonging, one's ethnic culture is considered an asset, or at least something that does not hinder one's belonging. America's narrative of immigration, which posits the US as a land of immigrants, is considered to be welcoming to all people regardless of their racial and ethnic background. As described by Iranians in my sample, the US narrative promises all individuals who work hard to become accomplished. Each and every individual in the US is given the same opportunities to succeed and 'make it'. This country has open opportunity structure, and if individuals have failed to achieve the 'American Dream' it is due to their lack of effort, hard work, and ambition. When Iranians lived experiences mirror the national narrative, and their racial/ethnic identity is perceived as unmarked and not a prohibiting force, then belonging is legitimated.

Conversely, both the national narrative and belonging are complicated and delegitimized when the national narrative and its promises do not correspond with Iranians' lived experiences. When Iranians perceive a lack of opportunity and meritocracy their understanding of the national narrative changes. They theoretically describe the national narrative; yet have found it to be contradictory to their lived experiences. Furthermore, experiences of racial and religious discrimination in the public sphere, especially in the workplace, make them aware that the promises of upward

mobility are not meant for them. They understand that they're neither perceived nor treated as 'Americans'. These experiences of exclusion and discrimination not only delegitimize the national narrative but also add a racial/ethnic dimension to being an American, and to belonging. Being marked, or othered, undermines both the national narrative, which is supposed to be one of inclusion, and the ability to belong for Iranians. Experiences of discrimination create a sense of 'being without belonging' for Iranians, they understand that they can take part in the labor market and educational institutions, organizations and even cultural practices, but their experiences of being marginalized and discriminated creates an inability for them to identify with them.

An important and noteworthy dynamic are the generational differences among Iranians in the US. Overwhelmingly, second generation Iranians had an inability to describe the national narrative as easily as the first generation. Although when they were probed or presented with follow-up questions most would declare "oh, yes, well that, of course", at first many were unable to easily point out the narrative. The first generation on the other hand quickly and easily distinguished America's core values and spoke of the narrative with ease. My assessment is that the second generation has internalized the narrative to such a degree that it exists to them on a subconscious level. The second generation's treatment of the national narrative is that of fish in water, it is so much a part of their every day environment and life that they no longer see, or distinguish it. That is not to say that they are unmarked or do not experience racial/ethnic discrimination, because they've had those experiences, but when it comes to recalling and examining the national narrative it is not as easily available to them as it is the first generation. The first generation came to the US with a certain set of visions and expectations, their reasons for

migration were partly due to their outlooks toward America's open opportunity structures and their desire to achieve upward mobility and participate in the 'American Dream'. Second generation Iranians were born in the US, they do not place Iran as a point of reference or consider it their homeland compared to their parents. Hence, unlike the first-generation, the second-generation takes America's national narrative for granted. What is more, among the second generation there is correspondence between the US national narrative and their lived experience, which legitimizes belonging for them. Ultimately, the second generation experiences the US as a place that has allowed them to gain opportunities, lead a good quality of life, and become a part of US society.

Germany

Turning toward the German context, it is clear that Iranians in Germany perceive the German national narrative to be drastically different from the American one. The following sections highlight Iranians' understanding of Germany's national narrative and examine what these narratives demonstrate about Iranians' perceptions of living in Germany.

Articulations of Germany's National Narrative

Unlike the US national narrative, the German national narrative is grounded upon an idea of Germany as a refugee accepting society that is not welcoming toward immigrants. Some of the themes of the national narrative, as articulated by the respondents, include: Germany not being an immigrant receiving society, perpetual refugees, foreigner and stranger status, and strangers among Germans. It should be noted that there was not much diversity in how the interviewed Iranians in Germany described the German national narrative; the conceptualization of Germany as a refugee-accepting

nation was a common theme among the respondents. Heide, a first generation Iranian woman, says the following about it:

> first of all, Germany is not a land of immigration. It accepts refugee. It tried to set up an immigration aspect, to get people here to work here, to accept people here to work with high skills and high education like the US, but that law was not successful in Germany because those who were highly skilled felt it would be ludicrous to come to Germany, especially considering how difficult the language is. We will take our skills and education to an English speaking society and immigrate there. Germany is a refugee accepting society, and with its refugee program, they allow people to get residency here either because of their religion, ethnicity/race, and or due to political reasons/instabilities that places these peoples' lives in danger.

Germany is a nation that accepts refugees, not an immigrant-receiving nation. Heide emphasizes that one of the reasons that attribute to the lack of immigration into Germany is due to high-skilled immigrants' preference for English-speaking countries, particularly because of the difficulties of learning German. Most newcomers to Germany are not immigrants, but refugees who migrate out of necessity and lack of choice; most are escaping various forms of persecution.

Houshang, an immigrant generation man, also stresses that Germany is a refugee accepting state as opposed to an immigrant receiving one. When he was asked whether German immigration law makes it easy to migrate here, he argued that:

> No. Immigration does not exist here, unless there's a company that wants to hire you, the company would also require you to have a German passport, or a foreigner who has a work permit here. This person would have to be hired. That's one instance for migration; the second one would be through seeking asylum. And seeking asylum in article 20 says that you can be a refugee if in your own nation you are subject to racial, religious, or political discrimination persecution. It is very rare that some can come via issues regarding human rights, or they are sick with maybe cancer, and they need treatment that they can't find in their own nation.

Immigration is not a main principle of Germany's national narrative or identity. Germany does not accept immigrants it receives asylum seekers. Although this is not fully articulated in Houshang's narrative, Germany's constitutional mandate to accept asylum

seekers escaping prosecution is directly connected to its Fascist past[33]. Hence, the German state is forced, by law, to accept refugee seekers, it does not accept them voluntarily, per say.

When I asked respondents about what they found most difficult about living in Germany, some pointed toward the continued existence of anti-foreigner prejudice. Kimia, a first generation woman, said the following:

> I think something that anyone that comes here and says when they get here is that German's are cold. But Germans aren't cold. They are scared. They are scared because it's strange to them. Germany has never been an immigrant nation, and it became this way, but this has not resonated and settled in with them because we still have people who are alive from the WWII era, and I think this is something that I as a foreigner have to understand. If I am using the opportunities here, they are not obliged to accept me, and I think many Iranians forget. Germans have no obligations or responsibilities for us. We have no inheritance or part of this place; we can try to integrate ourselves if we want to.

There are a number of important things that are brought up by Kimia. Iranians, as well as other foreigners, are strangers among Germans. A dominant narrative theme among Iranians in this research is that foreigners will always be perceived as perpetual foreigners and strangers in Germany. Respondents perceive that foreigners also have no birthright or inheritance to Germany, this is not their homeland, and they are in some ways guests who are living there. Furthermore, no matter how long Iranians live in Germany, they are foreigners, and this is a fact that must be accepted. Kimia's assertion of always being a foreigner is directly connected to Germany's national narrative, which does not allow non-Germans to see themselves as part of the imagined German community. Anahita, a second-generation woman, also underscores the notion that immigrants are perpetual foreigners, and cannot become a part of German society. When

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[33] Germany's constitutional mandate to accept asylum seekers, because of Germany's experiences with Fascism, has been documented in the work of Brubaker, 1992; Green, 2000.

she was presented a scenario question of whether hard work would allow immigrants to become a part of German society she asserted:

> Hard work is not the way to get to belong in this society. I mean you cannot be a part of this society, you can find certain people who are friendly to you, but in my opinion never a part of this society, only German people are a part of this society.

Hard work does not result in inclusion, or becoming a part of German society. Foreigners can live in Germany, they can have relations with Germans, but becoming a part of German society is reserved for Germans only, it requires German ancestry. Anahita's narrative is in line with a popular understanding that Germany's national narrative and identity is not rooted in ethnic plurality, but rather on German ancestry, or blood. Being a part of German society is reserved for Germans only.

Similar to Anahita, Anna, a second generation immigrant woman, said the following about how Iranian immigrants are received in Germany:

> No matter what you do you're still not German. No foreigner or non-German will say that they are German. In the US, that's different, everyone calls themselves an American, you'll see a Chinese or Japanese person saying that they're an American. Someone may call themselves a German-Iranian, but it's only to be politically correct, it's not really a reality. You will never become a German.

Anna perceives that Iranian immigrants are received like other foreigners in Germany, and no matter what immigrants do; their foreigner identity will not diminish. Once again the US is cited as being a place where immigrants can see, place, and feel themselves as 'being Americans', regardless of their ancestry, unlike in Germany where' being German' requires German ancestry.

Pari, a first generation immigrant woman, further dissects this notion of Iranians and foreigners being perceived and treated as strangers in Germany. When asked how immigrants were received in Germany she argued:

> bad, Germans are fearful people, anything that is strange to them, or unknown they distance themselves from this. Only foreigners that they know like the French, English and Americans can do well here, also people from Sweden or Scandivanian countries. One reason is how people look, they are white like them, a black American would be treated differently than a white American, and also because their cultures match up with Germans. Anyone that's not a part of that group, they are suspicious of, and this bothers a lot of immigrants, this has bothered me a lot since I've been here. I've been in many terrible fights with Germans over this.

Germans are fearful of immigrants because they construct them as being strangers and foreigners. Foreigners are viewed with suspicion, which makes it difficult for them to receive a positive reception in Germany. Other groups, primarily of western background, are seen as having closer cultural proximities to Germans, which results in them enjoying a more positive reception from Germans. For Pari the exclusion that Iranians and other foreigners face is a result of both cultural and racial differences. Receiving a positive reception in Germany is racially rooted. This is explicit in Pari's account of the treatment that individuals from northern European receive, and the differences in the treatment of black Americans compared to white ones.

Given the above narratives one is left with an impression that Germany's national identity and imagined community does not consist of non-Germans. Iranians' lived experiences in Germany have shaped their understanding of themselves as perpetual foreigners and strangers. Iranians have no ancestral connection to Germany, which is something that the German state has historically mandated as a prerequisite to German-ness and German ethnic identity[34]. Given these dynamics, Iranians, along with other immigrants, will never be Germans. The German national narrative bases belonging on

[34] The work of Brubaker, 1992; Gilroy, 1992; Giroux, 1995; Bonilla-Silva, 2000; Green, 2000; Alba, 2005 and Muller, 2011 have addressed the importance of ethno-cultural nationalism in the construction of the German state, and its national identity. Blood-based conceptions of citizenship and belonging were crucial in the formation of the "Volk", the German people. These conceptions continue to influence Germany's national narrative, its national identity, and its ideal imaged community.

racial/ethnic categorization and culture. This conceptualization is explicit in Germany, leading Iranians to see themselves as perpetual refugees, foreigners, and strangers among Germans. What is more, as demonstrated by the respondents, length of stay in Germany does not necessarily rid one of being viewed as a foreigner or a stranger; the mark of being a foreigner is perceived as something permanent. Iranians, along with other immigrants, are able to utilize some of the opportunities available in Germany with an understanding that they are guests in Germany. It is clear that the German narrative of 'not being a nation of immigrants', which provides no room for immigrants to see themselves as part of the larger German national community, trickles into Iranians' perceptions of their place in Germany. Iranians' lived experiences in Germany have shown them that they are perpetual foreigners and strangers among Germans.

Interestingly, there were no significant differences in how immigrant and second Iranians assessed German society and belonging. Both generations perceived that Germany accepts refugees and asylum seekers by law, but that it is not an immigrant-receiving nation. They also perceive that the German national narrative shapes belonging and membership, and have experienced that belonging is not secured by their work ethic or by cultural accommodation. Rather, unqualified belonging is reserved for those with German ancestry.

A question that remains, though, is what type of foreigners are Iranians? Which category of immigrants do they belong to? In the following section I will delve into how being a 'good foreigner' is related to perceptions of belonging among Iranians. I will illustrate that belonging can only be approximated by Iranians when they are perceived as being 'good foreigners'. Being 'good foreigners' entails Iranians incorporating German

cultural norms and practices into their everyday lives as a way to signal they have successfully accommodated to German culture and society.

Marked Belonging in Germany

Being a 'Good Foreigner'

Throughout the interviews Iranians remarked upon immigrants being viewed and treated differently by Germans depending on how 'foreign' or 'non-German' they appeared and behaved. Most of these observations resulted from the encounters and conversations that Iranians had with Germans. For example, Lailea, a second-generation woman, offered this when asked about how Iranian are received in Germany:

> well, immigrants, I don't think are really wanted here in the first place, I doubt they like them very much. A German that is here, it depends on who the immigrant is, if the immigrant is liberal and open to German culture, it's easier for them to be accepted. But let's say, I know a girl who is Arabic and she wears a headscarf and also speak with an accent, and that is very difficult for Germans to accept that. It's like look how she is talking and she is living here in Germany. You can't speak like that in Germany, deep inside, I think that Germans still have some anti-foreigner feelings; they still have ill feelings toward foreigners.

Lailea argues that immigrants, or foreigners, are always marked. However, some foreigners are acceptable and others are unacceptable. To be an acceptable, or 'good foreigner', means to be liberal and to be open to German culture and values. Being an unacceptable, or 'bad foreigner', means to visibly show one's non-Christian, in this case Muslim, faith, to display visible non-German culture, and to be illiberal and traditional. Lailea's sentiment and analysis was further highlighted in Azad's narrative. When Azad, a second-generation man, was asked about how immigrants are received in Germany he argued:

> That is very difficult, because there is not the picture of the immigrant. There are people that adopt and try to blend into society, these ones are perceived as very helpful, and normally you don't have any problems in Germany. But there are also groups of

> immigrants that are, you know, for example the Turkish who very much like their culture and try to grasp on to their culture, they kind of build up this cultural wall. They look down on Germans because they believe that they know nothing of honor, it's like, for example, German women, western women for them they are like she had a boyfriend before me that's a problem, and she is not marriage material. This is ridiculous for me, because instead of taking the positive aspects of your background and trying to adopt here, they kind of separate each other from the whole society, which makes them foreigners here and back home, because they are not really Turkish there either.

For Azad, being a 'good foreigner' means to be open and accepting of German culture, not segregating oneself from Germans, and not clinging to one's ethnic culture to the point of it debilitating you from interacting with German society. Thus, adapting to and integrating German culture is one of the ways that foreigners can become acceptable foreigners. Conversely, living life as one did in one's homeland is a sure way to be perceived and treated as unacceptable and 'bad foreigners' by Germans. Anna, a second-generation woman, also expressed Azad's sentiment regarding cultural integration. When asked how immigrants were received in Germany Anna argued:

> I: In the same way they did my parents, from the beginning you have to try to integrate. You cannot be like I am Iranian and I will only associate with Iranians, and will only speak Farsi and will only cook Iranian food. You came here to Germany, which means that you're in a different country and you have to involve yourself. Go look around, and see how Germans are, try to get the best of both countries.
> I: so, if you come to Germany with that mindset, does that you are received better?
> R: yes, I think so.
> I: how about if you don't?
> R: That's when you will have problems with Germans, because then you appear as strange.

Clinging to one's ethnic culture is one of the ways by which Iranians, and other foreigners, keep themselves from being received well in Germany. If Iranians and other foreigners do not want to be seen and treated as strangers they must mix and mingle with Germans, and incorporate German cultural aspects into their every day lives. Being an acceptable, "good", foreigner means being able to internalize and enact German culture.

In a similar vein, Kimia, a first generation woman, further explains how being an acceptable foreigner is tied to how one accommodates to German culture. When asked how Iranians were received in Germany she said:

> I think that they are viewed positively. It's because Iranians are mostly integrated, they have mixed within the population, and they have found their place here. They have not formed ethnic enclaves and shut themselves off. We have our own celebrations, and celebrate them. But we have not confined ourselves to one area; we are spread out. We speak Farsi and interested in Iranian culture and affairs, yet we have integrated into German society.

Iranians are treated differently than other foreigners, because they aim to integrate themselves into German society by mixing and living among other Germans. Iranians do not construct separate communities and enclaves for themselves; they do not exhibit clannish behaviors. Germans take notice of these differences, and consequently view and treat Iranians in a more positive manner. According to Kimia one can retain one's own ethnic culture and traditions for as long as it does not pose barriers for integrating into German society. Foreigners must be able to strike a balance between how to practice one's own culture and yet still be open and welcoming toward German culture. Accordingly, becoming 'good foreigners' is about demonstrating that one can practice one's own culture and traditions without it becoming a problem for German people. Iranians compared to other foreigners have been able to find that balance and thus they are viewed in a positive light.

Tanya, a second-generation woman, demonstrated the most striking and detailed narrative of what being a 'good' and 'acceptable' foreigner entails. When she was asked how Iranians were received in Germany she stated:

> I think that it differs. First of all, Germans who are 50 and up, they remember from the Shah's era and how Iran had good relations with the West, they have good views of Iranians. Then most of Iranians that come to Germany, are not the religious ones, I don't

> ever see Iranians wearing headscarves, it's mostly Turks that wear them. We Iranians dress well, are pretty, and dressed very neat, come and go, and dance and laugh, and Germans like that about us. They are like Europeans, they are like that, they're not that Muslim, they eat pepperoni pizza as well. The Muslim thing is important in Germany.
> I: why do you think that?
> Because it's different, it's strange to them. People usually keep a distance from things that are strange, we are more similar to them, we drink our wine, smoke our cigarettes, dance, we wear makeup, they see us like them, and then we are a bit exotic. Turks sit there and say, "we won't eat pork, we won't drink, we won't smoke cigarettes, we won't dance to this, we pray and go to the mosque, we praise our own culture," and sometimes they don't even know one word of German. And German's feel like they are being used, like Turks make money here and use the benefits of this society and send it to Turkey and build houses there. It's like we'll sit here and not work, get social benefits, also work under the table, not paying taxes, these things cause problems for Germans.

Iranians have a more positive reception and image in Germany because they are willing to meld themselves to German social and cultural norms. Unlike Turks, Iranians are more likely to socialize and engage in social activities with Germans, and less likely to be religious, and these dynamics lessen the perception that they are strangers and foreigners. Tanya also asserts that the positive reputation of the Shah's regime, which had pro-western leanings, still resonates with Germans and adds to the perception of Iranians being 'modern'. In sum, Iranians do not practice their culture in an unacceptable manner they practice it invisibly. Although Iranians are still foreigners among Germans they occupy a 'good foreigner' classification. Furthermore, some Iranians perceived that aside from cultural accommodation, their higher educational attainments influenced how Germans perceive them, which helped facilitate their entry into the good foreigner category.

I provide a contrasting illustration to underscore how a visible non-German culture and identity complicates Iranians' lived experiences. This can be seen in Banu's narrative, a second-generation woman living in Hamburg. Our conversation regarding employment in Germany led her to say the following about veiling in public settings:

> I worked in the theater there, and in the theater only old men and women were there, and our team was women only, and I felt that in the theater no one showed up in the hijab, no one was there with a hijab. There are times when wearing a hijab makes things harder, and some places I'm more comfortable with the hijab. Places, or neighborhoods in Hamburg or Berlin that being in a hijab is better, places with lots of Turks and Arabs. Their views are much more religious and when I wear a hijab they bother me less. I'll be bothered in German settings, but for me its very normal for me, if someone were to walk with me and they'll notice the stares, they notice people, but its normal for me to be strange to people. I have a friend who is black and she always says this, that at least you can take the veil off, this is my skin, it cant be taken off.

It is important to note that Banu's narrative was rare in the sample, as she was the only respondent who perceived that her religious identity influenced how she is treated in German society. Yet, her narrative provides a detailed account of what the consequences of wearing a hijab in Germany presents. Banu argues that being identified as Muslim in German society marks and stigmatizes her identity. She also uses her friend, who is black, as an example to point out that it's not only visible religious difference that stand out and makes 'one strange' in Germany, but also racial/ethnic differences.

The German National Narrative and Marked Belonging

The German national narrative is one of not belonging or being able to become a part of German society. Germany's national identity posits itself as not being a 'nation of immigrants' but rather a nation that has a constitutional amendment to accept refugees. This national narrative was clearly demonstrated by Iranians in my interviews. They perceived and experienced Germany as being a nation that is not necessarily welcoming toward immigrants, or foreigners, but rather one that is required, by law, to accept them. This national context and environment does not present Iranians with the opportunity to see themselves as being able to become a part of the nation-state.

Iranians' sense and understanding of belonging and membership is informed by how they perceive the national context in which they live. The German nation-state,

based on its refugee laws, accepts Iranians and other foreigners. This type of acceptance is not necessarily met with a welcoming or positive reception for newcomers; rather there is a bemoaning sentiment among Germans and the German state toward foreigners. Hence, Iranians entering this environment are acutely aware that they are not necessarily wanted in Germany. These dynamics coupled with Iranians' lived experiences have shown them that their identities are marked as perpetual foreigners in Germany.

Given that their belonging is marked, something that they cannot escape, Iranians attempt to ameliorate their position by being 'good foreigners'. Being 'good' and 'acceptable' foreigners entails Iranians absorbing German culture into their everyday lives. Being 'culturally German' means to adhere to the norms, activities, and practices of German society. Iranians demonstrated that mixing and mingling with Germans, residing near them, engaging in German social activities, and not visibly practicing a non-Christian faith are ways by which one can gain acceptability within German society. Ultimately, belonging for Iranians means being able to effectively, and visibly, adapt and perform German culture.

Iranians also expressed that being a 'good foreigner' does not mean a complete erasure of ethnic culture and practices. As long as one's culture is not visible, and does not pose a barrier to becoming a 'good foreigner', then one can retain one's ethnic culture. In this sense, one's ethnic culture should be practiced in private and not be visible in the public realm. Although foreigners are always marked in Germany, due to their non-German ancestry, they can live more comfortable lives if they culturally accommodate and practice a non-visible ethnic culture.

Conversely, when Iranians display a visible non-German culture they are perceived and treated as ‘unacceptable’ or ‘bad foreigners’. One is an ‘unacceptable’ foreigner if one does not adhere to German cultural and social practices, and visibly shows one’s culture; veiling in public is considered unacceptable. ‘Bad foreigners’ are seen as incapable of adapting to German society. The treatment that such individuals receive is far worse than those who are ‘good foreigners’. Furthermore, such individuals are more likely to be seen as parasitic to German society, because they are seen as being a burden to the state rather than providing a benefit.

Iranians who perceive themselves and are deemed ‘good foreigners’ demonstrate conscious based belonging. They signal and enact belonging through embracing various German practices. They are conscious and aware that they are connecting themselves to German people and society by displaying and acting out a non-visible ethnic culture. By actively displaying their German-ness through ways of speech, dress, tradition, and adopting German norms they are combining both awareness and action. This is the sort of belonging that exists among Iranians in Germany. Those who are deemed ‘bad’ foreigners do not sense belonging in Germany, rather their state of existence consists of being in Germany.

Being and Belonging in the United States and Germany

The experiences of Iranians in the United States and Germany in regard to the national narrative and belonging differ in some important ways. The United States is conceptualized as a nation comprised of immigrants, and this imagery is at the core of its identity. Immigrants perceive that they can belong because immigration and immigrants are central to America’s national narrative. Furthermore, regardless of their national

origins, immigrants are promised and expect to have access to open opportunity structures for upward mobility if they work hard. The US is articulated to be a nation of meritocracy, and accomplishments are reaped by one's own individual efforts. This is also a place of self-invention and reinvention, a place where one has unlimited freedoms to become anything one desires. Furthermore, the US is the archetypical example of democracy in the world; it is a place of true equality. All people are given the same rights and freedoms to partake in the American Dream, regardless of racial, ethnic, and religious background. The US national narrative conforms to belonging; it is by definition one of belonging.

Given the context of the US and its narrative, it is not surprising that Iranians experience belonging[35] when they perceive themselves as being 'unmarked' Americans, and when they feel that they can attain opportunities and resources for upward mobility. Iranians understand being 'unmarked' to involve their ethnic culture being seen neutrally or as an asset. An 'unmarked' belonging is the ultimate goal of the national narrative, which espouses that all individuals will become 'Americans' regardless of their background. The promise of the national narrative and American belonging is fulfilled for Iranians when they gain access to opportunity structures and reap the rewards of their work regardless of their ethnic origins and culture.

Conversely, being marked and racialized in the US upsets both the promises of the national narrative, which is imagined as being ethnically plural, and Iranians' ability to belong. Experiences of discrimination play a vital role in producing perceptions of

[35] As mentioned previously, belonging entails an identification with one's surroundings that combines awareness and action (Miller, 2003; Levitt and Schiller, 2004).

‘being without belonging[36]’. These experiences of marginalization and exclusion pose barriers to Iranians’ abilities to acquire a good quality of life, and from identifying and relating to the national narrative and its promises of equal opportunity and inclusion.

In Germany the national narrative is one of not belonging. The narrative does not hinge upon immigrants or immigration for its national identity, rather it underscores that Germany is not a nation comprised of immigrants. Germany allows newcomers to enter Germany as refugees who are escaping persecution in their homeland. Unlike Iranians in the United States, Iranians in Germany cannot view themselves as a part of a larger national story and identity. Rather, they are refugees who were given asylum in Germany.

The absence of an extensive immigration history in Germany, unlike the US, is an important factor that distinguishes both nations. This history influences the ways in which Iranians view their position in Germany. Germany’s national narrative reserves unqualified, complete, belonging for those with German ancestry only. Iranians do not have the ability to belong in terms of their racial/ethnic lineage. They are marked, racialized, and perceived as perpetual foreigners. Iranians understand and have internalized this critical aspect of German national identity, and attempt to resolve this complication by becoming ‘good foreigners’. Iranians’ efforts at downplaying or making their ethnic culture invisible are attempts toward belonging, although they are cognizant that unqualified belonging is reserved for Germans only. Hence, taking on and incorporating German cultural norms and practices are methods through which Iranians signal to Germans and German society that they are ‘good’ and ‘acceptable’ foreigners

[36] Being refers to individuals having the ability to take part in institutions, organizations, experiences, cultural practices on various levels, yet not identify with them (Levitt and Schiller, 2004).

who want to be a part of German society. Belonging for Iranians in Germany is validated when they can effectively signal and show Germans that they have taken on German culture, when they can live among Germans and German society without being perceived as total strangers. Belonging is complicated for Iranians when they display a visible non-German culture, and hence perceived as being unwilling to adhere to German cultural norms and practices. Not accommodating to German cultural norms and practices places Iranians in the category of 'bad' and 'unacceptable' foreigners who occupy perpetual foreigner and stranger status in Germany. This status is marked by a sense of 'being' in Germany rather than belonging. Although both categories of Iranians, the acceptable and unacceptable foreigner, are marked and racialized, the former is seen as more cultural accommodating and liberal than the latter. Most Iranians have found that in order to lead more comfortable lives in Germany requires them to consciously take on German culture in their everyday lives in order to be accepted as foreigners and not be perceived as strangers.

Discussion

Iranians in both the United States and Germany position themselves vis-a`-vis the national narratives of their respective nations, and ideas surrounding being and belonging. The national narratives of each nation define Iranians' perceptions of each place, of being and belonging, and mediate their lived experiences. Iranians in the US, who see their ethnic culture as an asset, or as being neutral, perceive their belonging similarly as those who see themselves as 'good foreigners' in Germany. Furthermore, experiences of discrimination among Iranians in the US do not necessarily differ much from those who feel like perpetual foreigners and strangers in Germany. In both contexts

these individuals occupy a state of being without belonging, because they're identities are racialized, or marked, which causes them to experience marginality and exclusion. Interestingly, racialized immigrant reception in the US is perceived as contradicting the national narrative whereas in Germany it is seen as an integral aspect of the narrative. Iranians, even those who critique the narrative for being contradictory to their lived experiences, articulate that the US is a 'nation of immigrants' and a 'land of opportunity'. This popular and hegemonic understanding of America's national narrative is critical in influencing how being and belonging is perceived. Iranians in Germany do not have the ability to see themselves as being a part of a larger community of immigrants, because Germany's national narrative does not promote such an image among its populace. Thus, Iranians' inability to see themselves as part of German society is directly related to how they perceive and experience the German national context. However, they perceive that being 'good immigrants' allows them to come closer to belonging in Germany.

Lastly, examining generational differences in both contexts makes it clear that immigrant and second-generation Iranians in the US differ in how they perceive and understand the national narrative and belonging compared to those in Germany. In the US, I interviewed second generation Iranians who knew the national narrative subconsciously, yet some had difficulties articulating it. After some probing they voiced the narrative, but not as clearly as the first generation. Furthermore, second-generation Iranians were more adamant about belonging to the US compared to the first generation, and this was to be expected given that they were born in the US, their fluency in English, entrenchment in American cultural norms, and the absence of using Iran as a homeland reference. The Iranian second-generation in the US was also college educated, with a

handful of individuals with post-graduate degrees. I attribute the differences among the second-generation in the US to both the national narrative, which promises them that hard work will enable them to become middle-class Americans, and their actual ability to acquire an equally good or better quality of life than the immigrant generation. Children of immigrants, particularly those born here, argue that they experience belonging because they were born and raised in the US, they have gained educational mobility through American institutions, and they partake in American cultural festivities. These dynamics facilitate different types and degrees of belonging compared to the first generation. The larger belief that they can achieve upward mobility through America's open opportunity structures, if they work hard, is not lost upon second-generation Iranians, rather their lived experiences correspond with and legitimize the national narrative.

This sentiment does not exist in German, in Germany, interviewees mostly stressed, Iranians would perpetually be marked and classified as a foreigner regardless of generational status, citizenship, or length of residence. Second-generation Iranians did not express that being born in Germany, being citizens of Germany, or having spent their entire lives there greatly influenced the perceptions that Germans had of them. Some even commented that Germans viewed non-German citizens as 'plastic Deutsch', meaning they are plastic Germans, not real Germans. Furthermore, both generations in Germany vividly narrated the national narrative; there were no distinct differences between the two generations in this regard. Declarations of belonging did not significantly differ between the two generations. Both immigrant and second generation Iranians saw themselves, and perceived that others saw them, as foreigners in Germany. This is directly connected to Germany's narrative of 'not being a nation of immigrants',

which bases national belonging on German ancestry, or blood. Within this context, immigrants, including Iranians, are not given the ability to see themselves as part of the German imagined community. Although, second-generation Iranians spoke German with more fluency than their parents, most were college-educated in Germany, and knew the 'ways' of German society better, yet they did not perceive that these factors made them German, or that they were no longer viewed as foreigners. Rather, second generation Iranians, similar to the immigrant generation, felt that their foreigner identity impeded their ability to attain greater educational and work opportunities. Many second-generation Iranians have received educational credentials, either via the university or vocational training, yet many continue to experience blocked mobility in the labor market. These experiences do not help produce experiences of belonging; rather, they facilitate a sense of being without belonging. Ultimately, both immigrant and second generation Iranians perceive that Germany's anti-foreigner environment mitigates their ability to have a good quality of life and come close to belonging.

In regards to the second-generation, it should be noted that an institutional approach[37], as seen in the scholarship of Crul & Doomerik (2003) and Worbs (2003), has the potential to further address differences among the Iranian second-generation in different western nations. Specifically, an exploration of the variations within the US and Germany's educational system and the ways in which transitions into the labor market take place may give us more insight into the mobility patterns of second-generation Iranians. It is important for future research on the experiences of second-generation Iranians to further examine how the state and its institutions work to facilitate or curb

[37] The work of Crul and Doomerik (2003) and Worbs (2003) both speak to how institutional context is significant in shaping mobility of second-generation migrants of foreign background in European countries.

mobility patterns of the second-generation, which powerfully influence quality of life and perceptions and experiences of belonging and membership.

What is more, reflecting on past research on Iranians in the US and Europe, the interviewed Iranians of this study, similar to the findings of Bozorgmehr (2000, 2007), have attained high educational and professional backgrounds, which has enabled a significant portion of the Iranian community in the western nations to become middle-class. However, these attainments do not insulate them from experiencing of discrimination and marginality. Similar to findings of Chaichain (1997), Hosseini-Kaladjahi (1997), Khosravi (1999), this research also demonstrates that Iranians experience discrimination in the labor market in both national contexts, which causes them to experience disruptions to belonging and membership. Yet, what remain unexamined in the current scholarship about Iranians are more in-depth investigations about how they experience belonging and membership in the West. My research adds an important aspect to scholarship about Iranians in western nations, mainly; we have more insight into how national narratives inform Iranians' definitions, expectations, and assessments of belonging and membership. This research adds the comparative dimension of belonging and membership by examining evaluations of belonging in two western nations where the national narratives are different. Ultimately, Iranians' understanding of the national narratives of the US and Germany shapes their perceptions and expectations of social mobility and belonging, and influences their assessments and experiences of being and belonging in the US and Germany. Another important finding is that there are generational differences in regards to descriptions and assessments of the national narrative and belonging among second-generation Iranians in US and Germany.

Turning toward the next chapter, I will examine how global political dynamics surrounding Iran impact Iranians' lives in the US and Germany.

CHAPTER SIX:
GLOBAL POLTICS

For the last 34 years, geo-political relations between the Iranian and US regime have affected the lives of Iranians in western nations. The 1979 Iranian Revolution, the hostage crisis, and ongoing conflicts regarding Iran's uranium enrichment program have all helped shape the current political relationship between Iran and western nations, especially the US. What is more, the heavy sanctions that have been imposed on Iran by the UN Security Council since 2010 in relation to Iran's uranium enrichment program have helped to further characterize Iran as a defiant nation that is unwilling to abide by the international community's rules. In the previous chapter, I presented data to demonstrate that the national narratives of the US and Germany influence Iranians' perceptions, expectations, and experiences of being and belonging. Specifically, I found that Iranians' abilities to perceive and experience belonging in both nations were significantly influenced by the extent to which had access to unmarked ethnic identities, were perceived as being 'good foreigners', whether they had, or had not, experienced discrimination or marginality, and the degree to which US and Germany's national narrative facilitated or mitigated their ability to see themselves as members of their host society.

In this chapter, I examine how global politics surrounding Iran impact Iranians lives in the West. Specifically, I address the ways in which global politics surrounding Iran stigmatizes and politicizes Iranians' identities and negatively impacts their ability to belong in the United States and Germany. In what follows I will describe how Iranians in the US and Germany perceive Iran's global standing. Next I examine Iranians'

perceptions of how Iran's reputation influences their experiences and how changes to Iran's reputation will impact their lives. My data show that in both the US and Germany Iranians describe Iran's reputation in the West as hostile, defiant, and associated with terrorism. Iranians believe that they are marginalized in both the United States and Germany because they are associated with the Iranian regime. Marginalization means that they are racially profiled, discriminated against and forced to either defend or hide their Iranian identity. Moreover, their view that their experiences are directly connected to Iran's global positioning vis-à-vis western nations is demonstrated in their statements about how their lives as immigrants would change if Iran's relationship to the West were to change. Iranians in both nations hypothesized that an improved Iranian standing would help facilitate belonging and membership. What is more, the ways in which Iranians approximate belonging is dependent on the national narratives of their country of settlement.

Iran's Global Political Reputation

In the following section I will highlight how Iranians articulate Iran's reputation in the West. Respondents commonly argued that the media played a key role in creating a set of common-sense assumptions about Iran's global politics. Iranians perceive that the dominant discourse surrounding Iran has led Americans and Germans to view Iran as a nation that is dangerous, hostile, defiant, and a home to terrorists. Although some argued that the uprisings of the Green Movement[38] during the summer of 2009 shifted public

[38] The Green Movement was a movement that arose out of the 2009 presidential elections in which Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won the elections, but some Iranians claimed his win was fraudulent. Mass demonstrations throughout Iran, most notably Tehran, demanded that Ahmadinejad step down as president. The Green Movement sparked an array of solidarity rallies throughout the US and Europe as well, which involved many Iranians demonstrating in support of Iranians living in Iran. At the time of the interviews in 2010 and 2011, the Green Movement was still going strong. Since then it has significantly died down with

discourse about Iran, others viewed Iran's uranium enrichment program and its position in Mid-East politics as more central in shaping Iran's global reputation. I will begin the following section by illustrating how Iran's reputation is described in the US and Germany.

Iranians described the dominant discourse surrounding Iran to be comprised of anti-West sentiments, religious fundamentalism, and a pursuit of nuclear weapons. The respondents repeatedly narrated these indicators as the content of Iran's reputation in the West. Nick, a first-generation immigrant man living in northern California, said the following about Iran's reputation:

> It's really bad, I think they think the regime is the number one terrorist in the whole world, they think they're going to attack other countries as soon as they get the nuclear function going. So again, because many Americans are not educated about different cultures, and as soon as they see things in the news, I mean every time Obama has a speech there is something about Iran. So yeah, it's really bad. It's probably zero right now as far as reputation goes.

For Nick, Iran is constructed as a leading terrorist nation that is waiting to attack other nations with nuclear weapons. Furthermore, Iran is seldom absent from media discussions and the speeches of American politicians. Similar to other respondents, Nick argued that the public was generally misinformed in regards to the political situation surrounding Iran. Cyrus, a first generation immigrant man living in southern California, said the following about Iran's reputation:

> Iran in the US is seen as completely out of whack, and the people have no information, a lack of information. They portray an image that is absurd and untruthful, they portray Iran as an aggressor. I was talking to this guy who said that Iran attacked Iraq. And I said when did Iran attack Iraq? Iran did not attack any country, they attacked us, and Iran was attacked. I also told my colleague, you know if a situation of war goes on, the chance that Israel will be attacking any country is way greater than Iran attacking any country. That is the kind of message that is missed, and people are not getting it.

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the elections of a new president, Rouhani, who many view as a reformist, rather than a conservative hard-liner.

Cyrus argues that the dominant image of Iran is that of a dangerous nation that desires to cause harm to others. Similar to Nick, Cyrus describes the people, meaning Americans, as misinformed and lacking insight in regards to Iran-US politics. Furthermore, Cyrus believes that Israel poses a far greater threat to the global community than Iran.

Hormuz, a first generation immigrant man living in Hamburg, offers us an image of Iran's reputation before and after the revolution. He said the following about Iran's reputation:

> All of it is negative; they'll show the prayer ceremonies in Iran, they'll show the slogans of "death to the US", "death to Israel." And Germans think that all of Iranians are like this, they judge Iranians based on that. Back in the Shah's era, Iran's politics were very much respected and looked upon highly, and this differs highly from now. Iran's regime is seen as backward.

Hormuz argues that Iran reputation among German's is that of a backward country full of religious zealots who hate both America and Israel. Unlike the Shah's era when western nations respected Iran and its politics, Iran's politics are not regarded highly. For Hormuz, Iranians in Germany are ultimately judged by the rhetoric and actions of the Iranian regime.

Similarly, Anahita, a second-generation immigrant woman living in Hamburg, also describes Iran's reputation before and after the revolution. When she was asked about Iran's reputation she explained:

> There are two. Either they'll say that those days when Iran was so modern, women wore miniskirts; there were bars and discos there. Now, everyone wears hijabs, and you have to wear a burka, only your eyes can show, and I have to explain that it's not like that. The stereotypes that they constructed are all the same: the Burka, the Hijab, can't drink liquor, no whiskey; men can have four wives, and the women they all have to stay virgins until they're married.

Anahita feels associated with the stereotypes of Iranians being religiously conservative and traditional, and is forced to address peoples' misguided assumptions about Iran.

Being associated with the negative imagery and stigma of the Iranian regime was a clear issue among respondents in both contexts. Houshang, a first generation immigrant man living in Hamburg, said the following about Iran's reputation:

> Bad things are said about Iran. Their quest for atomic weapons is constantly being advertised, and this is also because Iran consistently says that it wants to pursue nuclear weapons. Their role in the region, and the budget that they have set aside for Palestine, Lebanon, and for other Islamic countries. And that they want to do radical things and engage in radical politics. There are even discussions that Iran has relations with the Taliban, and when these things are said in the media, this creates people to think negatively about Iran. They start thinking, aha, Ahmadinejad, Khamenie, and Khomeini; these people are all against the world. This has negative effects because this is how Iran and its people are then regarded, based on these connotations.

For Houshang, the media presents Iran as a country that is acquiring atomic weapons, supporting other Muslim nations, engaging in radical politics, backing terrorism, and continuing Khomeini-type politics[39]. Similar to Hormuz, Houshang also believes that how Iranians are regarded and treated is contingent upon Iran's global positioning; ultimately, the world sees no difference between the Iranian regime and those of Iranian ancestry.

It is noteworthy that Iranians' perceptions of Iran's reputation were not completely uniform. Some Iranians felt that Iranians' political activities in regards to the Green Movement[40] had shifted public opinion and discourse about Iran, while others felt that Iran's reputation in the world was positive. Gandom, a first generation immigrant

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[39] Khomeini-type politics is largely about a continuation of a theocratic government that is highly critical of US and western involvement in the region, and in Iranian national and political affairs.

[40] A total of five individuals asserted that the Green Movement had been effective in changing public opinions about Iranians living in Iran and abroad.

woman living in Hamburg, said the following about Iran's reputation before and after the Green Movement:

> There are two images, one before the Green Movement, and one after. Before the elections, the minute you said you were Iranian they would say Ahmadinejad, atomic bombs and things like that. Iran is not Ahmadinejad and the US is not Bush. But after the elections, German society changed their perceptions toward Iranian society and the young people there, they saw them as educated and smart, peaceful people who are protesting in Germany on behalf of democracy in Iran. And seeing these young educated Iranians in Germany speaking to the media and articulating themselves in such a way really changed their views toward Iranians. They finally realized that the Iranian people don't deserve that regime, that they don't want that regime.

For Gandom, Iranians are no longer seen in a one-dimensional way. The mobilizations after the elections, within and outside of Iran, have created alternative images of Iranians and proven to Germans that the Iranian people and the regime are not the same, and that Iranians want and are capable of embracing a democratic government.

The significance of the Green Movement in changing public discourse about Iran was also brought up by Araxi, a second generation Iranian living in northern California. She said the following about Iran's reputation in the world:

> I think... I don't know. Because I feel like after the whole Green Movement recently, people kind of realized, oh, they don't all walk down the street carrying signs saying death to America, you know? There's like millions of people there that like, are not happy with the government and they want a change. And I think that that was really important for people to see. Between the actual government and the people. But I just feel like everything in the news is so negative about Iran and it's always like, Iran is building nuclear weapons or Iran won't.... the president denied the holocaust. Just like, constantly negative images of Iran.

Araxi feels uncertain about whether the Green Movement has helped erase or fully repair Iran's global political reputation, however she believes it has influenced how Americans view Iranians. Similar to Gandom, Araxi feels that the Green Movement has helped produce alternative images and messages about Iranians. Yet, in spite of the Green Movement, media coverage about Iran continues to be mostly negative.

Interestingly, not all Iranians described Iran's reputation in negative terms. Some Iranians did not engage in the common-sense discourse surrounding Iran. Shahin, a first-generation immigrant man living in Hamburg, offered an alternative image of Iran:

> It is good; Iran's foreign policy is good. It feels good when Iran talks back to the West, because they bossed us around for years. It was not like years ago when they came occupied and took things from us. I remember years ago, when we had to do military service and I used to be a pilot and when an American pilot would beat me up until I stood down because I could not do what he wanted me to do. Now, these things no longer exist. They are just trying to pressure us. For example, all this talk about nuclear weapons, they told the world that they did not have weapons and did not plan to use them. Iran is a powerful nation, and it is independent. We are not Iraq or Afghanistan, if the West could they would have already occupied us, but they cannot.

Rather than engaging with hegemonic discourse surrounding Iran, Shahin shares his personal views and thoughts about Iran's global political position. From his point of view the negative discourse surrounding Iran is mostly propaganda aimed at pressuring Iran to give up its power in the region. Furthermore, unlike its neighbors, Iran is described as being too powerful to be attacked or occupied by outside powers.

Bez, a first generation immigrant man living in southern California, thoughtfully describes the lack of objectivity in how the media constructs Iran's image. He said the following about Iran's reputation:

> Shitty. Iran is seen as snotty little kid who doesn't listen, and that won't get in line. It's funny because you see these headlines and it's never really objective. You can have two headlines, Iran has issues with the current UN inspections teams and halts inspections until another team is put together, or you can say Iran remains defiant. You know each headline is different. If you're living in Middle America, which headline are you more likely to believe? Well, that's how most countries see Iran. Then you have these other countries, who see Iran as cool, sometimes you respect the guy that stands up. I can see how Palestinians, North Koreans, some African nations, Venezuela look at Iran with some admiration, at least Ahmadinejad is standing up to the Americans. And I think secretly some Iranians, I mean I hate that regime and what's done to the Iranian people, but if somebody comes to me and especially if they're a hardcore Republican, patriotic American and they have their blinders on and they criticize the Iranian regime, I feel like I have to stand up for some things. And I'll have to bring up some nuclear facts, and how this isn't just about Iran being dangerous. It's about certain countries and having that power around the world and not letting some countries into that group.

For Bez, Iran's reputation depends on the media outlet and the viewership. Western media generally position Iran as being defiant, as committed to developing a nuclear program, and as a nation that will not adhere to the guidelines of the international community when those guidelines are not in the nation's interests. However, countries that have precarious political relations with the US admire Iranian politics because they see it as standing up to the West. Similar to Shahin, Bez describes Iran as asserting its agency and power in the region, rather than posing a danger to other nations. Furthermore, Bez believes that western nations have targeted Iran and do not want to admit the regime into their political community, because of Iran's insistence on its right to enrich uranium.

The above descriptions of Iran's reputation in the world are largely about Iran being a rogue state that remains defiant about its uranium enrichment program, which western nations assume will lead Iran to develop nuclear weapons. Iranians also describe western media as promoting a mainly negative image of Iran leaving little room for alternative opinions. Some Iranians believed that the Green Movement, and the media coverage of it, has helped repair Iran's standing by showing westerners that Iranians are not a homogenous group that is overly religious, but that Iranians are educated and capable of embracing democratic values.

Still, overwhelmingly, Iranians describe Iran's reputation in the West as hostile, dangerous, and defiant with regard to the interests of western nations and the international community. They argue that the media often ties the Iranian regime to terrorist activities, and as a threat to the larger Middle East region, especially in regard to Israel. Moreover, Iranians feel that they are associated with, and stigmatized by, the

mostly negative discourse surrounding Iran. These accounts did not differ in the US and Germany, Iranians in both nations described Iran's reputation in similar ways that speak to how Iran is positioned in the West and in the world. The question remains of how these assessments of Iran's reputation impact Iranians' lived experiences and their ability to belong in the US and Germany? Is belonging disrupted for Iranians as a result of Iran's mostly negative political position in the world? In the following section I will examine how Iranians perceive the impact of Iran's global standing baring on their lives.

Global Politics Shape Experiences

Iranians argued that their lives were influenced by Iran's unfavorable reputation in the following ways: they were forced to defend and explain their identities, they experienced shame and discomfort, and they experienced marginality and exclusion. Ultimately these experiences disrupted Iranians' ability to feel that they belonged in and were members of their country of settlement.

Explaining, Defending, Hiding Identity

Being marginalized or excluded commonly led Iranians to either hide or defend their ancestry or identity. Iranians in both the US and Germany frequently felt defensive about their national origins and ancestry. Mitra, a second-generation woman living in northern California, said the following about how Iran's reputation impacts her life

> It makes me a bit defensive about all things Iranian. It makes me defensive about anything Muslim. It makes me want to correct people, it makes me want to challenge people, and it also makes me want educate people. Teach them that it's much more complicated.

Mitra feels compelled to explain, teach, and defend her Iranian identity and culture as a result of the negative discourse surrounding it. She feels that the Iranian political situation is much more complicated and nuanced than how it is generally portrayed by the media.

Kimia, a first generation immigrant woman living in Hamburg, provides a description of how Iran's reputation affects her life in Germany and Iranians' lives in the US. She states:

> I think that it leaves a negative effect on me. You have to answer a lot of questions and people are suspicious. I think that there is a reason for this; the media portrayals serve a purpose. I think this affects Iranians in the US even more, because people there are so misinformed, uneducated about these things. I'm sorry, but that's the reality, the alternative media that's available here is very different.

Similar to Mitra, Kimia also described the role of the media in portraying a negative image of Iran. Kimia feels that she is associated with the negative media depictions, and has to constantly answer questions about her background. Kimia believes that the dominant discourse surrounding Iran serves a purpose; it pushes a certain political agenda. Furthermore, Kimia believes that Iranians in the US are more impacted by this negative discourse because of America's media monopoly and lack of alternative media.

Pari, a first generation immigrant woman in living in Hamburg, shared the following about how Iran's reputation affects her life:

> See, the moment you say Iranian, I don't like anyone asking me where I'm from, the moment you tell someone you're from Iran, you fall into this defensive stance. And you're just not in the mood to have to constantly defend your identity, also having to explain.

Similar to Mitra and Kimia's assertions about defending their identities, Pari argues that she is uncomfortable with revealing her ancestry because of the reactions and questions it elicits. Pari feels defensive about her background, and does not what to be probed and questioned about it.

Pari's experiences of discomfort in revealing her ancestry and background are not uncommon among Iranians in this study. Bez, who lives in the US, describes how younger family members are affected by Iran's reputation:

> I think younger people are way more affected by this, I have a cousin who is a bit younger than me, in his early 30's, whose middle name is Mohammad. He disguises his name and is very sensitive about anyone finding out about his name, because he does not want to be associated with being Middle Eastern and Muslim.

Bez describes his cousin as being uncomfortable with his name because it reveals his background; his fear of being 'exposed' signals the stigma of having Iranian, Middle Eastern, or Muslim identity in the US. According the Bez, if his cousin can hide his background he can avoid marginalization and discrimination.

Marginalization and Exclusion

Iranians cited experiences with exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination as a result of being associated with Iran's politically stigmatized reputation. These narrations were most vivid among Iranians living in the US, and were informed by an environment that was perceived to be prejudicial toward Iranians. In the US, respondents often repeated the centrality of Iran's global political position in shaping their ability to secure resources, climb the mobility ladder, and attain a good quality of life in the US. Cyrus said the following about how global politics surrounding Iran influence his life:

> Well, it creates an environment that is negative and a negative environment is never good. A negative environment creates lack of resources, networking ability, and you have to go outside the mainstream and find somewhere of connecting and developing businesses. It does affects people's lives big time, and you have to do other things.

Cyrus sees Iranians, like himself, inhabiting a negative environment in the US that results from Iran's international reputation. This environment makes Iranians more prone to being marginalized and to losing important resources. Consequently, Iranians are forced

to find alternate professions, and learn different ways to network and run their businesses. For Cyrus, Iranians' quality of life and mobility patterns are impacted by experiences of marginality and exclusion.

The inability to secure resources, particularly employment opportunities, was also commonly addressed in Iranians' responses. Maryam, a first generation immigrant woman living in southern California, said the following about how Iran's reputation is affecting the lives of Iranians:

> I think that entering the job market may be difficult or a challenge. To continue education in some ways, let's say a person is Iranian or Afghani and the other person is American, naturally the American will be chosen. Even though the Iranian is more qualified. So, it's not without effect, because the mind state of people is filled with the media, whether you want it or not, the media and propaganda is in people's heads and it affects various aspects of one's lives, work, education, even living in an environment where everyone is American may make one uncomfortable.

Maryam argues that the media acts as a propaganda machine, disseminating negative images surrounding Iran, and the Middle East. Iranians are associated with this imagery and, ultimately, profiled and discriminated because of it. Maryam believes that even Iranians who are qualified experience exclusion and discrimination in the labor market, at educational institutions, and even in their day-to-day lives. Ultimately, Iranians' stigmatized background and identity causes them to experience exclusion and marginalization, which impacts their quality of life.

The effects of a hostile and negative environment in regards to Iranians' ability to secure resources was also described by Tony, a first generation immigrant man living in northern California. Tony stated the following about information technology and the employment of Iranian engineers:

> There are lots, a lot of people of Chinese background, a lot of Vietnamese, but not that many Iranians. I think Iranians are to some degree being watched, they are considered to

> be an issue, and this affects the job situation for Iranians. They're involved with technology, and any kind of technology is knowledge. They don't want that knowledge to be given to Iranians, they'd rather give it to the Chinese and not Iranians, and so that's an issue here. So, I don't see many Iranians there. The challenge for Iranians is to not be limited. So Iranians being the people that they are, they are very proud, and really want to do their own thing, they either become doctors so that they can be in control of their own practice, so that they don't have a boss. Or they become a lawyer, or they have their own business. It's being independent, because the society is very, very hostile toward Iranians, it's a very hostile situation here, and this is not the time for Iranians to really grow with the government.

Tony's professional experiences in the US labor market have shown him that Iranians are passed up and not hired in some fields because of the cloud of suspicion surrounding their national origin. Although, he does not explicitly mention it, Tony alludes to the idea that Iranians are not perceived as loyal to the US but as capable of leaking sensitive information to the Iranian regime. Moreover, he argues that employers in certain American industries are hostile toward Iranians, which forces them to establish independent, private businesses in order to secure a good quality of life. Ultimately, Tony believes that Iranians encounter anti-Iranian prejudice in the US, which causes them to experience marginality and exclusion in the labor market which influences their quality of life and therein their belonging and membership in American society.

Interestingly, self-employment does not fully insulate Iranians from experiencing marginality. Paul, a second-generation man living in northern California, said the following about how the negative connotations of being Iranian affected his workplace interactions:

> You know what? I should say this. Up until I stopped working, I never admitted to that part of my heritage. Because there were usually problems associated with that. For example, at my business, we were working on someone's scooter. I had hired my nephew to help me for a summer. For some reason, my nephew brought up our heritage and the customer heard, and I used to have a really good rapport with this man, but I could tell in his face that it was, again, fear and loathing, and he never returned.

For Paul, being recognized as an Iranian has affected his livelihood. Paul hides his ancestry in the US because he feels that Iranians are both hated and feared in the US. Although Paul was self-employed, he was never comfortable with revealing his ancestry, because he recognized it would create problems for him, which it eventually did. Ultimately, in light of his experiences with American patrons, Paul learned that hiding his identity was important if he wanted to retain, at least some, of his customers.

What is striking about Iranians' experiences with marginality and discrimination with regard to global politics is that it shows itself differently among those living in the US compared to those in Germany. For Iranians in the US, contentious political relations between the US and Iran make it more difficult for them to acquire mobility, particularly in the labor market, and experience belonging. In Germany, Iranians do not perceive the global politics surrounding Iran as causing them to experience exclusion in the same ways, especially with regard to occupational mobility. Rather, the German national context and the national narrative is perceived as more immediately shaping Iranians' ability to acquire resources, quality of life, and perceive belonging.

Interestingly, when examining Iranians' descriptions of how their lives have been influenced by Iran's unfavorable global reputation, we see numerous commonalities among Iranians' lived experiences in both contexts. The dominant negative discourse surrounding Iran marginalizes and excludes Iranians, forcing them to defend or hide their identities in both the US and Germany. Iranians also feel ashamed and have lost pride with regard to their ancestry, culture, and homeland. What is more, some Iranians employ covering mechanisms, like hiding their identities, in order to escape marginalization and exclusion. Ultimately, in the US, marginality leads Iranians to feel that their labor market

opportunities and prospects for social class mobility are limited. In Germany, their sense of stigmatized membership is increased; their sense of isolation and exclusion from German society, heightened. Yet, in both nations their sense of belonging is inhibited by experiences of marginality and exclusion, because of the political stigma that is associated with Iran.

The significance of Iran's global position vis-à-vis western nations for Iranians in the West is further highlighted by the views of the respondents about the impact a positive image of Iran would have on their lives. Specifically, how would their lives change if they did not live with the stigmas created by Iran's global politics? The following section will examine these dynamics.

What If It Changed?

Iranians in the US and Germany shared common expectations of how their lives would be different if they did not live with the stigmas created by Iran's global politics. However, their outlooks also varied in some important ways[41]. In the US, Iranians' narratives were mostly about being able to acquire a neutral ethnic identity and be more comfortable, and not experience racial profiling, exclusion, and marginalization once global politics surrounding Iran became more positive. These themes of belonging are directly linked to the US national narrative, which states that belonging in the US is not determined by racial/ethnic background or national origins. Rather, belonging is more centrally shaped by hard work, success, social class mobility, and an internalization of US political ideals and values. In Germany, Iranians hypothesized that they would be more accepted throughout German society, and live in comfort if Iran's standing

[41] The question asked: "If the reputation of Iran were to change, would that have an impact on your life?"

improved. Specifically, an increased sense of comfort and acceptance would allow Iranians to be seen as 'good immigrants', and help them establish belonging in Germany. Belonging, according to the German national narrative, is secured by being a part of the 'Volk', the German people. Iranians cannot become German, yet they can be 'good immigrants' and come close to belonging by culturally accommodating and integrating into German society. In both contexts, Iranians hypothesize in ways that are consistent with the national narratives of the country of settlement that they would attain belonging if the stigma associated with Iran disappears.

The United States

Iranians in the US had various assumptions of how their lives would change if Iran's standing in the West improved. Particularly, they believed that they would no longer experience discrimination and marginality, they would not need to hide their ancestry, and they would be more comfortable and happy absent the stigma created by Iran's global politics. In the following section I will present Iranians' narrations of how they perceive their lives changing once Iran's reputation changed. Specifically, I will show that the interviewed Iranians used indicators, such as comfort, happiness, pride, lack of marginality and stigma, and neutral ethnic identity, to construct their understanding of how they will experience belonging with a change in Iran's reputation.

Comfort, Happiness, and Pride

Iranians in the US often repeated the importance of having comfort, happiness, and pride in their lives. Maryam described how her life would be impacted if Iran's reputation changed:

> I think that one would be more comfortable; one would feel more comfort in society. When you enter somewhere, maybe if I wanted to live somewhere else, I would be more comfortable if the reputation of Iran was better. I am an Iranian; then I can more

> comfortably introduce myself as an Iranian. Of course it would leave a positive influence, 100%.

For Maryam, Iranians would live in comfort, be perceived more positively, and be able to reveal their identities if Iran's standing improved. Once Iranians' identities are no longer stigmatized by Iran's reputation, they will lead more comfortable lives and belong. Furthermore, Maryam sees Iranians' quality of life improving once Iran's reputation in the world becomes progressively better.

Similar to Maryam, RC, a first generation immigrant woman, also cited that she would acquire more comfort and pride if Iran's reputation changed. She shared the following:

> I think I would be happier, don't you think? All of us would be happier if we had a good reputation. I think it would bring us more prestige I think a lot of people would be more comfortable saying their Iranians. I mean the whole concept of Persian and Iranian came from the fact that Iranians here were not comfortable saying they're Iranian. They said Persian so people think about Persian carpets and the Persian Empire and confuse that with Iran.

RC believes that Iran's negative image in the world creates a lack of prestige and comfort for Iranians. RC also perceives that Iranians call themselves Persian as a way to disassociate with Iran. For RC, Iranians cannot fully be happy and proud because of their stigmatized homeland. The discomfort around being identified as Iranian was also repeated by Jasmine, a second-generation immigrant woman living in southern California. When I asked about how a changed Iranian reputation would impact her life she stated the following:

> Yes, I think it would be seen more in a positive way, there would be more pride and people would be more proud. Even now you see people who never fully got to work through it, and reject parts of themselves being Iranian. And they're in their thirties or late twenties and are still trying to deal with these things. They are still rejecting their Iranian side. My boyfriend is a little bit like that. "I don't like Persian music", and I tell him "you haven't given it a chance." He rejects a part of himself, and I asked him if he could be any other race what would you be, he said I guess Iranian, but there's still this

> stigma attached to it. He doesn't have that many Iranian friends, but I'm his first Iranian girlfriend.

Jasmine perceives that Iranians, like her boyfriend, may become more comfortable with accepting and revealing their Iranian identity once discussions surrounding Iran improve. She also believes that Iranians would be generally more proud of their homeland, and willing to engage with their culture if there was no stigma attached to it. Iranians perceive their ability to be comfortable with, as well as proud of their identities and national origins, as being centrally linked to the removal of the marginality and stigma that is externally imposed on their identities.

No Stigma

Iranians hypothesized than an improved Iranian image would cease the stigmatization of their ancestry and identity. When asked if his life would be impacted if Iran's standing in the world changed, Mister X, a second generation Iranian living in southern California, said the following:

> Of course. Do you discriminate much against Germans or French? No, because politically, we're allies with them, this and that. So, of course it'd matter. During the time of the Shah, Americans loved Iranians.

For Mister X, Iranians' experiences with marginalization are connected to foreign policy and diplomatic relations. As with the Shah's era, once US-Iran relations improve and the nations are political allies Americans will love Iranians once again.

Siv, a first generation immigrant woman living in northern California, said the following about how her life would change if Iran's reputation improved:

> You would get what you deserve to get. I would be judged just on me, not based on what's going on in Iran.

If Iran's standing in the world improved, Siv's sees herself as finally being judged by her talents and capabilities instead of her national origins and identity. Siv's identity would no longer pose barriers to her quality of life. Respondents also revealed that an improved reputation for Iran would allow them to be publicly proud of their homeland without being harassed. Mansoor, a first generation immigrant man living in southern California, shared the following about how his life would be impacted by a positive Iranian reputation

> It's not going to happen overnight, but I would not be ashamed of a government that represents me. I would be more proud of my country. My wife, she's proud of her flag, I wish I could put up an Iranian flag, but I will not. I wish I could put up the flag of my country, but I can't, my window would get smashed out of ignorance.

For Mansoor, an improved Iranian standing would allow him to display his homelands' flag and embrace and be proud of where he came from without experiencing anti-Iranian prejudice. He believes that a more positive Iranian reputation would also lessen Iranians' experiences with marginalization, de-stigmatize their identities, and facilitate a more comfortable environment. An environment that will, over time, allow Iranians to be proud of their national origin and belong in the US.

Neutral Ethnic Identity

The ability to acquire a neutral ethnic identity, blend in and belong like other immigrants, if Iran's reputation became more positive, was apparent among Iranians' narratives. Vanessa said the following about how changes to Iran's standing would affect her life

> Sometimes I joke with my mom like "I wish we were Italian." Everybody loves the Italians. They love their food, they all go there for the summer, and they travel. It's so much happier. And my dad's always said "you know, but Iranians have really only been in this country about 30 or so years, it's a newer group. Wait 'til your kids are grown-ups. It might be easier for them because people are more familiar with the culture and maybe

> that country has changed a little." And I think when the Chinese came here a long time ago, they were here to build the railroad and there was discrimination towards them.... or the Irish or even the Italians. And that group has been here for hundreds of years now in the country. So I think once this group has established themselves, I think maybe it'll be easier.

Vanessa argues that older immigrant groups like the Italians, Chinese, and Irish all experienced exclusion, marginalization, and discrimination when they initially came to the US. However, as these groups became established they were accepted and became a part of American society. Vanessa hopes that Iranians will be able to experience belonging in US society, and have their culture loved one day, like the Italians. She ultimately argues that Iranians' ability to become a part of US society is predicated upon their length of time in the US, and Iran having a more positive standing in the West.

Similar to Vanessa, Paul, a second-generation man living in northern California, also shares this idea of Iranians' identities being perceived in a more neutral way once Iran's global political standing improves. He said the following about how his life would be impacted if Iran's reputation changed:

> You know, it would be nice to have a more pervasive neutral perspective in America. Like for instance if someone's Greek, there's nothing really negative... no negative connotation of being Greek.

Being Greek is not associated with negative imagery in the US; it is a neutral identity. For Paul, it would be a nice change if Iranians, like white ethnics, were perceived neutrally; if the negative connotations associated with Iran did not cloud the identity of Iranian Americans. Ultimately, Paul predicates Iranians' ability to belong and become members of US society, like white ethnic immigrants, upon their identities not being stigmatized.

The above quotes show that Iranian respondents view global politics surrounding Iran as centrally impacting their ability to belong and become members of the US. Iranians' accounts of how their lives would change if Iran's standing in the world improved reveals that Iranians expects to have fewer experiences with being stigmatized and marginalized, be treated equally, be proud of their culture and background, be comfortable in the US, and ultimately belong and become like other Americans. It is telling and noteworthy that Iranians perceived that they would, like past white European ethnic immigrant groups to the US, endure marginality for a period of time but eventually become 'Americans'. Vanessa, Paul, and Mansoor all described Iranians acquiring a neutral ethnic identity that is not stigmatized once Iran-US relations improve, and the environment in US becomes more receptive toward Iranians. Iranians' description of becoming like other Americans, once anti-Iranian prejudice disappears, is ultimately tied to their perceptions that belonging in the US is secured by acquiring a neutral ethnic identity that is not stigmatized by Iran's global political reputation. Once Iranians acquire this identity, they see themselves as belonging and becoming a part of US society, as outlined by the US national narrative.

Germany

Unlike in the US, in Germany, Iranians' expectations for how they would be perceived and treated by Germans if Iran's standing in the world improved lacked a discussion of facing less marginalization and exclusion, their statements do not have the implications of acceptance based on ethnic identity that is a part of the American experience. Instead, most Iranians said that they would be better-received foreigners. And like those in the US, they would be able to live with more comfort, happiness, and pride

in their Iranian identity. However, their belonging would be defined by being good foreigners and immigrants in Germany. I begin with an examination of how Iranians perceive their identities and lived experiences to be influenced by global politics surrounding Iran, and then show how Iranians assume they will be accepted in Germany once Iran's global reputation changes.

Comfort, Happiness, and Pride

Iranians often lamented being unable to express pride over Iran's rich history and culture. Rostam, a first generation immigrant man living in Hamburg, said the following about how changes to Iran's reputation would impact his life:

> If things were to get better and Iran becomes a progressive nation, then that would make me happy. That would give me more energy. Although I am living here, I should not feel like I am from a defeated place. Iran had a beautiful history in the past, and I hope that it can achieve democracy, be successful, and that the society can progress.

Although he lives in Germany, the ways in which Iran is depicted influences Rostam's state of mind and emotions. He perceives himself being more proud, happy, and energetic once Iran's global political reputation improves. Similar to Rostam, being able to be proud over being from Iran was also echoed by Nasrin, a first generation immigrant woman. She said the following about if, and how, changes to Iran's reputation would impact her:

> Yes, of course, because everyone's views would also change. Then I could say that I am Iranian, I can hold my head up high.

If Iran's reputation changed, so would public opinion and discussions surrounding Iran. This would allow Nasrin to proudly declare that she was Iranian, without feeling stigma or shame. Donya, a second-generation woman living in Hamburg, also described how she would feel if Iran's global reputation improved:

> I think if they were to say more positive things then I would be less upset. No matter how long we're here and what we do, in the end we're Iranian, and it doesn't feel good when Iran is spoken of in negative ways.

Negative discourse surrounding Iran is upsetting and unpleasant to Donya. Although she was born in Germany and had lived her entire life there, she felt that the stigma of having Iranian ancestry does not go away regardless of how long one lives in Germany. Moreover, her quality of life would improve if Iran's reputation became more positive. Interestingly, many Iranians felt that they were 'good immigrants and foreigners' in Germany, and that what kept them from being recognized as such as Iran's global political standing.

Acceptance and Being Good Immigrants

Discussions surrounding the acceptance of Iranian immigrants were noticeable among respondents in Germany. Pari said the following about if, and how, an improved Iranian image would impact her life:

> Yes. In Germany, Iranians are seen as good immigrants because they work and they're educated. If their homeland is also seen as being good, being accepted in the world, then it may be like Japan, that type of reputation.

For Pari, Iranians have a reputation of being good immigrants in Germany, because of their educational attainments and work habits. If their homeland was also regarded more positively in the world, then Iranians could more easily gain acceptance, and membership, into German society. Interestingly, Pari makes a comparison to Japan as a way to signal that people from Japan were stigmatized by Japan's global politics until its diplomatic relations with western nations improved. Pari believes that Iranians may also experience a similar pattern, and be better received once Iran's global political relations improve.

Some respondents were not as direct and explicit in regards to how their lives would be impacted once their identities were no longer stigmatized; yet they pointed toward receiving greater acceptance from Germans once political relations between Iran and Germany improved. Ebrahim, a first generation immigrant man living in Hamburg, stated the following about how diplomatic relations between Iran and Germany influence the lives of Iranian immigrants:

> Compared to other immigrants they view Iranians in a better light. They respect and emphasize Iranian history, and that the Shah of Iran had taken a German woman as his first wife, and that she was married to the King of Iran, this left a good effect. This current regime they hate and most of them are against the current Iranian regime. Some of them view Iranians as terrorists. But again some of them are those who do not like immigrants, they are against immigrants in general. There are different viewpoints about Iranians.

Similar to Kimia, Ebrahim argues that Iranian immigrants have a good reputation in Germany compared to other immigrant groups. And an improved Iranian global political reputation will further facilitate Iranians to be perceived in a better light and be accepted as good immigrants in Germany.

Similar to Pari and Ebrahim, Sombol, a first generation immigrant woman in Hamburg, also said that an improved Iranian global political standing would improve public discourse about Iranian immigrants. She explained how:

> Yes, because when the viewpoint of Germans towards Iranians is good, it's very different than being depicted as people who are always living illegally and doing harm. There is less illegal Iranians here than those from Poland or other eastern European countries who do bad things or things that are not seen in a good light.

For Sombol, an improved Iranian global image would finally match up to how Iranian immigrants actually conduct themselves in Germany. Sombol argues that other immigrants, like eastern Europeans, are more likely to be a part of criminal activities and

to be seen as damaging to German society in comparison to Iranians. Changes to Iran's global political reputation would improve public discourse regarding those of Iranian ancestry allowing Germans to see Iranians as good immigrants and accepting them as such in Germany.

Siavash, a first generation immigrant man living in Hamburg, also said that a more positive social climate for Iranians is connected to global political relations improving. When asked how a change in Iran's reputation would impact his life, he explained:

> I guess in some ways I would stop getting so many questions about Ahmadinejad. It would be a better environment though, a friendlier relationship between Germans and Iranians.

For Siavash if Iran's reputation improved, German-Iranian relations would become friendlier creating a more comfortable environment for Iranian immigrants in Germany. His social relationships with Germans, and those of other Iranians, would not be mediated the Ahmadinejad's reputation. Iranians' responses regarding how their lives would change once politics surrounding Iran improved also emphasized happiness and pride.

Iranians' accounts of how their lives would be impacted if Iran's reputation in the world changed revealed a number of themes. Primarily, Iranians in Germany felt that they would be accepted more, live more comfortably, have more pride, and be generally happier if Iran's global political position improved. Although, as Kimia described, Iranians are educated immigrants who work in Germany, an improved Iranian image would only advance Iranian-German relations and create a more comfortable environment for Iranians. This improved context would allow Iranians to be proud of their homeland and culture, and not feel stigmatized because of their national origins.

Given the German national narrative of belonging, Iranians in Germany did not provide responses that indicated that Iran's reputation influenced their ability or inability to become German. Rather, Iranians assume that an improved global Iranian reputation would de-stigmatize their identities allowing them to be perceived as even better immigrants and foreigners in Germany. Kimia, Ebrahim, and Sombol argue that Iranian immigrants are perceived differently than other immigrants, and what keeps Iranians from experiencing more acceptance and comfort in German society are the global politics surrounding Iran. What is more, Iranians' ability to belong and come close to 'good immigrants and foreigners' classification is significantly tied to Iran's global political standing.

Discussion

Overwhelmingly, Iranians in both the US and Germany describe Iran's image in the West as hostile, defiant, anti-democratic, backward, and terroristic. This image affects Iranians' lived experiences in the US and Germany, because they are associated with the negative connotations and images of Iran. For the majority of respondents, in their daily lives in the US and Germany they are not differentiated from the Iranian regime. The negative connotations surrounding Iran impacted Iranians in the US and Germany in similar and different ways. In both contexts, Iranians felt that they were under a cloud of suspicion. Their identity was the subject of scrutiny and questioning and this made them feel defensive of their background. The participants in the research experienced shame and discomfort; they expressed a loss of pride in their ancestry and homeland. They contrasted their current experiences with the Shah's era where they felt respected by the West and pride in their ancestry. What is more, Iranians employ

covering mechanisms like hiding or changing their names, and not revealing their ancestry or background as a way to distance and disassociate themselves from their stigmatized homeland. Although some Iranians saw the Green Movement as having changed public perceptions and opinions about Iranians, the negative discourse more centrally shapes Iran's global political image in the world.

In the US, global politics puts a cap on Iranians' quality of middle class experiences, and facilitates the construction of social marginality and discrimination against them. In Germany, it solidifies a boundary that is already there, and further complicates and stigmatizes Iranians' identities and experiences as foreigners in a nation where their best opportunities are shaped by being good immigrants. Ultimately, in both the US and Germany, Iranians' identities are stigmatized because they are associated with Iran. This association complicates and negatively impacts Iranians' quality of life in both nations, powerfully impeding Iranians' ability to belong as it is defined in both the US and Germany.

Descriptions of how a positive perception of Iranian would influence the lives of this group of respondents were connected to how each nation's narrative defined belonging and membership. Iranians in US and Germany share that they would be happier, more comfortable, and more proud of their identities. However, their expectations also varied in some important ways. As described in the national narratives and belonging chapter, Iranians in the US experience belonging when they are not subject to marginality and discrimination, and perceive themselves as 'unmarked' Americans. Iranians perceive being 'unmarked' to mean that their identities and national origins are not stigmatized, when their identity and experiences parallel the discourse that surrounds

white American ethnic groups. This research has found that Iranians in the US imagine themselves securing belonging once their identity and background is not stigmatized and once they can have full access to American opportunity structures. Unfriendly foreign policy and diplomatic relations between the US and Iran have helped breed anti-Iranian prejudice in the US. And as long as dominant discourse surrounding Iran continues to include themes such as defiant, anti-American, anti-West, and anti-democratic, Iranians believe that they will experience marginality and exclusion making it difficult for them to secure a good quality of life and experience belonging and membership.

Germany's national narrative reserves unqualified belonging for those with German ancestry. Iranians are viewed as foreigners in Germany. The German context indubitably shapes how Iranians perceive a more positive reputation will impact their lives. Iranians do not claim to be able to 'blend in' or become like other Germans if Iran's standing were to improve. Rather, many believe that they will be recognized as good immigrants and foreigners. Iranians in Germany understand that their ability to seamlessly blend into German society and gain access to limitless opportunities is reserved for Germans only. However an improved Iranian reputation will increase the chances that they will be recognized as good immigrants and foreigners in German society. Good immigrant belonging will be available to them once the stigma that surrounds their national origin is removed.

This research speaks to past scholarship on Iranians in multiple ways. Similar to past research by Marvasti & McKinney (2004), Daha (2011) and Tehranian (2008) that highlighted that Iranians experience discrimination in the US, and the research of Hossein-Kaladjahi (1997), Khosravi (1999), Safi (2010) in various European nations, my

findings also shows Iranians experience marginality and exclusion, specifically in the labor market. This research has also found, similar to Marvasti and McKinney (2004), that Iranians employ various covering tactics as a way to help reduce, and, or, bypass the discrimination that they experienced. However, given that we still lack diversity in terms of empirical sociological research surrounding Iranian immigrants, there is a lack of understanding of how Iranians' everyday lives are impacted by the antagonistic and uncertain geo-political relations between their homeland and nations of settlement. My research adds to these larger conversations by examining how and in which ways global political dynamics stigmatize and politicize Iranians' identities, significantly impacting their ability to experience belonging and membership. Importantly, the Iranians who participated in this research believe that better global political relations between Iran and western nations will positively impact their lives. What is more, Iranians hypothesized in ways consistent with the national narratives of their country of settlement that they would come closer to belonging if the stigma associated with Iran disappears. More broadly, this research has shown that migrants and their children feel that the diplomatic and political relations between nation-states impact their lives. Specifically, immigrants who are associated with a politically stigmatized homeland are inevitably marked by the negative connotations surrounding it, and experience marginalization and disruptions to belonging. The inclusion of national narratives and global political factors give us a more complete understanding of immigrant experiences and processes of belonging and membership.

CHAPTER 7:
CONCLUSION

This qualitative methods project examining Iranians perceptions of belonging in the United States and Germany produced several significant findings in relation to the guiding research questions: *How do America's and Germany's national narratives of immigration influence Iranians' sense of belonging*? and *How do Iranians perceive the global politics surrounding Iran as impacting their lives in the West*? The central idea driving this research is that immigrant belonging is impacted by both national and global factors. In this concluding chapter, I will introduce three final sections: first, I will share vignettes that capture Iranians' descriptions of belonging in each nation; second, I will highlight the major empirical findings; and third, I will provide some implications of this research; and lastly I will offer some afterthoughts.

Belonging

Sometimes the clearest illustration of the sense of belonging experienced or not experienced by Iranian immigrants comes in the voice of the immigrant. The following vignettes capture the personal experience of belonging and demonstrate the impact of national and global factors on this sense of belonging.

When I asked Cyrus, a first generation immigrant man living in southern California, if he belonged, he stated:

> Well, belonging is a very high level of qualification. And I don't think belonging is one way street, it's a two way street, and in that sense I don't think belonging is really there. We are trying to penetrate this society in a way that we can lead comfortable lives, that's my view. The situation is that you are trying to get acceptance so you can have a comfortable life, you don't belong here per se in that regard. Belonging means all the avenues and all the parts of society are working for you.

Tony, a first generation immigrant man living in northern California, said the following about what would help him experience belonging:

> I don't think anything would except if I was born here, and/or if the relationship between Iran and the US was like before. That would definitely make a big difference, because then there would be no clash.

Houshang, a first-generation immigrant man living in Hamburg, said the following about what would make him belong more:

> Yes, there is something. It's that thing that remains hidden in German people, it's that Germans will not accept you as a foreigner, the feeling that I got in Canada was not that they said this person is a foreigner, this person is an insider, and this person is a Canadian. I did not get that sense from people there. I saw that an Indian man was wearing a turban but was a policeman there; here in the offices you do not see that, in any public jobs you will not see that. 6 million non-Germans live here, but you see them less in public jobs, in government, public jobs. And it is these things, when you are not accepted in this society, you sense that you are not a part of that society. When a foreigner or an Iranian comes to the US, they say, my America, no one here will say, my Germany! No one will say that, that feeling does not exist and I have this fight with Germans constantly, you guys pay a lot of our socially expenses, set up schools for us, give us asylum and residency, but the feeling that I am a part of you, you do not give us that feeling, that emotion does not exist.

Anahita, a second-generation immigrant woman living in Hamburg, shared the following after she was asked about belonging:

> I remember after the University I was unemployed for 3 months. I remember going to see this woman at the employment office and she said that, she told me this directly; she didn't want to believe how well my grades were. When she checked all my work, she said that if it were up to her, the German would get the job. She said that if she was a manager or boss at a company that she'd also choose a German over me. I told her that's exactly why I was forced to be there, live off of 400 Euros a month, and be unemployed after my University education.

These illustrations make clear that national narratives and global politics can shape an immigrants' sense of belonging in their country of migration. Cyrus, Tony, Houshang, and Anahita descriptions all highlight that their ability to experience belonging is shaped and complicated by national and global factors. In the US, the global

politics surrounding Iran have created an unwelcoming environment for Iranians in the US making it difficult for them to acquire a better quality, have equal access to opportunities and resources in society, and to experience belonging. Anti-Iranian prejudice is not seen as innately ingrained in US society, but more as a product of the downward shifts in the nature of Iran and America's political relationship. Belonging is perceived as being hindered by Iran's unfavorable global political standing. In Germany, anti-foreigner prejudice is perceived as pervasive, omnipresent, and perpetually impacting immigrants' abilities to belong. Unlike those living in the US, Iranians in Germany perceive that they will never be able to proudly declare that Germany is their nation; rather they feel like perpetual guests and foreigners in Germany. Ultimately, in Germany, it is anti-foreign prejudice, which is endemic to Germany's national identity, not Iranians' lack of cultural accommodation that impedes their ability to belong.

Major Findings

As outlined in chapter two, past research on Iranian immigrants has often focused on debates surrounding employment and educational mobility, identity, and family relations. Some studies have revealed that Iranians are stigmatized by their identities, experience marginalization, and that they utilize various covering mechanisms. However, my research connects these findings to larger conversations about the role of national narratives and global political context in shaping Iranians' experiences of belonging and membership in their host society. My research shows that Iranians' understanding of belonging is shaped by their migration experiences, the national narratives of their nation of settlement, and the global politics surrounding Iran. In the first data chapter, I demonstrated that Iranians' migration experiences were shaped by

immigration policies of each nation, especially for post-Revolution migrants, and refugee policy, especially in Germany, helped shape their settlement experiences. What is more, the findings of the second data chapter showed that national narratives of immigration are significant in shaping migrants' understandings of the countries of settlement. These narratives inform Iranians' interpretations of not just the prospects of belonging, but the indications of whether they have accomplished it. Furthermore, in the last data chapter, I demonstrated that global political dynamics greatly shape Iranians' lived experiences by stigmatizing their identities and circumventing their ability to belong. The three analytic chapters draw on empirical data from sixty-four in-depth interviews with immigrant and second generation Iranians living in northern and southern California, and Hamburg, Germany to address my central research questions. An examination of Iranians' migration and settlement experiences revealed that changes to Iran's global political relationship with western nations since 1979 influenced Iranians' experiences, and quality of life, in the US and Germany. The interviewed Iranians who migrated to the US and Germany prior to 1979 came for educational opportunities with many intending to return to Iran after the completion of their degrees. However, the severing of diplomatic relations between Iran and the US after the revolution and hostage crisis shifted both American immigration policy toward Iran, and the political relations between Iran and other western nations. These shifts led some Iranian respondents to migrate to Germany instead because entering Germany as asylum seekers was fairly easy and institutionalized. What is more, the German state was experienced by Iranians to be a social welfare state that generously admitted refugees and asylum seekers, and offered

them institutionalized re-settlement, yet the German people were overwhelmingly regarded as being unaccepting of foreigners.

Moreover, the data demonstrates that Iranians' perceptions of belonging are shaped by dominant national ideologies and narratives of the US and Germany, which define who belongs and how belonging is attained in each nation. In addition, Iranians' experiences in each nation, specifically in regards to acquiring upward mobility, influences extent to which they assess whether they have come close to, or acquired, belonging and membership. Importantly, the data shows that global political factors, specifically the omnipresent negative discourse and imagery surrounding Iran further complicates belonging for Iranians in the US and Germany. These global political dynamics not only informed their migration and settlement experiences, but also continue to mark and stigmatize their identities as a result of being associated with a nation whose political interests are at odds with those of the United States and Germany. For the respondents in this project this set of political relationships means that they are targeted for discrimination and exclusion, and that they feel their opportunities and face-to face interactions are negatively impacted. In the US, global politics puts a cap on their quality of middle class experiences, and facilitates the construction of social marginality and discrimination against them. In Germany, it helps solidify a boundary that is already there. Ultimately, an examination of Iranians' lived experiences in US and Germany revealed that national narratives and global political dynamics greatly influence how Iranians experience belonging. In this section, I will discuss at length these three major empirical findings in relation to belonging: (1) geo-political stigma and anti-Iranian

prejudice in the US, (2) Germany and anti-foreigner prejudice, (3) generational progress and delay.

Geopolitical stigma and anti-Iranian prejudice refers to the centrality of global political dynamics surrounding Iran in producing an anti-Iranian environment in the US. The respondents describe this environment as powerfully influencing how they are perceived and treated in the United States. Iranians' identities are stigmatized by Iran's negative global political reputation causing them to experience marginality and to be treated with suspicion in their daily lives. These dynamics impede their ability to secure resources and opportunities, to experience mobility, to attain a good quality of life, and to feel that they belong in American society.

It is noteworthy that Iranians felt that better diplomatic relations between Iran and the US would give them equal access to educational institutions and the labor market, and ultimately lead them to experience more mobility. Iranians also assumed that an improved Iranian image would unmark and de-stigmatize their identities allowing them to blend in and become Americans in the same way that European ethnic groups had become American. The respondents in this project thought of 'becoming' like other Americans in a way that is intricately tied to the American national narrative. Belonging was seen as hinging on one's merits, character, and work ethic rather than one's national origins or ancestry. Iranians see themselves as being able to access the American Dream, achieving upward mobility once Iran's global political position improves and they are no longer subject to anti-Iranian prejudice in the US. Ultimately, Iranians who come close to experiences of belonging are those who perceive themselves as occupying a neutral, unmarked, ethnic identity, have had no vivid experiences with marginality and exclusion,

and have been able to effectively climb the mobility ladder. Yet for other respondents, the political stigma that is imposed upon their identity and national origin, as a consequence of Iran's global political position, disrupts their ability to belong and experience membership in the US.

The second major finding speaks to the centrality of the German national context and its national narrative in producing an anti-foreigner environment in Germany. The German national narrative and German national identity make clear that unconditional belonging is reserved for Germans only. Iranians perceive and experience dissonance between Germany's policies of accepting foreigners, including refugees and asylum seekers, and the sentiments of the German people. Overwhelmingly, Iranians experience Germany to be a place that is prejudiced toward all non-European foreigners. Their experiences with anti-foreigner prejudice and discrimination, particularly in the labor market and at educational institutions, pose barriers to them attaining a good quality of life, and a sense of belonging and membership in Germany. Iranians aim to resolve this complication by becoming good foreigners. Adopting German cultural norms and practices, living amongst Germans, and integrating themselves into German society is seen as the most effective way to lead more comfortable lives and be accepted by Germans. Iranians are acutely aware that they will maintain a foreigner identity and never become Germans; yet becoming good foreigners allows them to more easily establish a good quality of life and come close to belonging.

Interestingly, when Iranians described how their lives would change if global politics improved, they did not say that they will no longer be subject to marginality or exclusion, like those in the US; rather, they expect that an improved reputation will allow

them to be better received, and accepted as foreigners and immigrants, which would allow them to have a good quality of life. An improved Iranian global image is not assumed to remove anti-foreigner prejudice, or allow them to 'become' Germans; rather it would create an environment where Iranians could live in Germany as 'good immigrants'. Ultimately, Iranians' ability to belong in Germany is shaped by both a German national context that remains highly prejudicial and discriminatory toward foreigners, and global political dynamics which further stigmatize their identities and complicate their acceptance as good immigrants in German society.

The last major empirical finding from this project deals with generational progress and delay in regards to belonging. There were interesting differences in how the second generation perceived and experienced belonging in each nation. In the US, the second generation was more explicit and vivid in their descriptions of what belonging entailed and the ways in which they saw themselves as belonging to the US. Unlike the immigrant generation, the second generation felt that they belonged because they had no other nation as their point of reference, they were fully socialized in American society, participated in American institutions, spoke the language fluently, and were Americanized, more or less, while still retaining aspects of their parents' culture. Second generation Iranians saw these practices, habits, and skills as the main components of what secured belonging for them. It is noteworthy that all of the second-generation respondents were at the least college-educated and felt that there weren't many barriers preventing them from upward mobility. Given that these young Iranians either came from middle-class families, or at least working class parents who were college-educated, indubitably influenced their outlook toward the US and its opportunity structures. The second-

generations' ability to access the educational resources needed for professional careers, despite their perceptions of the existence of anti-Iranian prejudice, legitimized both the US national narrative and proved to them that they can secure a good quality of life and be a part of US society.

In Germany, the second generation experienced generational lag with regard to belonging. Their ability to belong is not resolved by length of residence, German citizenship, German educational attainments, or their adherence German cultural norms and practices. Rather, the second-generation in Germany understood belonging and membership as something that only Germans attain. Although 12 out of the 16 second generation Iranians were college educated, the remaining four had received vocational training, and most were German citizens, they felt that being a foreigner blocked their mobility and excluded them from further educational and work and professional opportunities. The second generation believed that being marked as foreigners was perpetual, and not an identity that one loses after a few generations, although one would expect them to have more generalized feelings of belonging given their professional backgrounds. Ultimately, anti-foreigner prejudice excludes second-generation Iranians in Germany from accessing greater opportunities and resources and impedes them from experiencing belonging.

Implications

The reality of transnationalism and globalism makes it increasingly important to examine how the experiences of migrants and their adult children are shaped by national and global dynamics. The topic of immigrant belonging and membership continues to be important within the sociological scholarship on immigration and race/ethnicity. I believe

this dissertation has great potential to contribute to these discussions in two important ways: first, this research demonstrates the need to take the dominant ideological discourses of nation-states into account when examining immigrants' lived experiences and belonging and membership. Second, the findings of this research empirically show that global political dynamics have the capacity to stigmatize migrants' identities, impact their quality of life, and disrupt experiences of belonging and membership.

To begin, there is a common assumption within the immigration scholarship, specifically within theories of immigrant integration, that the lives of migrants and their children in their host society are primarily shaped by their labor market participation, educational attainment, access to residency and citizenship, levels of civic participation, and cultural accommodation. While these factors are important in assessing migrants' participation and involvement with their host society, and extent to which they have acquired upward, or downward, mobility, they do not tell us much about migrants' perceptions, expectations, and assessments of belonging and membership in their host society. This gap in the literature about immigrant belonging and membership also characterizes the existing research on the Iranian Diaspora. My research addresses this gap by examining how migrants perceive, understand, and assess the national narratives of their host society as it applies to their expectations and experiences of mobility and belonging. In order words, I found that taking national narratives of the US and Germany into account demonstrated that the dominant ideological discourse of the host society informs both migrants' definitions and understanding of belonging, and influenced evaluations of quality of life and belonging. Thus, in going forward with research on immigrant experiences, it is important we take into account national narratives, or the

hegemonic ideological discourses of nations, because they are the 'backdrop' or assumptions that are made about opportunities and the quality of life.

What is more, it is important to incorporate globalism and global politics into our analyses of immigrant experiences, belonging, and membership. Given that we live in a world that is more interconnected than previous eras and migrants are increasingly engaged in transnational activities and behaviors, it is important to take into account global politics, because they help inform policies and common sense assumptions about migrants and where they come from. The historical experiences of Japanese-Americans in the context of World War II are a prime example of how global politics stigmatized, politicized, and marginalized their identities. Global politics also influenced US state policies that discriminated against, and stripped Japanese-Americans of their economic resources and civil rights. Clearly, global politics mattered in their experiences. In contemporary times, we can look at the experiences of Muslim immigrants and their descendants before 9/11, who were extremely middle-class, and compare it to how September 11 stigmatized and marginalized their identities. My research directly relates to these dynamics and highlights that political relations between nation-states are significant to examining immigrant experiences and belonging and membership. Ultimately, the inclusion of national narratives and global politics contributes to our understanding of the sociological processes that facilitate, and disrupt, experiences of immigrant belonging and membership in their host society, and provides us with a deeper understanding of the layered and complex dynamics that shape immigrant experiences.

Afterthoughts

Reflecting on my personal migration narrative's relationship to this dissertation research, I can more clearly locate my experiences within larger narratives of immigrant migration experiences. Migration is painful, and it is nearly impossible to recreate 'home' when you have been pulled from your roots. The respondents in this research painstakingly attempt to re-create a sense of home, comfort, and belonging for themselves and their families in nations where they feel no birthright or inheritance. Dynamics outside of their control influence the extent to which they can belong. I, like many Iranian immigrants, know more about living in western nations than I know about living in Iran, yet I share with them this sense of belonging at times and not belonging other times. In a global context, where western nations are continually and increasingly in conflict with Middle Eastern nations, this sense of not belonging, of being marginalized and stigmatized, is at an all-time high. Potential war with Iran, and other Middle Eastern nations, is continuously mentioned and highlighted by politicians and the media. It is within this larger context that Iranians, like me, are attempting to find a sense of normalcy and belonging in nations that have volatile relations with their country of origin. These domestic and geo-political dynamics will, unfortunately, continue to affect those who have the least amount of power and agency to change the course of foreign policy affairs. It is very likely that the precarious relations between Middle Eastern nations, like Iran, and western nations will not change in the very near future. Hence the marginalization and stigma that is associated with those of Middle Eastern descent and Muslim background will continue to proliferate. Instances of racial profiling, acts of discrimination, and the violation of the civil rights of individuals who have no direct, or

even indirect, relations with the nations they left behind are on the rise. Many Iranian immigrants left their homelands in order to pursue better lives for themselves and their families; some fled due to possible political persecution, others due to societal instabilities born out of the 1979 revolution and Iran-Iraq war. Regardless of the reasons for their migration, many Iranians find themselves entangled in a web of domestic and global conflicts that they had not imagined. These larger dynamics will, nevertheless, continue to pose barriers to belonging and inclusion as long as Middle Easterners and Muslims are associated with, and inextricably linked to, the political affairs of their homeland. If history can teach us anything, it is that nothing is permanent. Iranians, Middle Easterners, and Muslims are currently constructed as people who pose a great danger to global democracy, progress, and peace. However, this may not always be the case, only time will tell. In the meantime, Iranians, Middle Easterners, and Muslims inhabit an unstable sense of belonging in the West, and the extent to which they can escape stigmatization and marginalization and fully belong is to be seen.

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APPENDIX A

DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS ON IRANIANS IN THE US

Demographic information on Iranians	Estimate
Number of Persons with Iranian Ancestry	470,227
Number of Iranian Foreign Born in the US	305,365
Number of Iranians born in US	164,862
% with High School Education	14.1
% with College Education	30.7
% in Labor Force	64.6
% in Professional/Managerial Jobs	54.7

2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

APPENDIX B
DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS ON FOREIGNERS IN GERMANY

Demographic Information on Foreigners in Germany	Estimates
Number of foreigners and their descendants in Germany	8,403,000
% of foreigners with migration experiences of their own	66.4
% of foreigners with migration experiences not of their own	18.7
% of foreigners with migration experiences of their own with secondary general school certificates	42.1
% of foreigners without migration experiences of their own with secondary school certificate	9.2
% of foreigners with migration experiences of their own with intermediate school certificates	31.4
% of foreigners without migration experiences of their own with intermediate school certificate	9.8
% of foreigners with migration experiences of their own that are in labor force	42.6
% of foreigners without migration experiences of their own that are in labor force	8.6

2012, Statistical Yearbook, Federal Statistical Office, Germany

APPENDIX C
FIRST GENERATION INTERVIEW GUIDE

Migration

1. Why did you leave Iran? **Probe if necessary**: when did you leave Iran? Did you leave alone or with other family members?
2. Why did you decide to come to Germany/ U.S.? Did you consider any other places to go to besides Germany/U.S.?

Networks

3. Did anybody tell you what it would be like living in Germany/U.S. before you arrived here? If yes, what were you told? What were your general expectations about what your life would be like in Germany/U.S.?
4. Did you have any relatives/ friends who lived in the U.S./Germany when you arrived? **Probe if necessary**: If yes, did they assist your family in getting settled? What did they do exactly? Did you stay in contact with them after you arrived?
5. Can you describe the first neighborhood you moved into in US/Germany? Who told you about it? Is that a place that you wanted to live? **Probe if necessary:** Did you move? If yes, where do you live now? Which neighborhood did you like the most? The least? Why?
6. How did you get your first job? **What was that job? Probe if necessary**: Who told you about it? Do you still work there? If no, where do you work now? How did you get your current job?
7. Could you give me a sense of the ethnic composition of the place where you work? (**Probe-** for the ethnicity of owner, supervisor and co-workers, if relevant)
8. When looking for work, who typically do you go to for information regarding job opportunities?
9. Do you belong to or participate in any organizations? If yes, tell me about it. Why do you participate in these organizations? What are the organizations goals? What are the other members like? Is it specifically for Iranians?

10. Do you participate in any religious organizations? If yes, what is that like? (**probe**- for ethnic composition of mosque)
11. Do you frequent any Iranian businesses? If yes, what types of businesses? What do you purchase from them?

Settlement

12. Tell me about your experiences of getting settled in US/Germany?
13. Who helped you get settled in Germany/U.S.? What did they help you with?
14. Did you get help from any organizations? If yes, what were their names? **Probe if necessary**: Did you get help from any government agencies? If yes, what did they help you with? Did you have to do anything to qualify for that help?
15. What do you like most about living in the U.S./Germany?
16. What have you found to be most difficult about living here? Why? (**Probe** about how other members of the family feel. Are there differences among you in terms of how you evaluate life here? If so, how would you explain that?
17. What have your experiences taught you about living here?

National Narratives

18. What did you think American/ German society would be like before you moved here? Did your ideas come from what other immigrants told you? Or from other sources such as books, films etc. Could you give me an image of how you imagined your life would be?
19. Have your ideas about this country changed after you had lived here for a while? How?
20. In your opinion, what are some core values of American/German society?
21. Have these values influenced your life here? How? (**Probe**—do you see the core values of America/Germany as different from those of Iranian society? At this point which core set of values do you see yourself more aligned with—or is it mixed?
22. Now, let's talk a bit about how you were received or welcomed here. How in general would you describe how you have been received in this country since your arrival? **Please elaborate**. In your opinion how are immigrants received in

this country? How are Iranians received in this country? **Probe if necessary**: does this differ from how other immigrants are received?

23. Do you think immigration law in U.S. / Germany makes it easy for people to migrate here? Does it favor some immigrant groups more than others? Is it the same for all? Why or why not?
24. **Scenario question for U.S.**: I am going to describe a conversation between two people and ask you to tell me which one best captures your experience or beliefs: **Person A:** says "America/Germany is a land of opportunity. With hard work one can become a part of this society." **Person B:** says: "America may be called the land of opportunity but in reality there is a lot of discrimination. Working hard doesn't mean that you will become part of this society." Which one do you agree with and why?
25. **Scenario question for Germany:** I am going to describe a conversation between two people and ask you to tell me which one best captures your experience or beliefs: **Person A:** says "Germany is a country that allows everyone who works hard, including immigrants, to become a part of this society." **Person B:** says "Germany is a country where immigrants, even when they work hard, are not wanted nor can really become a part of the society." Which one do you agree with and why?

Positioning

26. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a typical German/ American? That is, how would you describe how Germans/Americans are like to a countryman who has not been here?
27. In what ways would you say you are like other Germans/Americans? In what ways are you different from Germans/Americans? Has that changed over time? Are there differences among your family members in how close or distant they feel to the broader German/American society?
28. Of the racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. / Germany which one/ones are Iranians most similar to? Why?

29. Of the racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. / Germany which one/ones are Iranians most dissimilar to? Why?
30. What do you think are key issues affecting immigrants in this country? Why?
31. What do you think are key issues affecting minorities in this country? Why?

Discrimination

32. In general, do you think people recognize that you are Iranian? Why or why not?
33. Do you know of any situations where someone was treated unfairly because they are Iranian? Can you tell me about it? **If not about the respondent**: have you ever been treated unfairly because you are Iranian? Why?
34. Do you think being Middle Eastern matters in the way people are treated here? Do you think skin color matters in the way people are treated here? Why or why not?
35. Do you think religious background makes a difference? Why or why not?
36. Has your immigrant background ever influenced your getting a job in Germany/US? Or disadvantaged you? If so, how so?

Iran & global politics

37. From your point of view, what is Iran's reputation in the world?
38. Do you think that this reputation influences your life here in Germany/U.S.? Why or why not? Has that changed over time?
39. If the reputation of Iran was different would that have an impact on your life?
40. Do you think Iran's reputation in the world keeps Iranians from going back to visit Iran? How about living there? Why or why not?

Residency/Citizenship

41. What do you have to do to become a permanent resident in this country? Have you become a permanent resident?
42. How about becoming a citizen? Are you a citizen? If yes, why did you become a citizen? What was the experience of becoming a citizen like for you?

43. **If citizen in both nations**, have you taken a naturalization class? If yes, what was that like? What did you learn? What was most important for you? Least important? (**Probe**—was this free or did you have to pay for it?
44. **If citizen in both nations**, did these classes make you feel that your Iranian culture and identity was being challenged? Why or why not?
45. **Residents and citizens in both nations**, do you think having this passport matters when traveling? Why?
46. What do you think the benefits are of having citizenship in this nation? Are there any downfalls? Why or why not?
47. Do you think that being a citizen of this nation guarantees that one is treated like other people that live here? Why or why not?

<u>Belonging</u>

48. In general, would you say that you feel like you belong in Germany/America?
49. What would make you feel more a part of this society? Why?
50. What do you think is the best way to create community among Iranians in U.S./Germany? Why?
51. Do you have any preferences about whom your child/children date? Preferences about marriage partners? Why? Does this differ from your child's/ children's preferences? How?
52. Do you think your child/children have an easier fitting time into U.S./German society compared to you? Why?
53. Do you think your child/ children's views towards living in US/Germany differ from yours? How so? What explains these differences, if there are any?
54. Are there any aspects of your life here (or this society) that make it hard for you to teach your child/ children about Iranian culture? If yes, what aspects? **Probe if necessary**: how about teaching them about religious practice? Why?

APPENDIX D
SECOND-GENERATION INTERVIEW GUIDE

Growing up

1. Tell me about the neighborhood you grew up in as a child? **Probe** about the ethnic composition of the area, their friendships within it. **Probe if necessary**: did your family have friendships with other families in your neighborhood?
2. Growing up was there anything in your household that was uniquely Iranian? **Probe if necessary**: any cultural practices? Did your parents speak Farsi to you? Was this similar to the families your parents associated with?
3. Did your parents/family rely on you to translate for them? **Probe if necessary**: how about filling out work applications? Immigration papers? Housing applications? How did you feel about doing those things? Did these experiences make you feel different from other kids your age?
4. As a child were there things about your family that made you feel different from other kids? **Probe if necessary**: Were there any specific rules about friends/going out? Sleepovers?

Schooling

5. Tell me about your experiences in school? What were some of your most positive memories? Any not so good memories? **Probe if necessary**: how were you treated by your schoolmates?
6. Who were your closest friends in school? **Probe if necessary**: can you describe them? Were any of them Iranian?
7. Tell me about your parents' involvement in your schooling? **Probe if necessary**: did they help you with your homework? Did they attend parent-teacher conferences? Was there anything that was difficult for them to help you with? Why?
8. Were there any experiences at school that made you feel different from the other students? Why or why not?
9. Did you ever go to Farsi school? If yes, how was that like?

10. Have you gone to college/university? How was college different from high school? How would you describe the overall ethnic composition of your college? What was most difficult for you?

Networks

11. Now I'd like to talk a bit about your three closest friends currently, could you tell me how you met each one and how would you describe what connects you the most, or what the foundation of your friendship is? **Probe** about ethnic background.
12. Have you ever been employed? If yes, tell me about your first job? Do you still work there? If no, where do you work now?
13. When looking for work, who do you go for information regarding job opportunities?
14. Do you participate in any organizations? If yes, tell me about it. Why do you participate in these organizations? What are the organizations goals? What are the other members like? Is it specifically for Iranians?
15. Do you participate in any religious organizations? If yes, what is that like?
16. When considering dating partners/ potential spouse, how important is it that they are Iranian? Why or why not?
17. Do your parents have any preferences for who you date/marry? If yes, what are their preferences? How do you feel about their preferences? What would the consequences be of your going against their wishes in this area?
18. Do you frequent any Iranian businesses? If yes, what types of businesses? Why do you frequent them? How often?

Settlement

19. What did your parents tell you about why they came to the U.S./Germany?
20. What did your parents tell you about their getting settled in U.S./Germany?

21. Have your parents' experiences taught you anything about living here? That is, what lessons have you learned from those experiences? If yes, what?
22. Do you feel that your parents' experiences have affected your perceptions about living here? How so?

National Narratives

23. In your opinion, what are some core values of American/German society?
24. Is this different from what you were taught in school about US/German society? Why or why not?
25. Have these values influenced your life here? Have these values influenced your parents' lives? How? (**Probe**—do you see the core values of America/Germany as different from those of Iranian society? At this point which core set of values do you see yourself more aligned with—or is it mixed?
26. In your opinion how are immigrants received in this country? How are Iranians received in this country? **Probe if necessary**: does this differ from how other immigrants are received?
27. Do you think immigration law in U.S. / Germany makes it easy for people to migrate here? Does it favor some immigrant groups more than others? Is it the same for all? Why or why not?
28. **Scenario question for U.S.**: I am going to describe a conversation between two people and ask you to tell me which one best captures your experience or beliefs: **Person A:** says "America/Germany is a land of opportunity. With hard work one can become a part of this society. **Person B:** says "America may be called the land of opportunity but in reality there is a lot of discrimination. Working hard doesn't mean that you will become part of this society." Which one do you agree with and why?
29. **Scenario question for Germany:** I am going to describe a conversation between two people and ask you to tell me which one best captures your experience or beliefs: **Person A:** says "Germany is a country that allows

everyone who works hard, including immigrants, to become a part of this society." **Person B:** says "Germany is a country where immigrants, even when they work hard, are not wanted nor can really become a part of the society." Which one do you agree with and why?

Positioning

30. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of a typical German/ American?
31. What makes you like other Germans/Americans? What makes you different from Germans? Americans?
32. Of the racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. / Germany which one/ones are Iranians most similar to? Why?
33. Of the racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. / Germany which one/ones are Iranians most dissimilar to? Why?
34. What do you think are key issues affecting immigrants in this country? Why?
35. What do you think are key issues affecting minorities in this country? Why?

Discrimination

36. In general, do you think people recognize that you are Iranian? Why or why not?
37. Do you know of any situations where someone was treated unfairly because they are Iranian? Can you tell me about it? **If not about the respondent**: have you ever been treated unfairly because you are Iranian? Why?
38. Do you think being Middle Eastern matters in the way people are treated here? Do you think skin color matters in the way people are treated here? Why or why not?
39. Do you think religious background makes a difference? Why or why not?

40. Has you immigrant background ever influenced you getting a job in Germany/U.S.? Or disadvantaged you? Why or why not?

Iran & global politics

41. From your point of view, what is Iran's reputation in the world?
42. Do you think that this reputation influences your life here in Germany/U.S.? Why or why not?
43. If the reputation of Iran was different would that have an impact on your life?
44. Do you think Iran's reputation in the world keeps Iranians from going back to visit Iran? How about living there? Why or why not?
45. Do your views about Iran differ from your parents? Why or why not?

Residency/Citizenship

46. **Second-Generation Iranians in Germany who are not citizens**: Do you know what it takes to become a citizen here? If yes, what?
47. **If citizen in Germany**, why did you become a citizen? What was that experience for you? Did you take a naturalization class? If yes, what was that like? What did you learn? What was most important for you? What was least important for you?
48. **If citizen in Germany**, Did these classes make you feel that your Iranian culture and identity was being challenged? Why or why not?
49. **Residents and citizens in both nations,** do you think having a passport matters when traveling? Why?
50. What do you think the benefits are of having citizenship in this nation? Are there any downfalls? Why or why not?
51. Do you think that being a citizen of this nation guarantees that one is treated like other people that live here? Why or why not?

Belonging

52. What aspects of living here make you feel like you are a part of this society? Why?

53. What would make you feel more a part of this society? Why?

54. What do you think is the best way to create community among Iranians in US/Germany? Why?

55. Do you think your parents' views about living in US/Germany differ from yours? How so?

56. In what ways are you different from your parents? How?