

Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit

Case Study Series

**Second-generation Afghans in Iran:
Integration, Identity and Return**



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April 2008

Funding for this research was provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the European Commission (EC)

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About the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU)

The Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) is an independent research organisation headquartered in Kabul. AREU's mission is to conduct high-quality research that informs and influences policy and practice. AREU also actively promotes a culture of research and learning by strengthening analytical capacity in Afghanistan and facilitating reflection and debate. Fundamental to AREU's vision is that its work should improve Afghan lives.

AREU was established in 2002 by the assistance community working in Afghanistan and has a board of directors with representation from donors, UN and other multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Current funding for AREU is provided by the European Commission (EC), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Bank, and the governments of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Funding for this project was provided by UNHCR and EC.

Acknowledgements

In 2005, a little over one million (1,021,323) documented Afghans remained in Iran 33.4 percent (341,157) of whom were second-generation, that is, those aged between 15 and 29 who were either born in Iran, or arrived in Iran as children and were subsequently raised and educated in Iran. The figure above excludes a substantial number of undocumented Afghans in Iran. Second-generation Afghans comprise a particular demographic whose experiences and aspirations while not homogenous within the Afghan population, is different from their parent's generation. Education, occupational skills, family dynamics, and economic prospects of the second-generation Afghans in Iran have inspired different values and economic aspirations as compared to the first generation, and thus, the former has different perspective towards life in either of their host- or home society. The main objective of this research is to deepen our understanding of the situation of the second-generation Afghans Iran.

Conducted in the cities of Mashhad, Tehran, and Isfahan this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the second-generation Afghans by examining their integration in the host society, their identity, as well as their willingness and perceptions about returning to Afghanistan. This report highlights the findings of the study which was conducted during July-November 2006. The results have considerable policy implications for the governments of Iran and Afghanistan as well as the UNHCR who have been negotiating about the repatriation of Afghans in Iran since 2001.

We owe many thanks to those who have made contributions to the implementation of the project. The Faculty of Social Sciences as well as the office of Vice Chancellor for Research Affairs of the University of Tehran provided institutional support. This report is the result of a fruitful collaboration by all team members who have been involved in ongoing research about the situation of Afghans in Iran. We would like to acknowledge the useful contribution and helpful assistance of Meimanat Hosseini-Chavoshi and Hajieh Bibi Razeghi throughout the study. Hamideh Jamshidiha has made significant contribution to the project in the translation of the manuscript and early draft of this report.

Our final thanks and appreciation go to our interviewers (Mohammad Javad Mohaghegh, Afifeh Mohagheghzadeh, Zohreh Hosseini, Hossein Ali Karimi and Halimeh Mirzaie), our key informants in Tehran and Isfahan (Seyed Nader Mousavi and Mohammad Ali Haidari), and to our respondents whose efforts and participation were invaluable in collecting the data for this project. This research program was initiated in 2006, with funding provided by the European Commission (EC), administered through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the AREU. We would also like to appreciate the AREU's support team particularly Dr Paula Kantor and Ms Mamiko Saito for their valuable support and comments during the process of this project.

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Tehran, April 2008

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Acronyms

AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
BAFIA	Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs
NGO	non-governmental organisation
SES	socio-economic status
UNHCR	United Nation High Commission for Refugees

Glossary

<i>amayesh</i>	a BAFIA Census to identify foreign nationals carried out periodically
<i>gheirat</i>	male sensitivity to family honour, predominantly in relation to the behaviour and dress of female family members
<i>hosseinieh</i>	meeting place for religious commemoration of the martyrdom of the Shia Imam Hossein, and other communal religious activities
<i>jerib</i>	unit of land measurement, approximately one fifth of a hectare
<i>konkoor</i>	competitive national examination for university entrance
<i>manto</i>	long-sleeved, long-bodied coat worn by women
<i>mohajerin</i>	religious migrant
<i>nazri</i>	The giving of alms (cooked food, sweets or money) to relatives and neighbours on days of religious significance
<i>Nowrooz</i>	New Year based on the Solar Hijra Calendar, beginning on the vernal equinox
<i>pish danesh gahi</i>	Yr 12/pre-university programme
<i>rahn</i>	bond for rented house: landlord invests the bond and keeps the interest, returning the principal intact to the renter at the end of the rental contract; the higher the <i>rahn</i> , the lower the rent, and vice versa
<i>Tooman</i>	Iranian currency; \$US1 = approx. 9,274 Toomans or 92,740 Rials (June 25, 2007)
<i>vatan</i>	Homeland, home (also Meehan)

Executive Summary

The total number of documented Afghans aged between 15 and 29 years living in Iran is 341,157 or 33.4 percent of the total population of Afghans in Iran. Broadly speaking, these Afghans may be categorised as “second-generation”, that is, those Afghans born in Iran, or who have spent more than half of their life in Iran. Second-generation Afghans comprise a particular demographic whose experiences and aspirations while not homogenous within that demographic, is different from their parents’ generation, and from their counterparts in Afghanistan. A more liberal social and cultural environment that offers education and economic opportunity has inspired different values and aspirations in the second-generation, some converging with their Iranian counterparts. Discriminatory government policies which differentiate non-nationals also shape these opportunities and experiences, however.

This research has explored second-generation experiences of education, employment and social networks against a thematic of integration. It also examined the self definition of second-generation respondents themselves in relation to their counterparts in Afghanistan, their Iranian peers and their parents, and also their attachment to Afghanistan or Iran as homeland. Finally, the issues which shape second-generation perceptions of their future in relation to Iran, and intention in relation to return to Afghanistan were examined.

Fieldwork for the research into second-generation Afghans in Iran was conducted in the cities of Mashhad, Tehran, and Isfahan during a 16-week period from July to November 2006. Eighty individual interviews with second generation Afghans were conducted during this period (40 females and 40 males), along with focus group discussions in each fieldsite. Eight interviews with parents of second-generation offspring complemented these data, providing insights on the first generation’s views of their children, who grew up outside their ‘homeland’ but may one day return to it.

Some of the main findings from the study include the following:

- There is incongruity between education status and current occupation and income, due to government policy which restricts Afghan workers to non-skilled labour sectors.
- However, there is no particular relation between education level and satisfaction with current occupation.
- A relationship exists between job satisfaction and return intention, with those who are satisfied more likely to want to remain in Iran.
- There is some convergence in second-generation attitudes and preferences with Iranian counterparts in relation to gender relations, the value of education, and economic aspirations.
- A relationship exists between those who assess their current occupation as satisfactory, and those who assess their relations with Iranian co-workers and employers as “good”, and those who are not taking current action to return to Afghanistan
- Good relations at the neighbourhood level and current non-action to return to Afghanistan appear to be linked.
- While respondents tended to define themselves as modern, they defined “being Afghan” in terms of dispositions of other Afghans defined as traditional:

patriarchal, devout, immoderate, not literate, hard working, and resigned to fate.

- A majority of respondents perceived Afghanistan as homeland.
- Afghanistan-born respondents were split between taking current action to return, and intending not to return, but Iranian-born second-generation Afghans were more likely to be undecided about returning to Afghanistan.

Recommendations

- The governments of Iran and Afghanistan, together with the UNHCR, should maintain their membership of the Tripartite Agreement and its supporting arrangements to ensure the safe and voluntary return of Afghans in Iran, including second-generation Afghans.
- To enable Iran to maintain basic health and welfare services to Afghans, substantial burden-sharing aid should be provided to the government, NGOs, Iranian civil society and Afghan community-based service providers.
- The Iranian Ministry of Education and the Embassy of Afghanistan in Tehran should act bilaterally to legalise Afghan schools in Iran and provide standardised curricula and professional development for Afghan teachers.
- Continued support should be provided to the International Organization for Migration in its efforts to assist in reintegration and employment of skilled Afghans and their families. This work should focus on the identification of Afghan graduates and skilled workers living in Iran, matching these with labour needs in Afghanistan and ultimately facilitating their reintegration and employment in Afghanistan.
- In order to encourage the return of educated Afghan women in Iran and their families, the government of Afghanistan must continue to make concerted efforts to promote the elimination of discrimination against Afghan women.
- The Government of Afghanistan through its broadcasting organisation should act to promote positive images of Afghans who have lived in Iran including: those who are currently living in Iran, those visiting Afghanistan from Iran, and those in the process of resettling in Afghanistan, in an effort to increase the success of reintegration for returnees.

1. Introduction

This report is one of a series of three case studies conducted as part of AREU's research on second-generation Afghan refugees living in Pakistan and Iran, and those who have returned from these neighbouring countries to Afghanistan since 2001.¹ This research project, *Second-Generation Afghans in Neighbouring Countries*, was initiated in 2006 and follows on from AREU's work on transnational networks undertaken in 2004 and 2005, which drew attention to the lack of information about the significant number of Afghan youths and young adults currently living in Pakistan and Iran – many of whom were neither born nor grew up in Afghanistan, and have little or no experience of living in their "homeland".

Second-Generation Afghans in Neighbouring Countries is administered through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and funded by the European Commission (EC). The aim of the project is to gain a detailed understanding of the life experiences and return intentions of second-generation Afghans in Pakistan and Iran, as well as the reintegration experiences – successful or otherwise – of those who have recently returned. This study focuses on second-generation Afghans in Iran and complements an earlier study into second-generation Afghans in Pakistan.² The research explores issues related to young Afghans' attachments and perceptions which shape their intentions in relation to both Afghanistan and Iran.

1.1 Demographic background of Second-generation Afghans in Iran

From 2002 to the end of June 2006, approximately 1.5 million Afghans voluntarily repatriated from Iran to Afghanistan. Of these 58 percent were assisted by UNHCR.³ Drawing on the 2005 Amayesh⁴ data the total number of registered Afghans living in Iran is a little over one million (1,021,323), 54 percent of whom are males. This figure does not include unregistered Afghans, including single labour migrants, estimated to be 500,000.⁵ There are no official published statistics on the substantial number of Afghans in Iran who are neither documented nor labour migrants.

Figure 1 illustrates the large share of the population of registered Afghans in Iran who are under age 30; 71 percent are in this group, with 33 percent of the total population of Afghans falling in the age group 15-29. This group composes the study population – those second-generation Afghans either born in Iran or who have spent more than half of their life in Iran.

Second-generation Afghans in Iran comprise a particular demographic whose experiences and aspirations while not homogenous within the demographic, will be different from their parent's generation, and from their counterparts in Afghanistan. Educational

¹ As defined in this study, second-generation Afghans are those males and females who are 15 to 30 years of age and have spent more than half of their lives in Iran. Many have been born in Iran, while others have grown up in that country from an early age.

² Mamiko Saito and Pam Hunte, "To Return or to Remain: The dilemma of Second-generation Afghans in Pakistan" (Kabul: AREU, 2007).

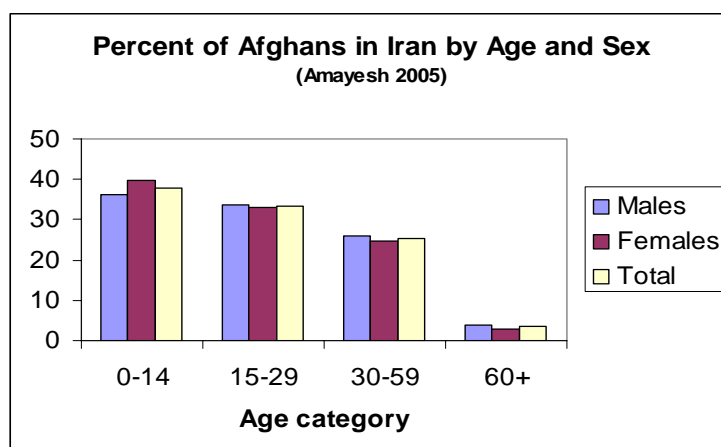
³ UNHCR, "Afghan Repatriation Analysis" (Tehran: UNHCR, 2007).

⁴ Amayesh refers to a census to identify foreign nationals periodically carried out by BAFIA. Three *amayesh* or census have been conducted with the most recent conducted in 2008.

⁵ U.S. Committee for Refugees, "World Refugee Survey 2004," In *Iran Country Report*, 2004.

achievements occupational skills, and economic opportunity in Iran have inspired different values and aspirations, although it should be not ignored that some Afghans claim that they have regressed in material terms in Iran. However, policies which differentiate non-nationals from nationals shape the opportunities and experiences of second-generation Afghans in Iran. Second-generation Afghans in Iran have been raised in an arguably more liberal social and religious environment, and exposed to values, attitudes and practices that are different from those of their parents. It is perhaps inevitable that some of their preferences and aspirations will reflect some convergence with their Iranian counterparts. Inter-generational differences occur universally as a result of naturally occurring social and technological change, however where two generations have been raised in different cultural and social environments, these differences may be exacerbated. Until now, the experiences and aspirations of this large population of Afghans in Iran have not been the subject of focused research, yet they potentially offer critical data for understanding the dynamics of return decision-making processes and rationales.

Figure 1. Age distribution of registered Afghans in Iran by sex (Amayesh 2005)



1.2 Brief history of Afghans in Iran

The transitory migration of Afghans to Iran motivated by economics has been documented since the nineteenth century, and probably also occurred earlier than this. Several hundred thousand Afghan labour migrants were said to be working in Iran during the 1970s oil-led construction boom. Afghans also have migrated to Iran as a result of impoverishment and debt brought on by drought.

Between 1979 and 2001, Afghan migration to Iran was primarily motivated by the direct and indirect effects of war, including widespread violence and insecurity, compulsory national service, insecurity, threat to female honour (*namoos*), unemployment and inflation. The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan resulted in a massive influx of 2.9 million Afghans into Iran between 1980 and 1989. Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, 1.4 million Afghans returned from Iran to Afghanistan in 1992, but again after the fall of Kabul in 1992, a third wave of movement to Iran and Pakistan occurred. A fourth major movement occurred in response to the repressive rule of Taliban militants and fighting between Taliban and opposition groups between 1994 and 2001.

Iran is one of the most concentrated areas of Afghan migrants and refugees. Iran's early policy towards Afghans seeking asylum has been described by many commentators as

“open door”. In a strong demonstration of Islamic solidarity, the Iranian government demonstrated considerable generosity to Afghans fleeing communist-occupied Afghanistan. It granted Afghans access to its high quality social services (health and education) and permitted them to work. Afghans were considered *mohajerin*, which rather than simply translating to mean migrants, in the context of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan referred to “religious migrants”. However, after the withdrawal of the Soviets in 1989 and the subsequent civil war between various *mujahiddin* factions, Afghans seeking refuge in post-1993 Iran were no longer considered to be religious migrants, but simply immigrants. From 1993, the Iranian government started issuing temporary registration cards to undocumented or newly arrived Afghans. In official documents the government of Iran has referred to both undocumented and documented Afghans as immigrants rather than refugees.

1.3 Iranian government policy towards Afghans

In order to understand the political context within which second-generation Afghans grew up in Iran, it is useful to present a summary of changes in government policy towards Afghans. In 1976, Iran ratified the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol with reservations regarding articles 17 (wage earning employment), 23 (public relief), 24 (labour legislation and social security), and 26 (freedom of movement). With regard to article 17, recognised refugees with residence permits must apply for work permits in Iran, which in most cases restrict them to manual labour. In practice, while the authorities have granted few work permits to refugees, it should be said that they have generally tolerated the presence of Afghans working in areas where labour shortages have existed.

From 1979-92, most Afghans entering Iran were issued with “blue cards” which indicated their status as *mohajerin* or involuntary migrants. Blue card holders were granted indefinite permission to stay in Iran legally. As a result of domestic economic and social concerns in the 1990s, refugee policy shifted to emphasise prevention of illegal entry and repatriation of Afghan refugees.⁶ Since this time, Iran has actively pushed for the repatriation of Afghans back to Afghanistan by:

- making repeated efforts (often in collaboration with UNHCR) to document and register Afghans in Iran in preparation for repatriation;
- implementing several deportation campaigns, the most recent in early 2007;
- incrementally reducing services to Afghans (particularly education); and
- legislating employment restrictions (most notably Article 48 in 2000).

In April 2000, the parliament passed a law under Article 48 of the third five-year development plan requiring all foreigners not in possession of a work permit to leave Iran by March 2001. This was followed in June 2001 with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs subjecting employers of foreign illegal workers to heavy fines and imprisonment.⁷ Many small businesses employing Afghans were shut down, and the government revoked the work permits of some Afghans. Afghans with residence cards were permitted to work in 16 categories of mainly manual work.

⁶ B. Rajaei, “The politics of refugee policy in post-revolutionary Iran,” *The Middle East Journal*, 54, no. 1 (2000): 62.

⁷ Turton and P. Marsden, *Taking Refugees for a Ride? The Politics of Refugee Return to Afghanistan* (Kabul: AREU, 2002), 31.

In 2000, the Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs (BAFIA) conducted a major exercise in registration of all foreigners. BAFIA issued certificates to documented foreigners that superseded all previously issued documents, which became null and void. Prior to the 2001 registration, Afghans had received a range of statuses, the majority without the rights and benefits normally accorded to refugees under the UN Refugee Convention. UNHCR agreed to participate with the Iranian government in a joint repatriation programme in 2000. Under this programme, Afghans in Iran, regardless of their status or time of arrival, were invited to come forward either to benefit from material assistance to repatriate voluntarily, or to present their claims for the need for protection. Under the joint programme, those Afghans recognised as requiring protection were granted three-month temporary residence permits (renewable four times), and were required to reside in the province where the permits were issued until the situation was conducive for their return. Separate from the refugee-screening procedure, BAFIA and UNHCR established a voluntary repatriation programme.

In 2003, under Article 138 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 11 articles were approved by Member Ministers of the Executive Co-ordination Council for Foreign Nationals to accelerate repatriation of Afghan nationals. These policies discriminate against Afghans in order to encourage their repatriation. The articles sought to reduce Afghan access to employment by targeting legal action at employers who hired Afghans without work permits; prohibited renting accommodation to Afghan nationals, except to those who entered the country with a valid passport and visa and who had been issued residence permits; and limited access to administrative and banking services for those without a passport, visa and residence permit. The Iranian government implemented further measures intended to “induce a more substantial level of repatriation of Afghans in 2004” by raising the cost of living for Afghans in Iran.⁸ These measures included the introduction of school fees for Afghan children at all levels, and the re-registration of all Afghans who had been registered under the 2001 BAFIA exercise (including payment of a USD6-8 fee).

In 2005, BAFIA was enabled to collect fees for services from foreign migrants residing in Tehran City for at least 18 months, with fees due at the time of issue or renewal of ID cards. The rationale of the bill was that foreign migrants were putting a burden on civil services. Fees were scaled according to family size:

- Single-person migrant families - 700,000 Rials [USD75]
- Two-person migrant families - 1,000,000 Rials [USD107]
- Three- or four-person migrant families - 1,500,000 Rials [USD161]
- More than four-person migrant families - 2,000,000 Rials [USD214]

Also in 2005, contradicting efforts to rationalise services to Afghans and increase costs, the government of Iran reduced school fees for Afghans for the 2005-6 school year. Depending on the education level and province, annual fees per student ranged from 200,000-670,000 Rials (USD22-74). In the previous school year 2004-5, these fees had ranged from 800,000-1.2 million Rials (USD89-133).⁹

⁸ UNHCR, “Global Report 2003: Islamic Republic of Iran,” <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/opendoc.pdf?id=40c6d7500&tbl=PUBL> (accessed 8 September 2005)

⁹ U.S. Committee for Refugees, “World Refugee Survey 2006,” In *Iran Country Report*, 2006.

The US Committee on Refugees reported significant deportations of Afghans deemed to be illegal: 140,000 in 2004, 200,000 in 2005 and 130,000 in 2006.¹⁰ This continued in 2007 with the Afghan government stating that since April, some 200,000 Afghans thought to be living in Iran illegally were deported.¹¹

¹⁰ U.S. Committee for Refugees, 2005; U.S. Committee for Refugees, 2006; U.S. Committee for Refugees, 2007.

¹¹ <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=73721>, 14 August 2007.

2. Study Context

Fieldwork for the research into second-generation Afghans in Iran was conducted in the cities of Mashhad, Tehran and Isfahan (see Appendix 1) during a 16-week period from July to November 2006. The research team comprised five university-based academics (three demographers and a sociologist from the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Tehran, and an anthropologist from the Australian National University), and five field-based interviewers (two male and three females). The interviewers were themselves second-generation Afghans, four from Mashhad and one from Tehran, and all were either university graduates or current students, and all were Hazara Shia. One interviewer was designated the role of field manager, and each interview team comprised two members: one interviewer who conducted the interview, and another who recorded and transcribed the interview.

Fieldwork consisted of semi-structured interviews using an open-ended questionnaire format, focus group discussions, and basic social mapping (see Appendix 1). Prior to the commencement of fieldwork, training was conducted at the University of Tehran, attended by the research team including Iran-based academics, and three interviewers. During the course of the research, several meetings were held in Mashhad and Isfahan attended by academic and interviewer team members to discuss issues arising from the fieldwork. Interview teams in each city maintained routine contact with the university-based research director. This allowed for resolution of issues and problems associated with sampling, and the content of the questionnaire, and helped to ensure the quality of data collection. In each fieldsite, a key informant from the local community, usually associated with the local Afghan-administered school, was engaged to identify suitable second-generation respondents based on the study's sampling frame (see Table 2) and also offered schools as a venue for conducting interviews. Reliance on key informants in the education field to identify respondents affected the final sample, thus fewer stories of less educated Afghans are captured in the study.

Table 1. Second-generation Afghan study sample (N=80)

	Female		Male		TOTAL
	Single	Married	Single	Married	
Mashhad	9	7	7	9	32
Tehran	9	7	9	7	32
Isfahan	4	4	6	2	16
Sub-TOTAL	22	18	22	18	80
	40		40		

In order to compare results across Iran and Pakistan, AREU sought to standardise the research methodology and issued the Iran- and Pakistan-based research teams with interview guides for both individual interviews and focus group discussions. These interview guides were then adapted and translated into Farsi by the research team in Iran. Interviews were conducted in Dari, an Afghan dialect of the Iranian national language Farsi. Eighty individual semi-structured interviews (see Table 2), six focus group discussion, and eight parental interviews (i.e., with the parents of second-generation Afghans) were conducted.

The duration of individual interviews ranged between two and two-and-a-half hours. The summer months comprise the peak work period for migrants, particularly those in the construction sector, and as interview times usually coincided with work hours, interviewers experienced some difficulty in identifying respondents based on the

sampling frame. Female respondents were less willing than their male counterparts to participate in an interview, probably due to cultural restrictions placed on women's participation, and the requirement to gain permission from parents or spouses prior to the interview. Interviews with female respondents were usually conducted in the interviewee's home, and appointment times pre-arranged to minimise interruption by other household members and tasks.

Six focus group discussions (one male and one female focus group in every site) were conducted across the three fieldwork locations. None of the participants were the subjects of individual interviews. Focus groups discussions in Tehran were held at the Faculty of Social Sciences, while those in Mashhad and Isfahan were held at local Afghan schools. Eight interviews with parents of second-generation Afghans were conducted to understand generational issues. Finally, basic social mapping data about community institutions was collated, as were interviewers' observations and insights during the course of interviewing and social mapping (see Appendix 2).

2.1 Selection of fieldsites

The research team selected three locations (Mashhad, Tehran, and Isfahan) due to the size of the Afghan population in their respective provinces.¹² While Zahedan was a research site for the previous Transnational Networks study, due to security concerns associated with its border location, Isfahan was selected as the third site. As a field location, Isfahan has the advantage of hosting a large population of Afghans resident in outlying or peri-urban areas of the city (e.g., Dolatabad and Rahnan). Apart from Isfahan, respondents were drawn from urban areas because the vast majority of Afghans in Iran reside in urban locations.

In Mashhad, fieldwork was conducted during the period July-September 2006. There were some difficulties in identifying suitable Tajik and Pashtun ethnic respondents according to the sampling frame, as the Afghan population in Mashhad is predominantly Hazara. Fieldwork in Tehran was conducted over a five week period between September and November, and field work in Isfahan was conducted during a two week period in November. Due to time constraints, only 16 respondents were interviewed in Isfahan.

2.2 Selection of respondents

The main criteria for selecting second-generation Afghan respondents was that they be aged 15 to 30 years old, and either born in Iran, or had spent more than half of their lives in Iran. The quota sampling frame was designed to ensure inclusion of:

- both single and married respondents;
- households reflecting a range of socio-economic status (low, medium and high);
- respondents with a range of education levels (low, medium and high); and
- respondents from a range of Afghan ethnic groups.

These selection criteria were considered important in exploring the complexities of the situation of second-generation Afghans. In building the sampling frame based on these criteria several assumptions were made. First, marital status may affect adaptation in the host society and perceptions in relation to return. Second, economic status, education level, and ethnicity may affect the opportunities and experiences of second-generation Afghans in Iran, and by extension, their return intentions.

¹² Thirty-one percent of registered Afghans reside in Tehran Province, 15 percent in Khorasan Province (Mashhad) and 12.6 percent in Isfahan Province (Amayesh 2005).

Interviewers ascertained the economic status of respondents by inquiring about the economic activities of the household, and in cases where interviews were conducted in homes, observation of household assets contributed to classification. This has several risks, particularly related to interviewer subjectivity. Likewise, because Iranian legislation limits Afghans to certain occupations, economic activity may not accurately represent socio-economic status. This initial classification was done for the purpose of the quota sampling. Later, during the data analysis stage, a more nuanced assessment of respondents' socio-economic status classified respondents into five categories: low, below average, average, above average and high (see Appendix 3). This categorisation used up to ten indicators: education level, occupational prestige, monthly income, house and agricultural land ownership in Afghanistan, household items owned, amount of house bond, amount of house rent, interviewer's estimation of the household's socio-economic situation and the general socio-economic ranking of the residential area.

Snowball sampling techniques were used to identify respondents through social networks, and the study's Afghan field manager contacted local residents, elders, organisations, Afghan schools and cultural centres, and Afghan shops to identify suitable respondents. Identifying respondents according to the sampling frame criteria proved both difficult and time-consuming. This was most evident in Mashhad where the sample frame required identification of ethnic Tajik and Pashtun respondents in a predominantly Hazara ethnic location. Respondent selection in Tehran and Isfahan was accelerated as key informants were briefed on the sampling frame in advance, and arranged interview times with selected respondents in determined locations (at an Afghan school, or in the home of the respondent or key informant).¹³

¹³ Reliance on key informants not trained in research or the study's aims may have led to bias in the sample toward educated respondents and professionals.

3. Characteristics of the study sample

This section examines the social, economic and demographic characteristics of the study population, including: time spent in Iran, education opportunity and achievement in relation to aspiration and current vocation in relation to aspiration. All of these factors contribute to influence second-generation Afghans' relationships with Iranians, perceptions of identity and their intention to return to Afghanistan or stay in Iran, which are discussed in the chapters following this one.

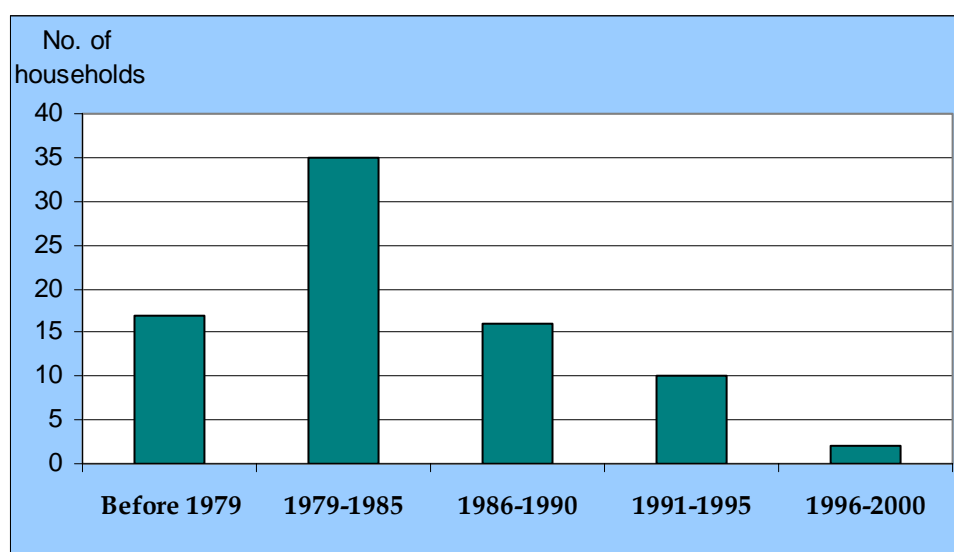
3.1 Social and demographic characteristics

The basic social and demographic characteristics of the second-generation Afghans who participated in individual interviews are useful background data for helping interpret the qualitative data. Note that the term "household" refers to those people sharing the same residence and may include kin and non-kin. The household matrix referred to the SGA's father as household head when the latter was living with his/her parents, or referred to the SGA's husband as household head when the SGA was a married woman. Where a second-generation Afghan was the household head, the household matrix referred to this person.

Of the 80 households profiled via individual interviews, 76 were male-headed and four were headed by females. Household size varied from 1 to 13 people, with a mean of 5.4 people per household. The majority of respondents (N=56) lived in nuclear families with 13 respondents living with extended families, seven in other mixed family groupings and four living alone.

Most Afghans interviewed in the study came to Iran during the period 1979 to 1985 (see Figure 2). Thirty-two reported their families came from Kabul, followed by Herat (N=10), Mazar-e Sharif (N=8), Bamiyan (N=7) and Ghazni (N=5). In terms of reasons for migration to Iran, 65 households migrated to Iran mainly due to war and insecurity in Afghanistan, 12 referred to poor economic conditions in Afghanistan, and three mentioned pilgrimage to Shiite sites in Iran.

Figure 2. Study sample, period of first arrival in Iran (N=80)



Regarding property ownership in Afghanistan, about 21 households claimed that they owned a private house in Afghanistan. Ownership of agricultural land in Afghanistan was less (N=29), with land size varying between 1 to 64 *jeribs*, with a mean of eight *jeribs* per household.¹⁴ In contrast, only five Afghan households involved in the study owned their own house in Iran. (Irrespective of affordability issues, Iranian state legislation prohibits non-nationals from owning property.) The cost of renting a house in Iran requires both initial bond known as *rahn* and monthly rent.¹⁵ On average, households paid 62,000 Tooman (USD67) monthly rent, and an initial bond payment of 3,067,000 Tooman (USD3,242). Combining the cost of monthly rent and bond, households were paying on average 154,000 Tooman (USD166) per month to rent a house to live in. Taking average monthly wages into account, households were paying about 60 percent of their income in rent.

Table 2 provides an overview of socio-economic status (SES) of the households profiled. Ownership of household goods and property¹⁶ was one of ten indices included in the SES measure (see Appendix 3). Each of the ten indicators was classified into 5 categories and given scores between 1 and 5 (one=low, 5=high), and scores for categories were added together. The socio-economic status of the respondents was classified according to the five categories (low, middle to low, middle, middle to high, and high). Although a range of households were profiled, overall, socio-economic status was estimated to be relatively low; in fact about 60 percent of (N=46) households were assessed to be low or below average. About 21 percent (N=17) of households were assessed as above average or high.

Table 2. Socio-economic status of sample households (N=80)

SES	Low	Below average	Average	Above average	High
No. of households	15	31	17	10	7
Percent	18.8	38.8	21.3	12.5	8.8

The mean age of second-generation Afghans interviewed was 24 years (Male=25, Female=23 years) (Table 3).

Thirty-one respondents were born in Iran and 48 were born in Afghanistan. These proportions are similar to the result for all registered Afghans in Iran recorded in the 2005 Amayesh. The age of arrival in Iran for those born outside Iran varied from 1 to 12 years, with a mean of six years (Figure 3).

¹⁴ *Jerib* is a unit of land measurement in Afghanistan, approximately one fifth of a hectare.

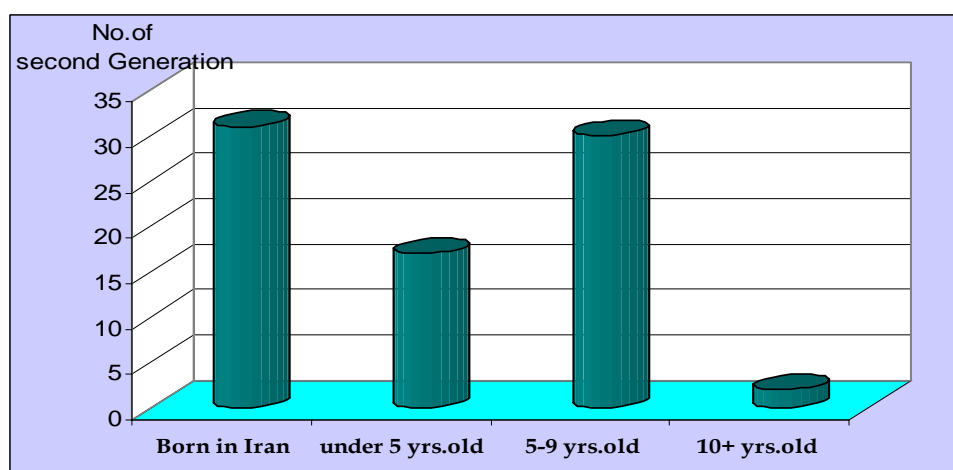
¹⁵ *Rahn* refers to a type of bond where the landlord invests the bond and keeps the interest, returning the principal intact to the renter at the end of the rental contract; the higher the *rahn*, the lower the rent, and vice versa.

¹⁶ Colour televisions were owned by 91 percent (N=73) of households profiled, telephone by 67 percent (N=54), freezer by 66 percent (N=53), radio/cassette recorder by 62 percent (N=50), sewing machine by 60 percent (N=48) and video by 51 percent (N=41). About one third of households had a mobile phone and the same proportion (N=28) owned a personal computer. Mobile phone ownership in Iran is increasingly common among the less educated and poor in Iran. The high level of ownership of computers may not necessarily be representative of the average second-generation household, and may reflect the high level of university-educated males in the university-based focus group. About four percent (N=3) owned a private car, while 10 percent (N=8) owned a motor bike, and 25 percent (N=20) a bicycle. Gold or other jewellery was owned by 69 percent (N=55).

Table 3. Second-generation sample by age and gender (N=80)

Age group	Gender		No. of Sample
	Male	Female	
15-20	9	11	20
20-25	13	19	32
25-30	18	10	28
Mean of age	(24.7)	(22.8)	(23.8)
Total	40	40	80

Figure 3. Age upon arrival of second-generation Afghans in Iran (N=80)



Based on the sampling frame, second-generation Afghan respondents were selected equally by sex. Half of the respondents were single, 36 were married and the remaining four were engaged to be married. (The 2005 Amayesh reported that 79 percent of women aged 29 and below are married, for men this figure is 31 percent.) The mean age at marriage for both sexes was 21 years, with 23 for men and 19 for women.

Nineteen of the second-generation respondents were heads of the household. Forty-four were children of the household head, 16 were a spouse of the household head and one was a daughter-in-law. In terms of ethnicity, 46 were Hazara, 30 Tajik, three Pashtun, and one was Ghezlbash (Table 4). This matches the ethnic distribution of Afghans according to the 2005 Amayesh data; however, the proportion of Hazaras included in the study is high, with the corresponding proportions of Tajiks and Pashtuns being low.

Eight respondents were either the father or mother of second-generation Afghans interviewed in the study. According to the sampling frame (see Appendix 4), in each site, two fathers and one mother should be interviewed; however, only two were interviewed in Isfahan. Appendix 5 shows the demographic characteristics of these respondents. In summary, they were equally Hazara and Tajik, two were non-literate and six literate (elementary education (3), secondary education (1), diploma (1), religious education (1)), and the cohort included housewives (3), labourers (2), a farmer (1), an electrician (1) and a chain maker (1). The socio-economic status for these respondents was equally spread: low (3), medium (2), and high (2).

Table 4. Proportion of ethnicity in Afghan population (comparison of 2005 Amayesh data and second-generation study sample)

2005 Amayesh Data		Second-generation study sample	
Hazara	39 %	Hazara	57.5 % (N=46)
Tajik	21.2 %	Tajik	37.5 % (N=30)
Pashtun	8.5 %	Pashtun	3.8 % (N=3)
Other and not stated	31.3 %	Other and not stated	1.3 % (N=1)

3.2 Education

In general, Amayesh data illustrate that second-generation Afghans have higher levels of education than their parents' generation, particularly at secondary levels and below (Table 5). These figures should be taken as broadly indicative only, as disclosure of education level was voluntary in the Amayesh, resulting in underestimation. The only reliable category is non-literacy.

Table 5. Distribution of registered Afghans surveyed by level of education and age (2005 Amayesh)

Level of education	15-29	30+
Illiterate	29.8	55.4
Primary	53.3	32.3
Secondary	12.6	5.7
Diploma	3.9	4.8
Religious schooling	0.16	0.6
University	0.2	1.4

Table 6 shows that the proportions of those selected for interview in this study had considerably higher levels of education than among registered Afghans reported in the 2005 Amayesh, likely in part a result of relying on key informants in the education field in selecting respondents. The proportions of the study respondents who were non-literate (N=4; 5%) or had primary school education (N=9; 11 percent) are lower than amongst all registered second-generation Afghans. Those with lower secondary level education (N=24; 30%), and upper secondary level education (N=11; 13.75 percent) are also higher. The proportion of study respondents with university-level education (N=17; 21.25%) shows the greatest difference.

State-run Iranian schools

The vast majority (N=51; 67 percent) of literate second-generation Afghans interviewed had attended Iranian schools; 15 percent (N=11) had attended Afghan schools. Several respondents mentioned that they had attended Iranian schools as they did not have access to self-regulated independent Afghan schools at the time of their schooling, implying a preference for this type of schooling. Additionally, some six percent (N=5) had attended Iranian schools before deciding to switch to an Afghan school, and about the same figure acted in reverse: attended Afghan schools before deciding to switch to an Iranian school. Females were more likely to attend Iranian schools than males. Some

interviewers put this down to higher acceptance by girls' schools of female students who are Afghan, compared to acceptance of male students who are Afghan by boys' schools. Discrimination and harassment is said to be lower towards female students compared with their male counterparts.

Table 6. Distribution of second-generation Afghans surveyed by level of education and sex (N=80)

Level of education	Male	Female	Total
Not literate	2	2	4
Primary	5	4	9
Lower secondary	10	14	24
Upper secondary	7	4	11
Secondary (completed)	5	7	12
Associate of Arts (AA)	1	2	3
BA	7	6	13
MA	3	1	4
Total	40	40	80

The benefits of Iranian schools in relation to self-run Afghan schools were listed as quality in facilities and teaching methods and regulation/discipline in the school environment. Contrasting the education system in Iran with Afghanistan, it was the systematic character of a centralised education system that drew most attention. A male studying for a bachelor's degree in Mashhad explained:

"Afghanistan does not have a unified educational system but in Iran the first thing you come across is a unified educational system. For example, if you want to go to a school in a remote town, the system is unified. You study the same books as other students with the same methods of teaching but in Afghanistan the school determines the system of education or even the teacher. Every teacher has his or her own system and even the resources are different. The books taught in one part of Afghanistan are different from the books in the other part." (Mm04)

Respondents assessed the education system in Afghanistan in almost unanimously negative terms. This assessment tended to be grounded in the distant past: either in their own experience as students during the Taliban period or earlier, or in their parents' narrative from this period or during the time of the Soviet occupation. A few commented on the system based on their observations during a recent visit to Afghanistan.

Some respondents viewed fairness in relation to discipline in the education system in Iran in positive terms. For example, a 30-year-old male educated to BA level in Tehran stated:

"The memories [of school in Afghanistan] that I can recall are bad. Teachers delivered severe beatings to pupils, laying them on the ground and thrashing them. On the whole it was a violent and harsh environment...(In Iran) I liked my teachers and yearned for school on Fridays when it was closed. In Iran they teach conscientiously and are mindful of what we have to achieve. In 1382 [2003] I went to Afghanistan and saw that the educational conditions are still the same as before. The teachers have little education and the students despite studying for six or seven years still cannot perform simple writing and reading exercises. The same old and decrepit educational system persists in Afghanistan." (Tm03)

“Moderateness” in relation to behaviour and worldview was also mentioned as an effect of literacy. For example, a 20-year-old single woman educated to diploma level in Isfahan explained:

“Migration to Iran has enabled Afghans to become educated. Sometimes I thank God for making migration possible. When Afghans migrated they put aside their old prejudices. In the past perhaps the Sunni did not like the Shiite to be his neighbour. But migration has brought understanding; their mental attitudes have changed ... here [in Iran] we’ve learnt to be ‘moderate’ about everything.” (If04)

Doubtless, moderateness in relation to behaviour may also be an effect of migration where one’s status as a non-national minority, and particularly in Iran where most Afghans are considered to be illegal by the state, means that people act in an understated manner in order not to attract attention.

The focus on natural sciences was considered to be another benefit of Iranian education. A 30-year-old male in Mashhad said: “Iran is a society which has progressed rapidly during the last three decades. And they had all the opportunities to advance in terms of science. But in our society this was the opposite...” (Mm15) Textbooks in Afghanistan were recalled by respondents to be in short supply or non-existent whereas in Iran they were published annually and made accessible to all students.

The size of classes in Iran also was considered to be beneficial by one 22-year-old educated to lower secondary level: “When my sister came here [Iran] I asked her about there [Afghanistan] and she said the classes were so crowded that we couldn’t understand the lessons.” (If05)

Respondents also praised the advanced educational background and pedagogical methods of teachers in Iran compared to Afghanistan. A 16-year-old male studying at lower secondary level explained:

“I went to school in Afghanistan in 1377 [1998] at the time of Taliban. The teachers were all clergymen. The books taught in Afghanistan were very difficult. Of course, they might have changed now. We even learnt the alphabet with difficulty. When we studied in one grade we learnt only the alphabet. But when we came to Iran and finished the first grade of primary school I could read newspapers and books. But in Afghanistan I could not write my name after finishing the second grade of primary school.” (Tm09)

One respondent claimed that it was the sophisticated and progressive education system in Iran underpinned by certain cultural values and ethics that Afghanistan shared with Iran that meant that he would rather undertake tertiary education in Iran than the West:

“The advantage of studying in Iran is that Iran is among the developed countries of the Middle East, and if we [Afghans] can establish a relationship with such a society it has many benefits for us. We share the same culture, we share similar traditions, and these common cultures can be a reason for studying in Iran. I personally believe that if I want to study in the human sciences it is much better to study in Iran than to study in Western countries.” (Mm08)

Contained in this respondent’s comment is a sentiment about the potential of Afghanistan to become more like Iran in terms of its level of “development” which is reflected elsewhere in this report in terms of education (knowledge and literacy).

In relation to university attendance in the mainstream system, this has changed in response to regulations to accelerate repatriation by the government of Iran. Prior to 2003, registered Afghans were permitted to compete with Iranian students for places in a limited number of Iranian universities through the state examination system known as *konkooor*. From 2003, *konkooor* places for Afghan students were restricted, as was their entrance into a pre-university programme known as *pish danesh gahi*. Afghan students may attend private university in Iran provided they have an average score of 14 out of 20, and are self-funded.

Self-regulated independent Afghan schools

Self-regulated Afghan schools in Iran were established by the Afghan community following legislation which precluded “undocumented” Afghan children from attending state-run schools, and set school fees for Afghan students (about USD22-74 per student depending on the level and province¹⁷ compared with around USD28 in self-regulated Afghan schools¹⁸). These schools offer basic education facilities, and do not receive funding from the Iranian Government or international non-governmental organisations. The earliest self-regulated schools were established during the period 1983-84 in the suburb of Golshahr on the outskirts of Mashhad. Established during the period of influx of Afghans considered to be religious migrants fleeing the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the schools and their founders initially were supported by the Government of Iran. The schools tended to be run by men who had been involved in cultural and educational activities and were educated in Afghanistan.

A second generation of schools was established in the following decade by Afghans who had fled Afghanistan following the fall of the Najibullah regime, and during the period of Taliban rule. The imperative of self-regulated schools was greater during this period as legislation prohibited attendance in state-run schools by Afghans who were considered to be undocumented. These schools tend to be led by second-generation Afghans educated in Iran, and many are women and Shiite Hazara. Most of these second-generation schools were established through the effort of an individual rather than a board of trustees, which was the case of the earlier schools. The curriculum of Afghan schools and resource materials are aligned with the mainstream Iranian curriculum, although history, geography and social studies textbooks have been published recently to provide Afghan children with information about Afghanistan.

Students attending Afghan schools may be categorised in terms of several characteristics:

- children of undocumented Afghans not permitted to enrol in state-run schools;
- children who have relevant ID documents but whose parents have travelled to other provinces to seek work and therefore their residence document is invalid;
- children whose education has been delayed and are too old for a junior class;
- children from large families that cannot afford the school fees of state-run schools; and
- children who returned to an Afghan school after seeking to shift to an Iranian school which required them to repeat schooling because their previous Afghan school qualification was not recognised.

¹⁷ U.S. Committee for Refugees, “World Refugee Survey 2006.”

¹⁸ P. J. Sehgal Wickramasekara, F. Mehran, L. Noroozi and S. Eisazade, “Afghan households in Iran: Profile and impact (final report)” (Geneva: International Migration Program, International Labour Office, 2006), 42.

The majority of self-regulated schools are held in houses with a yard, and rooms are used as classrooms. The size of the house depends on the size of school and number of students. Some of the early self-regulated schools were held in mosques and *hosseinieh* (meeting place for religious commemoration of the martyrdom of the Shia Imam Hossein, and other communal religious activities). In many cases tables and chairs were made available by the Iranian Ministry of Education. However most schools did not have library or laboratory facilities and learning was mediated through textbooks only.

The benefits of Afghan schools were mentioned not in terms of a learning environment, but in terms of the (Afghan) social and cultural environment offered: students can better understand Dari-speaking teachers and they are surrounded by students who are also Afghan and are more likely to have similar socio-economic and political statuses. This concern to restrict children's socialisation to other Afghans was not reflected in the interviews with eight parents of second-generation children. Regarding their children's school, these parents said that their children had mainly studied in Iranian schools, and that they did not worry about their children becoming Iranian because their aim in going to school was to become educated only, and that they learned about cultural matters at home.

Additionally, enrolment in Afghan schools requires no documentation, allowing all Afghan students to attend school without threat or risk of expulsion, and historical and cultural occasions such as Afghanistan's Independence Day are celebrated. Disadvantages of Afghan schools were listed as: sub-standard teaching facilities, low wages paid to teachers [compared with government schools], use of untrained teachers, absence of curriculum, ineffective administration, and excessive range of ages in junior classes due to delays in starting schooling for many children.

Respondents were critical of the lack of learning facilities in Afghan schools. A 19-year-old woman educated to upper secondary level and working as a teacher in a self-regulated school in Isfahan explained: "The Afghan schools don't have any library, prayer room, big yard, facilities for the children to play, proper black boards or even enough chalk. We face many problems. If you bring an Iranian here I don't think he could sit in these classrooms." (If07) Some respondents compared the conditions of Afghan schools in Iran with those in Afghanistan. In both, some students sat on the floor, and in both, classes could be conducted under canvas.

In response to the huge increase in Afghan schools from 2002, the Iranian Ministry of Education approached the Embassy of Afghanistan in Tehran to invite their involvement in monitoring self-regulated schools and standardising qualifications. As a result several regulations to standardise schools was introduced, including: formulation of a constitution for Afghan schools, regulating the educational pre-requisites of teachers, distribution of certain educational resources, monitoring of secondary school examinations, and publishing and submitting monthly reports on the condition of self-regulated schools to the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan. Qualifications obtained in Iran are recognised in Afghanistan. Iran-based Afghan schools which are registered by the Ministry of Education in Afghanistan are considered valid up to the second grade of secondary school. Those students who received their subsequent year (diploma) in Iran must sit for an examination in Afghanistan to validate this qualification.

While officially the government does not recognise the qualifications of students from Afghan schools because they have deemed Afghan schools to be illegal, in practice, many Iranian schools have recognised the qualifications of Afghan students if they also have valid residential documents. Afghan schools accept enrolments up to Yr 11

(diploma level or *diplom-e mottevasseteh*), and in larger cities a few schools also offer Yr 12 (*pish danesh gahi*). Those Afghans who have attained Yr 11 in an Afghan school and wish to proceed to Year 12 in a mainstream school may do so provided they are registered (i.e., have requisite identification documents) and have a minimum score of 17.5 out of 20.

In 2002, self-regulated schools were declared illegal by the government on the basis that they encouraged Afghans to remain in Iran. Implementation of the order to close down schools varied between districts, often based on the relationship between government and police officials and the local Afghan community. For example, in Shahr-e Rey in Tehran City, some 60 schools were closed. In the period 2005-6, schools in Mashhad and Isfahan were also closed, however the Afghan community resisted the closures by shifting to new locations. In some locations, students convened in teachers' houses in order to continue classes. It can be said that the closure of larger schools resulted in the proliferation of smaller informal schools.

According to data available for this study, during 2005-6, approximately 100,000 Afghans were enrolled in some 350 self-regulated schools in Tehran Province (particularly Varamin, Ghiamsdasht, Pakdasht, Karaj and Shahr-e Rey), and Khorasan, Qom, Isfahan, Sistan and Baloochistan Provinces. Student enrolment figures varied according to location; a small number of schools in Tehran City carry as many as 1500 enrolments, while enrolment of about 130 are usual for schools in outlying areas such as Varamin and Karaj in Tehran Province, and other provinces.

Private sector education facilities

In addition to state-run schools and self-regulated Afghan schools, some second-generation Afghans have attended special training courses run by the private sector and international NGOs such as the Japan-funded Nikoo Institute in Mashhad, the Netherlands-funded Arsidalf Institute in Shahr-e Rey, and the Iranian Red Crescent organisation. Around 54 percent (N=43) of respondents had attended training courses including English (N=12), computing (N=8), Quran (N=6) and other courses (N=17) such as a UN-sponsored course in agriculture, first aid, pharmacology and advanced maths. Other skills mentioned included fine arts (design, drawing, calligraphy, filmmaking, building façade decoration), manufacturing (tailoring, carpet weaving, spinning, ring making) and technical skills (mechanical, electrical, carpentry), and handicrafts (tailoring, embroidery, knitting, fabric decoration, crochet, doll making).

In general, men were twice more likely than women to enrol in ex-school training courses, reflecting the tendency for women of marriageable age to be restricted in their mobility and activity outside of the household. However, men only tended to attend computer courses; equal numbers of men and women had attended courses in English or the Quran. In Mashhad, several of the women respondents had attended courses in pharmacology and first aid (specialising in administration of injections). Forty percent (N=16) of men interviewed and 22 percent (N=9) of women were familiar with the activities of foreign institutes such as Nikoo, Arsidalf and Global Partners Institutes. The UN was mentioned for the financial support provided to female-headed households and the Iranian Red Crescent was mentioned for its first aid and family planning courses.

Reasons for going to school

Literate respondents (N=76) were asked which member/s of the family encouraged or facilitated their going to school, and for what reason. Most respondents (N=39; 51 percent) claimed that immediate family members, particularly parents – either mother

or father – sent their child to school. Some respondents said that their own siblings encouraged and supported the respondent to attend school. The tendency was however for male siblings to encourage their brothers' schooling, but not their sisters'. Some respondents had made the decision themselves to attend school.

The role of parents in decision-making about schooling raises the issue of expectations in relation to education, particularly the relation between education and life opportunity. Around 39 percent (N=30) of respondents claimed the main reason for attending school was to become literate. However, literacy is a means to different ends. Among Afghans, literacy may enable certain religious outcomes, for example, a 24-year-old male with primary education explained: "Yes I had some aims, such as to become literate, understand something, or read a piece of writing. My mother had the same objectives that, for example, I could learn something and read Islamic rules." (Mm14)

Literacy and continuing education may enable vocational outcomes that raise one's socio-economic status. Respondents from Isfahan explained the benefit of schooling less in terms of becoming literate and more in terms of acquiring a higher education and high-ranked profession (e.g., medicine or engineering). For example, a 25-year-old male studying at MA level said: "My family decided. Their intention was that I become a successful person. At first, they intended that I only become literate. But after entering high school, their goal was that I enter university." (Im01) Some parents sought to give their children the opportunity for literacy that they had been denied, as a 22-year-old female educated to diploma level explained: "It was mostly my mother's efforts, because she was illiterate and liked us to at least fulfil our wishes, to study and to go to university and reach a position." (Tf08)

Reasons for dropping out of school

Respondents who had not attended school, or who had left school prior to 12 years of education or the completion of secondary school, were asked to explain their situation. Reasons given included: financial difficulties (25 percent), followed by marriage (which presumably necessitated home duties and greater seclusion for women, and necessitated income generation for men), and lack of pre-requisite ID and residential documents precluding state school enrolment (according to government policy). Recent Iranian government legislation, such as the (2003) eleven *Regulations on accelerating repatriation of Afghan nationals* under Article 138 of the Constitution, differentiates Afghan nationals in terms of those who are registered or documented and those who are not. Some students experienced pressure at school to not attract negative attention, such as this 28-year-old male: "I always tried to act in a way that the deputy or teachers never tell me 'come to the office because you have problems for not having a birth certificate'." (Tm14)

Some discontinued due to negative attitudes towards them by Iranian students. For example, a 21-year-old male educated to lower secondary level said:

"I studied up to the third grade of lower secondary only because I was ridiculed for being Afghan. Because of this I did not continue my study. Otherwise, I would have graduated with an average score of 17 [out of a maximum score of 20]. My scores were not bad but I was fed up because of these issues." (Tm07)

By way of contrast, other respondents experienced the Iranian school environment and relations with Iranian students and teachers in positive terms. A 29-year-old male educated to diploma level said:

“The relationship between Iranian students and Afghans was natural. They became acquainted, socialized and became friends. The [Iranian] teachers had a positive attitude and never discriminated between Afghans and Iranians. In fact they complimented the Afghans who comprised some of the best students with some of the highest grades.” (Mm09)

One respondent claimed that Iranian treatment of Afghan students also depended on the attitudes and dispositions of the latter, and that this was different from one school to the next. A 27-year-old educated to MA level explained:

“At my school in Tehran the teachers and administrative staff were good to us and I studied very hard as a non-national student. As a group, Afghan students at that school showed that we had capability. But in Khatim Abad [Shahr-e Rey, Tehran] the Afghan students were more diverse and could be categorised into three groups: those who were indifferent to studying and were disruptive, those who applied themselves but had little capacity, and those who were excellent students and were well behaved.” (Tf07)

Some female respondents did not continue their schooling due to the household work responsibilities which precluded them from homework. As a 27-year-old married housewife educated to lower secondary level recounted: “I studied the second grade [Year 8] twice because I failed. I could not study because I was doing all of the housework such as washing dishes and sweeping. I failed yet again and after that I decided not to go anymore.” (Tf13)

3.3 Employment

Regarding occupation, 33 respondents categorised themselves as not being currently employed (including students (N=19) and housewives (N=14)). Table 7 shows that of those currently employed, about 20 were employed as professionals and clerks (mainly teachers or principals of independent Afghan schools¹⁹), and 16 worked in petty trades and as plant operators in factories (tailor, bag maker, mason, etc.). Only six were labourers, and the remainder worked in sales. While 22 women respondents were not currently in the labour force, of those who were working, 11 taught in independent Afghan schools and seven were tailors. The distribution of Afghan males across occupations was more dispersed than for females.

Table 7. Distribution of employed second-generation Afghans by current occupation, (N=47)

Occupation	Number	Percent
Professionals and clerks	20	42.5
Salespersons	5	10.6
Crafts and plant operators	16	34.0
Labourers	6	12.8
Total	47	100.0

Note that the distribution of registered Afghans by current occupation according to the 2005 Amayesh (Table 8) shows almost an inversion of proportions, with labourers comprising over 60 percent of registered Afghans in Iran, while professionals and clerks (included in the category “Other”) comprise 17 percent.

¹⁹ Again reflecting easy access to this group and their involvement as key informants in locating respondents.

Part of the reason for the proportional difference between the 2005 Amayesh data for all registered Afghans and the study sample may be the higher education levels of second-generation Afghans as a cohort leading to a higher proportion in professional occupations. It was also more difficult to locate labourers to invite them to participate in the study, as their work kept them away from home or other gathering sites most days. Note that the over-sampling of university-educated respondents may not affect distribution by current occupation, as over-sampling occurred among respondents who were current students, and these respondents tended to register themselves as students (N=19), and were not therefore counted as employed.

Table 8. Distribution of registered Afghans in Iran, by occupation

Occupation	Number	Percent
Simple labourer	105,322	60.18
Farmer	9177	5.24
Tailor	7133	4.08
Bricklayer	3987	2.28
Peddler	3709	2.12
Shoemaker	3383	1.93
Road building labourer	3053	1.74
Seller	1873	1.07
Religious school student	1473	0.84
Carpet weaver	1324	0.76
Stonecutter	1199	0.68
Well sinker	1093	0.62
Brick maker	1031	0.59
Others	31,242	17.85
Total	174,999	100

Source: 2005 Amayesh, 2007 Country Report of the state of refugees and migrants in Iran

Overall, the average second-generation male wage for the occupations listed was 220,000 Toomans per month (USD237), matching the average wage for registered Afghans reported in the 2005 Amayesh. Heads of the households profiled earned an average household monthly income of 230,000 Toomans (USD250).²⁰ This figure is very similar to the average household income of 279,780 Toomans reported in the 2005 Amayesh for registered Afghan households (see Appendix 6).

The relationship between education and jobs

Table 9 shows that education level is not a direct determinant of occupation and income for second-generation Afghans in Iran. (This is also the case for Iranian nationals.) In the case of Afghans, higher education is not necessarily reflected in income or type of occupation as a result of government policy which restricts Afghans to certain manual labour sectors, and under-supply of labour in these sectors which leads to employment opportunity. Second-generation Afghans surveyed who are not literate or primary educated are more likely to be employed in the income bracket defined as medium (150-300,00 Toomans), but less likely than medium and higher educated Afghans to be employed in the income bracket defined as high (300,000+ Toomans). While 50 percent of higher educated Afghans tend to be employed in the lowest income bracket (50%; N=8), one-quarter of higher and middle-educated Afghans are employed at the highest

²⁰ Iranian currency; \$US1=approximately 9,274 Toomans or 92,740 Rials (25 June 2007).

income bracket (25%; N=9) compared to 14 percent (N=6) of Afghans with no education. In summary, two trends can be observed:

- Level of education does not affect the composition of Afghans employed in the lowest income bracket, as Afghans educated to secondary level and above are twice as likely to be employed in the income bracket defined as low, than medium or high income brackets.
- Level of education does affect the composition of Afghans employed in the highest income bracket, as middle and higher educated Afghans are more likely than their lower educated counterparts to be in the highest income bracket.

Table 9. Education and income levels, second-generation Afghans

Education Level	Income Level /1000 Iran Rials			Total
	<1500	1500-3000	>3000	
Low (illiterate and primary)	15	21	6	42
	36.0%	50.0%	14.0%	100.0%
Middle (lower and upper secondary)	7	10	5	22
	32.0%	45.0%	23.0%	100.0%
High (diploma and above)	8	4	4	16
	50.0%	25.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	30	35	15	80

That there is not a clear positive relation between education and income level for Afghans in Iran gives rise to the question whether second-generation assessment of their occupation in Iran affects their decision-making about returning to Afghanistan.

Afghan kin and social networks, particularly fellow Afghans from the same region in Afghanistan, as well as Iranian acquaintances of Afghans, helped second-generation Afghans identify work by passing on information about opportunities. Of second-generation Afghan men in employment, 59 percent (N=19) claimed to be satisfied with their employment and defined this satisfaction in terms of acquiring work experience, contributing to the elimination of Afghan illiteracy through their work in teaching, suitability of the job in terms of the respondent's skills and interests, easiness, independence, social status associated with the job, and better working conditions in Iran compared to Afghanistan. In contrast, the remaining 41 percent (N=13) expressed dissatisfaction with their job, with the main reasons being inadequate wages, low social status, legal problems associated with self-regulated Afghan schools as a workplace, lack of job security, and unsuitable match between respondent's (high) skill level and the job.

In Table 10 the following patterns can be discerned in terms of the relation between job satisfaction and demographic characteristics, and between job satisfaction and return intention:

- There is no particular pattern between education level and job satisfaction (around 72 percent of respondents across each of the levels - low, medium and high - claimed to be satisfied with their current occupation).
- Highest levels of job satisfaction were among those in sales and employed as professional clerks, followed by trades. Those employed as labourers tended to register lowest levels of satisfaction.

- There is no particular pattern between socio-economic status (SES) and level of job satisfaction, with highest satisfaction equally spread between lowest and highest SES, and lowest satisfaction among those in the medium to high bracket.
- A pattern exists between job satisfaction and return intention, with those who are satisfied more likely to want to remain in Iran (of those second-generation respondents who wish to remain in Iran, 70% (N=26) were satisfied with their current occupation).

Table 10. Satisfaction in relation to current occupation, by demographic characteristics (N=51)

Characteristics of second-generation		Satisfaction from current job		No. of Sample
		Have	Do not have	
Total		37 (73%)	14 (27%)	51
Gender	Male	20	12	32
	Female	17	2	19
Country of birth	Iran	16	4	20
	Afghanistan	21	10	31
Ethnicity	Hazara	23	8	31
	Tajik	12	5	17
	Pashtun	1	1	2
	Ghezelbash	1	0	1
Marital status	Single	22	6	28
	Married/Engaged	15	8	23
Education level	Low	6	2	8
	Middle	15	6	21
	High	16	6	22
Occupation categories	Professionals and clerks	17	3	20
	Petty trades	12	6	18
	Labouring	4	5	9
	Sales	4	0	4
Household SES	Low	8	2	10
	Middle to low	13	6	19
	Middle	6	2	8
	Middle to high	5	3	8
	High	5	1	6
Return decision	Return	7	5	12
	Staying in Iran	26	11	37
	Go abroad	2	0	2

There is a pattern between job satisfaction and Afghan employees' relationship with employers and co-workers (Table 11). In relation to employers, respondents were more likely to have an Iranian employer than an Afghan one: around 41 percent (N=16) had Iranian employers compared with 31 percent (N=12) having Afghan employers; around 27 percent (N=9) were self-employed. Those who expressed satisfaction with their current job were more likely to assess their relations with their Iranian employer as "good". Of those respondents with Iranian employers who assessed their current job to be satisfactory, 88 percent (N=16) also assessed as "good" their relation with their Iranian employer. In relation to co-workers, 47 percent (N=24) had Afghan co-workers, 31 percent (N=16) had Iranian co-workers, and 21 percent (N=11) were self-employed or

working with family members. Similarly to the case with Iranian employers, those who assessed their current job as satisfactory were more likely to have good relations with Iranian co-workers: of those respondents with Iranian co-workers who assessed their current job to be satisfactory (N=14), 92 percent (N=13) also assessed as “good” their relations with their Iranian co-workers.

Table 11. Relation between job satisfaction and relations with Iranian co-workers (N=51)

Characteristics of second generation		Satisfaction with current job		No. of Sample
		Have	Do not have	
Total		37 (73%)	14 (27%)	51
Origin of co-worker	Iranian	14	2	16
	Afghan	17	7	24
	Sole worker or with other family members	6	5	11
Relationship with Iranian co-worker	Good	13	1	14
	Not good	1	1	2
Origin of employer	Iranian	16	5	21
	Afghan	12	4	16
	Self-employed	9	5	14
Relationship with Iranian employer	Good	16	2	18
	Not good	0	3	3

Female employees

In relation to second-generation Afghan women, 47 percent (N=19) were in paid work outside of the home in occupations including: teaching, tailoring and embroidery, cultural activities, administrative jobs in universities and medical centres, hairdressing and house cleaning. Overall the average monthly income for second-generation Afghan women was 52,800 Toomans (USD57), or one-quarter of the monthly amount received by their male counterparts, reflecting Afghan men’s role as primary breadwinner. In contrast to second-generation men interviewed, almost all women in paid work outside of the home claimed satisfaction in their job for the following reasons: being of service to fellow Afghans in Iran, reducing Afghan illiteracy, job interest, suitable wages, and the “safety” or morality of the workplace in terms of gender relations. In relation to this latter point it should be noted that the majority of second-generation women in paid work outside of the home were employed by Afghans.

Of the remaining 21 women who were not in paid work outside of the home, both single and married women respondents mentioned that they were restricted by either their fathers or husbands. This practice is underpinned by interpretation of Muslim religious tenets and patriarchal ideology. Some respondents perceived Iranian women to be unrestricted by male family members if they wanted to seek paid work outside of the family home, and that it was class reasons rather than gender restrictions that saw some Iranian women not seek work. For example, a 17-year-old woman working as a tailor in a small factory explained:

“Afghan females whose families prohibit them from working outside of the household may do piece work at home. Those Afghan women whose families are more liberal may get paid work outside of the household. For example, I know of a woman who has opened a shop, and another friend became the secretary of a factory. But persons like me whose families do not

permit me to work outside of the house are forced to do tailoring and embroidering at home. For Iranians though it depends on their status. If their economic position is weaker, they will do paid work. But if their economic status is high, they do not seek to work.” (Mf13)

Single and married second-generation Afghan women had significant responsibilities in relation to home duties and/or raising children. Some casual piece work was undertaken by second-generation women in the home such as shelling pistachios, sorting and grading saffron, embroidery and carpet weaving (these activities were not included in the calculation for women doing paid work outside of the home). Sixty-five percent (N=26) of women interviewed were involved to varying extents in public life outside of the household, for example, attending school, university or a workplace, carrying out daily shopping and/or paying household bills. Note that illiteracy levels were identical for second-generation women and men (N=4), and while more women than men had completed secondary school, the reverse was the case for university education.

Second-generation Afghan women who are educated are likely to work as teachers or participate in cultural activities, similar to their educated Iranian counterparts. However, it was perceived that unlike Afghan women, Iranian women had access to the public sector (civil servant), private sector (nurse, doctor, engineer), trades such as beautician services, as well as sales. Iranian women may also establish small businesses, for example, associated with tailoring and beautician work, whereas Afghans may open a business only in partnership with an Iranian. Afghan women who are not literate and whose socio-economic status is low are likely to work as labourers in the rural sector (farms and orchards), as domestic cleaning help in Iranian households, and in carpet weaving.

Comparative perceptions of work opportunities for Afghans and Iranians

Reflected in the relatively high levels of satisfaction in relation to occupation is the position that any paid work is considered acceptable because Afghans in Iran are not in a position to be selective. For example, a 29-year-old male working as a bazaar shopkeeper explained:

“See, there's no such thing as choosing a job in Iran, it's necessary to work. One needs food and housing, and if one remains unemployed he will face destitution. Relatives and friends guide Afghans towards particular jobs. It's much easier for Iranians to choose a job. They have the right to choose a job because there are various opportunities for work.” (Mm12)

Second-generation male respondents perceived that fellow Afghans are restricted to a range of jobs that are for the most insecure and often undertaken clandestinely. These jobs include labouring, technical and mechanical jobs in manufacturing, artisan work (shoemaking, carpentry, stone cutting), security, street and bazaar vendors. Employment as teachers or administrators in self-regulated Afghan schools is not without social status, but job security is uncertain due to their ambiguous legal status.

Respondents had experienced difficulty in establishing small businesses such as bakeries. For example, an 18-year-old male working as a labourer in Isfahan stated:

“Iranians can open a shop but Afghans are not permitted to do this, and are prevented by the local government and police. In Afghanistan, I was a baker and I wanted to open a bakery in Iran because Afghan women are harassed in [Iranian] bakeries, and because the population of Afghans is very high and they mostly buy bread. I should open a bakery for Afghans so that neither Iranians nor Afghans are ‘pestered’ [gir dadan]. [But] Iranians did not welcome this plan and we were not permitted to open a bakery.” (Im07)

Afghan male respondents perceived their Iranian peers as having better education opportunities to complete high school or university. They also perceived many of their Iranian peers to be unemployed, although they claimed a greater number of job opportunities were available to them that were better paid, more secure and offered work-related insurance. For their Iranian peers, these jobs are located in the civil service, the private sector, sales and taxi driving. Afghans' perception of unemployment among Iranians is not without a moral overlay suggesting laziness on the part of Iranians in opposition to Afghan industriousness. A 28-year-old male working as a butcher explained:

"We Afghans are a very hardworking people, and because of that we are content with very little [whereas] most Iranians are not like this and most are jobless. Not that there is no work for them, there are jobs, but Iranians have high expectations, they want a job where they sit behind a desk in an office. But you cannot achieve that if you don't work hard. Among my Iranian friends there are many who are unemployed." (Tm14)

The majority of respondents, both men and women, considered that discrimination against Afghans in relation to employment was due to Afghans' non-national status. Some however claimed that it was not discrimination but skills, knowledge and capital which Afghans lacked that precluded them from obtaining certain jobs. Work practices and work experiences perceived by respondents as discriminatory included:

- Afghans in Iran work in jobs that are hard and dirty, and attract low social status and wages.
- Iranians are often hired on account of their nationality ahead of Afghans.
- Afghans cannot get jobs in the government sector.
- Afghans are not permitted to establish their own business.
- Undocumented Afghans are not permitted to do any jobs that require identification.
- The Iranian Ministry of Labour fines employers who hire undocumented Afghan workers, thus discouraging employment of Afghans.
- Afghans who work casually and intermittently in the informal sector have no job security.
- Afghans are not provided with work-related insurance.
- Hazara Afghans are discriminated against because of their distinct appearance which identifies them as non-national Afghans.

The validity of these perceptions is backed up by an extensive ILO-sponsored study of Afghans in Iran undertaken in 2006.²¹ Note that these research results are general and do not disaggregate the second generation. Relevant findings based on the ILO surveyed population²² are:

- Twenty-six percent of Iranian employees work in the three sectors (manufacturing, construction, trade and commerce) in which 80 percent of Afghans work.

²¹ Wickramasekara, et al, "Afghan households in Iran: Profile and impact (final report)," 5-6.

²² Data were collected from 1,505 Afghan households in 10 selected cities in Iran, and from 1,049 employers, 1,261 Iranian workers and 2,102 Afghan workers.

- Afghan employees comprise regular workers (39%), casual workers (28%), and self-employed (23%).
- Less than three percent of Afghan employees have written contracts while 77 percent were engaged on the basis of oral contracts; the remainder have no contract whatsoever, and more than 99 percent of Afghan employees do not have any type of work-related insurance (accident, unemployment and retirement insurance).
- In relation to comparative labour force participation rates, although labour force participation of Afghan men and Iranian men are more-or-less the same (around 65%), the figure for Iranian women (around 15%) is twice that of Afghan women (8.2%).
- Iranian workers earn about 12 to 20 percent more than their Afghan counterparts even though the latter's work hours are around 10 percent longer.

Ethnicity which carries certain phenotype markers results in discrimination of some Afghans. Note that Hazara respondents (N=46) comprised 57% of total interviewees (see Table 5). Eight male and four females interviewed claimed that Hazara Afghans, due to their Central Asian phenotype which distinguishes them as non-Iranians, experience more discrimination than other Afghans such as Tajiks (whose lingua franca is Tajik not Dari/Farsi), who tend to have a Southern European phenotype. For example, a 30-year-old in Isfahan explained: "The Tajik-speaking Afghans have acquired some jobs because of their facial similarity with Iranians and the Iranians accept them easily and if the Tajiks learn to speak Farsi then the Iranians cannot distinguish whether they are Afghan or Iranian." (Im04)

A 30-year-old married Tajik working as a principal in an Afghan school in Isfahan compared the experience of Hazaras and Tajiks:

"I have seen many jobs given to people who appear similar to Iranians. These people have influential jobs and live in the wealthier parts of town. For example, I have seen people from Herat and Tajiks who are both very similar to Iranians. They have welding and woodwork workshops, and Iranian customers, but they cannot be distinguished from Iranians. But ethnicities like Hazara are recognisable by their facial features and live and work in temporary jobs in marginal places where they have little contact with Iranians." (Tm03)

Some respondents claimed that Pashtuns who are Sunni are also the subject of discrimination, although this may be due to their Sunni sect in a predominantly Shiite society, rather than their appearance.

4. Social networks and familial relationships

The previous section on employment provided evidence of an association among some respondents between good relations with Iranian employers and co-workers, and job satisfaction, and further, between satisfactory assessment of one's job and intention to remain in Iran (at least in the medium term). This section further considers the impact of social relations more broadly. It is proposed that social networks constitute attachment and connection, and that these experiences may shape the extent to which one does or doesn't feel socially integrated. Further, where social networks include Iranians, these networks may engender a more generalised sense of social integration within Iranian society, influencing return intentions.

Since the 1990s, social scientists have focused their attention on the experiences and behaviour of the second generation as central to understanding immigrant adaptation and progress in the host society. Adaptation models in migration studies tend to theorise that as migrants adapt to the society of destination, their behaviour converges towards that of the native-born population. Adaptation (social adaptation) is defined as "the process by which a group or an individual adjusts his behaviour to suit his social environment, that is, other groups or the larger society".²³

Change is expected to occur at the group level, where there may be physical changes such as new types of housing or increased population density, biological changes like new nutritional regimes, economic changes like new forms of employment, cultural changes like alteration or replacement of original linguistic, religious, educational and technical institutions, and social changes such as realignment of inter-group relations. Changes also may occur at the individual level with changes in values, attitudes, abilities and motives.²⁴

Theoretical models of adaptation propose differences in adaptation at the group level and at the individual level. Duration of residence, level of intermarriage, proficiency in the language of the host society, residential segregation and citizenship have been used as major indicators of migrants' adaptation and or integration to the host society. The marriage of a migrant to a member of the host society ("intermarriage") is considered to be an indicator of adaptation at the individual level. Likewise a person's degree of proficiency in the language of the host society (if the languages of migrant and host society differ) is also claimed as an indicator of adaptation at an individual level. Intermarriage and level of language proficiency can also be measured at a group level, and are arguably more useful when measured at that level. In terms of adaptation at the level of the group, migrant adaptation can be measured by comparing occupational, residential and educational status with non-migrants (i.e., nationals) as a group.

4.1 Socialising in the public domain

The social activities of second-generation Afghan men and women are different. Men's activities are located in the public domain and often done with male friends rather than relatives, for example, going to the park and cinema, playing sport, travelling, and visiting relatives and friends.

²³ A.G. Theodorson, *A Modern Dictionary of Sociology* (New York: Crowell Company, 1969), 5.

²⁴ J. W. Berry, "Acculturation and adaptation in a new society," *International Migration* (Special Issue: Migration and Health in the 1990s), no. 30 (1992): 70.

However, socialising or spending leisure time in public domains risked “pestering” [*gir dadan*] from Iranians. As an 18-year-old male in Isfahan explained: “I do not go out as much as I would like as Iranians pester us. We like to go to the park to become refreshed but we cannot do this here for fear of being pestered and so we spend most of our time at home.” (Im07) Second-generation Afghans tend to venture into public domains as members of larger groups: men tend to be accompanied by their friends (non-kin), while women are more likely to be accompanied by members of the immediate family and extended family. Those Afghan males who left the household alone were headed towards specific destinations such as the workplace or educational centres where they are studying.

Women socialise in domestic spaces such as their own or relatives’ homes. In these spaces they hosted their co-workers, friends, neighbours and relatives. As a result, women are more likely to have a close friendship with an Iranian than their male counterparts, and less likely to interact with Iranian neighbours or attend their funerals or weddings (in the public domain). When they do go out they are accompanied by family members. Most women respondents claimed that they were permitted to go outside of the home without a chaperone. Seven disclosed that they were not permitted to go outside alone, and a further two women disclosed that they themselves hesitated to go out alone. One 30-year-old married housewife explained that her parents trusted her and allowed her to make her own decision about going out, but her own judgement of the safety of the environment constrained her behaviour: “I did not have any restriction before marriage because of my parent’s trust. I was not restricted because my father was open-minded. But I never went alone, except to the workplace.” (Mf08)

Many women (52%; N=21) claimed that they needed to seek permission to leave the house; a further 13 said they would choose to inform family members where they were going. Three respondents claimed they were permitted to go out without permission. Permission to leave the house is mainly granted by the respondent’s mother if she is single, followed by her father, or older siblings or grandparents. The patriarchal family structure can invest a girl’s brothers with considerable authority over their sister, for example, an 18-year-old male Tajik said:

“Afghan girls living in Iran have bad conditions and have no right of choice. A girl living in a household with six brothers somehow has six fathers and six husbands too. For example, they make decisions for her and tell her how to go out and when she should come home. They decide what she should do. She does not have the right to choose.” (Tm06)

Married women tend to be granted permission by their husbands. Marriage is not necessarily a limiting factor on women’s freedom [*azadi*], which includes activity in the public domain: five respondents said they had more freedom than before, four said they had less freedom, and the same number reported no change between the two periods. Rather, the relative freedom allowed to a wife depends on her husband’s world view. Some reported that they had been required to change their dress code from the long-sleeved, long-bodied, *manto* coat, to the chador or black cape shrouding the woman’s body. A 22-year-old housewife said:

“Before marrying I had more freedom [azadi] and I used to go out wearing only a manto but now my husband does not allow me, and pesters me very much because [his suburb of] Dolat Abad [in Isfahan] is not an environment where you can wear manto because everyone else wears chador and therefore they will consider a manto to be undignified.” (If05)

4.2 Socialising with Iranians

Three indicators were used to understand relations with Iranians: having an Iranian as a good friend, interaction with Iranian neighbours and invitation to Iranian weddings and funerals. While the first indicator indicates individual relations, the second and third indicate neighbourhood level relations (Table 12).

Table 12. Assessment of relations with Iranians, by demographic characteristics (N=80)

Characteristics of Second-generation		Having Iranian as a good friend		Interaction with Iranian neighbours		Invited to Iranian weddings/ funerals ceremony		No. of Sample
		Yes	No	Good	Not Good	Yes	No	
Total		39 (49%)	41 (51%)	48 (60%)	32 (40%)	45 (56%)	35 (44%)	80
City	Mashhad	15	17	20	12	18	14	32
	Tehran	17	15	21	11	19	13	32
	Isfahan	7	9	7	9	8	8	16
Gender	Male	16	24	27	13	25	15	40
	Female	23	17	21	19	20	20	40
Country of Birth place	Iran	18	13	20	11	19	12	31
	Afghanistan	21	27	28	20	26	22	48
	Pakistan	0	1	0	1	0	1	1
Ethnicity	Hazara	22	24	28	18	25	21	46
	Tajik	14	16	17	13	17	13	30
	Pashtun	2	1	2	1	2	1	3
	Ghezelbash	1	0	1	0	1	0	1
Marital Status	Single	21	19	22	18	23	17	40
	Married/ Engaged	18	22	26	14	22	18	40
Education level	Low	5	8	5	8	4	9	13
	Middle	16	19	22	13	21	14	35
	High	18	14	21	11	20	12	32
Household SES	Low	6	9	9	6	10	5	15
	Middle to low	12	19	19	12	17	14	31
	Middle	9	8	9	8	9	8	17
	Middle to high	7	3	6	4	6	4	10
	High	5	2	5	2	3	4	7
Return Decision	Taking action to return	10	7	10	7	9	8	17
	Staying in Iran:							
	A. No intention to return	28	32	36	24	35	25	60
	B. Struggling with decision	5	16	12	9	10	11	21
	Go abroad	23	16	24	15	25	14	39
		1	2	2	1	1	2	3

Of the three forms of interaction, interaction with neighbours is most common, followed by invitation/attendance at ceremonies like weddings and funerals (56%; N=45), followed by friendship (49%; N=39). Other patterns can be observed:

- Some relation may exist between interaction with Iranian neighbours and the desire to remain in Iran. Of those 60 percent (N=48) who had good interaction with their Iranian neighbours, 60 percent (N=36) wished to remain in Iran

compared with 40 percent (N=24) of those who did not have good interaction with their Iranian neighbours, and this is almost identical for those who attend Iranian ceremonies such as weddings and funerals.

- A relation between friendship with an Iranian and desire to remain in Iran cannot be drawn however: of those who wanted to remain in Iran, around 46 percent (N=28) had a close friendship with an Iranian, while 60 percent (N=32) of those who did not have a close friendship with an Iranian wanted to remain in Iran.
- Respondents living in Tehran were more likely to have relations with Iranians across the three categories of personal friendship and neighbourliness, followed by Mashhad, and then Isfahan.
- Afghan women were more likely to have personal friendships with an Iranian than their male counterparts, and less likely to have interaction at a neighbourhood level, reflecting the cultural practice of regulating women's social activity and mobility.
- Iran-born second-generation Afghans are more likely to have relations across all three categories compared to their Afghanistan-born counterparts.
- Married respondents (N=40) are more likely (65%) to have interaction with Iranian neighbours compared to their single counterparts (55%) indicating that efforts at neighbourliness are extended at the level of the household, whereas single Afghans (N=40) are more likely to sustain a close friendship with an Iranian (52%) than their married counterparts (45%).
- There is a very strong relation between education level and level of interaction with Iranians. Those respondents with a high level of education (N=32) have higher levels of interaction across all three fields, followed by middle-level education (N=35). Afghans with lower levels of education (N=13) had lower levels of interaction across all fields.
- In terms of socio-economic status (SES), those with medium to high SES and lowest SES were most likely to have higher interaction with Iranians at the neighbourhood level, while those with medium to high and high SES were most likely to have friendships with Iranians, and low SES were less likely.
- No major differences exist between the level of social interaction for Hazaras and Tajik Afghans across any of the categories. If the assumption is made that Tajiks are more likely to be Sunni than Shia, and Hazaras are almost entirely Shia, this suggests that social relations with (Shia) Iranians are neither hindered by being Sunni, nor enhanced by being Shia.

Individual social relations with Iranians

Nearly all respondents socialised with Afghans who were both kin and non-kin. Respondents identified their friends as both Afghans and Iranians whose relationship to them was as co-workers, classmates, teachers, neighbours and relatives. Respondents were more likely to have a close friendship with an Afghan than an Iranian, but many (49 percent; N=39) did have a close friendship with an Iranian. There was a tendency among educated respondents to establish friendships on the basis of shared viewpoints and values rather than nationality. A 30-year-old housewife expressed this basis for friendship: "I socialise mainly with my classmates or students from my faculty. It doesn't matter whether they are Iranian or Afghan. As long as we can get along with each other I have no problem with anybody." (Mf02)

One second-generation 23-year-old housewife explained that she wanted her children to socialise with Iranian children: "I like my children to play with both Afghans and Iranians and with all nationalities and ethnicities, so that when they get older, they can come to terms with them." (Mf12) A 24-year-old housewife wanted her children to socialise with Iranian children as she considered them to demonstrate more "culture" – in this context, probably referring more to etiquette and speech: "I want my child to play with Iranians; Afghan children have a low level of culture but Iranian children are not like that." (Mf16)

Social relations at the level of the neighbourhood

Neighbourhoods comprise a mix of both Afghans and Iranians, with the relative percentage of each category depending on the location. Sixty percent (N=48) assessed their interaction with Iranian neighbours to be "good". Almost half of respondents characterised their involvement and relations with their local Afghan neighbourhood as "good", while a very low number (four respondents) described their relations as "not good".

Assessment of relations was based on perception of trust, existence of disputes and conflicts, and independence or interference in relation to one's affairs deemed to be personal. Additionally, some respondents mentioned relations based on Afghan-ness, which did not discriminate in terms of ethnicity. Benefits of maintaining good relations with neighbours included providing mutual assistance defined as emotional support at times of death, loaning money and borrowing furniture.

Relations with Afghan neighbours were twice as likely to be positive compared to relations with Iranian neighbours. Thirty-eight respondents characterised the relationship as good, 17 respondents described it as indifferent (neither good nor bad). A few respondents claimed they had no relations with Iranians.

Second-generation women were more likely to positively describe their relations with Iranians. Twenty-one respondents, among them seven women, asserted that Iranian and Afghan neighbours provided mutual assistance to each other when needed. Sometimes this relation is founded on their shared religious-cultural practice such as offering alms usually in the form of cooked food or sweets known as *nazri*. A 30-year-old male advocates good relations between Iranians and Afghans:

"When I meet the parents of my students I tell them that our Iranian friends have helped us very much. It has happened many times that an Iranian has offered to sponsor an Afghan child who has no parents, and pays the school fees so that the child can be enrolled as a student in the school. I personally live in an apartment block that has seven residences, and all of the residents know that we are Afghans. My wife and our neighbours give nazri to each other. If our neighbours have a ceremony [marasem] they invite us." (Tm03)

Residents attend each other's community celebrations, ceremonies [*marasem*] and funerals. Nearly all respondents (N=78) said they attended the weddings and funerals of Afghans in their neighbourhood. Almost half this number (N=45) said that they attended the funerals of Iranians in their neighbourhood, with fewer attending weddings. Afghan men were almost twice more likely than Afghan women to attend Iranian ceremonies, reflecting cultural practices in relation to women socialising in public domains.

In some neighbourhoods Afghan and Iranian residents have their own separate board of trustees. Some respondents kept only distant relations with their Iranian neighbours, for example, a 16-year-old student asserted: "I don't like to have relations [with Iranians]

to the extent that we learn about each other's life. My relation with Iranians is limited to simple and formal greetings only." (Tf15)

In the event of a dispute there is the potential for the dispute to become categorical, that is, Afghans perceive Iranian onlookers as supporting the Iranian person involved regardless of the justness of his claim, but on the basis of loyalty grounded in shared nationality. The same was not expressed but is undoubtedly demonstrated among Afghans in relation to Iranians. In other words, people align themselves based on their nationality rather than their assessment of the context of the situation and the particular behaviours or actions of the parties involved. For example, a 22-year-old housewife claimed:

"Iranians don't compromise with Afghans, Afghans might compromise with Iranians but Iranians will not. Once I was in a bakery queue and an Afghan got into an argument with an Iranian and all the Iranians supported the Iranian man although it was the Iranian's fault." (If05)

Bakeries were mentioned by several respondents in this study and the previous Transnational Networks study as a venue where quarrels are likely to occur between Afghans and Iranians. The bakery is a classic site where one group becomes defined as "other" in relation to "us". Bakeries tend to be run by Iranians, and Iranian and Afghan customers must stand together in a confined space and wait to be served. As orderly queue systems tend not to operate in crowded spaces, people may push to be served first even if they have not waited the longest. In this situation, the baker has some discretion in whom he serves. Some respondents indicated that Iranians may be served before Afghans although the latter have waited longest. The implication is that an Iranian baker may positively discriminate in favour of his Iranian customers. Bakeries are a site where Afghans seek to be served as individuals, but the actual process suggests that buyers come to be identified, and identify each other, in terms of their nationality. The structure of categorical thought has been described as being at the heart of discrimination based on ethnicity or nationality.²⁵

Thirty-two respondents claimed that they had experienced conflicts in their neighbourhood, with the identical number saying they had experienced none. Nearly all problems revolved around relations with Iranians, many related to quarrels and fights between Iranian and Afghan children and youth. Most problems were resolved within the neighbourhood by residents themselves, while sometimes elders were called upon to conciliate. Two respondents only referred to police intervention.

Among children, quarrels may start when Iranian children challenge Afghan children about belonging in Iran, or claim that they have moral authority because they (Iranian children) properly belong. A 30-year-old housewife explained:

"In the past, one of our problems was when my younger brothers and sisters fought with Iranian kids in the street. They [the Iranian kids] bullied: 'Why don't you return to Afghanistan? Now that you have come to our country you have to listen to what we say.' We would reply 'No, we won't listen to you, these things [civil war] happen and you are Muslim too - you have to accept us.' Sometimes, problems could not be resolved and led to quarrels. But these problems become resolved over time and with our patience." (Tf02)

²⁵ B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

4.3 Family life and marriage

Relations between second-generation Afghans living in Iran and their parents

Most respondents claimed to have an amicable and positive relationship with their parents. Ten percent (N=8) claimed they did not, and that this poor relation was with their father, for a range of reasons: arranged marriage, parent's preference for work ahead of study whereas respondent seeks to continue studying, and generational differences of opinion and preferences. Many of these conflicts are grounded in parents' expectations which did not match their offspring's preferences.

Differences of opinion and practice are to a lesser or greater extent to be expected as a natural outcome of generational difference, and socialisation in different time periods. In the context of second-generation Afghans, there are further layers of complexity, however: second-generation Afghans have largely been raised in an urban Iranian cultural milieu while their parents were raised in a rural environment in Afghanistan. Second-generation Afghans are mainly literate and educated, while their parents did not receive this opportunity and the majority are not literate. Respondents sometimes abbreviated the attitude of their parents as "traditional", meaning originating from an earlier time period, and having currency among their parents' generation and not their generation (this is discussed more in the next chapter). As a 25-year-old single male in Mashhad claimed:

"My parents expect me to behave and think the way they think, but I cannot accept most of their beliefs and thoughts in relation to what I wear, when I go out and where, the types of friends I associate with, on the time of praying. Since my parents were brought up in Afghanistan, they are influenced by a traditional rural culture but we have been raised in the city and we think in a different way. They want us to have the same traditional thinking as they have." (Mm04)

In relation to marriage, parents expected their children to marry spouses approved by their parents, follow the guidance and criteria of their parents in relation to choosing a partner, and behave in a manner that ensures a satisfactory conjugal life. Second-generation Afghans' perceptions of their parents' expectations are substantiated by the actual expectations articulated by the group of eight parents interviewed. Nearly all of the parents interviewed (N=7; 87%) wanted their offspring to marry Afghans who were either relatives or friends, that is, Afghans who were already known to the family. They explained the reasons for this being due to knowing each other's customs, culture and traditions, as well as knowing the disposition of the prospective spouse. One mother claimed that she hoped her children would marry Iranians in order to secure permanent residence in Iran.

Marriage

Of the total number of second-generation interviewees, 36 (18 men and 18 women) were married. The average age at marriage for men was 23.2 years, higher than the average age at marriage for women (18.9). These ages are significantly lower than among Iranians for whom the average age at marriage for men is 27.3 years and for women 24.6. One respondent only had an Iranian spouse – an Afghan man had married an Iranian woman. Almost all married respondents (N=33; 91 percent) had married in Iran, with three people travelling to Afghanistan to marry. At the wedding parties in Iran, invited guests included Afghan relatives and friends living in Iran, as well as Iranian

neighbours, co-workers and fellow students. Four respondents had invited and hosted guests from Afghanistan.

Marriage practices can be categorised in terms of three arrangements: arranged marriage where parents and elders are invested with primary decision-making, and the chosen spouse is likely to be a relative or consanguineous marriage known in Farsi as *ezdevaje famili* (literally, family marriage), assisted marriage where relatives and friends help facilitate a marriage proposal but do not have primary decision-making, and independent marriage which is sometimes also referred to as “love marriage” or *ezdevaj asheghane* (literally, *asheghane* means lovely) where spouses have met each other in a setting outside of the household and make an independent choice. While arranged marriage, often consanguineous, was the dominant mode of the parents of the second generation, assisted marriage and independent marriage have evolved to become contemporary practices, and preferred by many second-generation respondents. For example, a 26-year-old single man in Tehran explained:

“Among my relatives, a woman had to marry the person chosen by her father, and even if the man did not want to marry that woman they still became engaged. But this [practice] has changed in the past seven or eight years. Parents have observed how men and women in arranged marriages have difficulty living together and disagreements, and now parents allow them to make their own choice.” (Tm08)

One respondent implied that changed marriage practices or preferences among second-generation Afghans living in Iran is influenced by the character of Afghan household structures in Iran, and the fact that parents’ male siblings may not be present to wield influence in relation to marriage. A 29-year-old married male in Mashhad stated:

“If we talk about marriage, the final decision was [previously] made by the head of the family, by the father or the mother. Now the new [second] generation’s view has changed a lot. They want to have independence in their life choices. Of course many customs have changed, for example close relations previously existed between members of the extended family whereas relations are limited now. The family has become smaller with fewer members and the relations have become rather formal. In the past family relations were very close.” (Mm10)

However, unanimous approval for independent or “love marriages” was by no means forthcoming among second-generation respondents. 36 respondents (10 male and 26 female) expressed their opinion about love marriage with 14 (5 male and 9 female) opposed to this type of marriage. Generally, these respondents claimed that the basis of a love marriage was weak, and that “love” is a temporary and changeable phenomenon which can alter one’s perceptions. Several respondents used the metaphor of sight to suggest that love alters one’s perceptions; preventing one from seeing the suitability of the other person as a marriage partner. Such marriages are thought to end more readily in separation and/or divorce.

Significantly, of those married respondents interviewed, 72 percent (N=25) had married a relative (consanguineous marriage), reflecting the persistence of Afghan custom and influence of parents on the second-generation. In the event of consanguineous marriage, male family elders acted as mediators in the arrangement of the marriage, and ensured the suitor was not a drug user, and had a good work ethic. It can be assumed that in many cases consanguineous marriage is also arranged marriage and this was mentioned as a fundamental source of conflict between parents and their children of marriageable age. Some respondents mentioned that their parents had insisted on consanguineous

marriage even in cases where the person had objected, or was ignorant of the marriage proposal.

There is a tendency for second-generation women to perceive or to have experienced that they have less choice than their brothers in relation to choosing a spouse. For example, a married 25-year-old housewife explained her situation: "My brother has married; he had more decision-making power. For example, several suitors came [and proposed to her family] for me and I was not even told about them or even asked my opinion." (Mf10) A woman's parents will be familiar with a proposed spouse who is a relative, or at the very least they can make inquiries about him/her through other trusted relatives. For example, a single 25-year-old man was aware of his sisters' dilemma:

"In my family the decision of choosing a wife is my own responsibility. But it is different for my sisters; they don't have authority. But it's not that they have no role to play. My sisters cannot meet someone at university or in their work place, decide to get married, and then inform my parents that this is the man they want to marry. This is not an acceptable course in Afghan culture where women usually have arranged marriages with their relatives. Parents are familiar with relatives. Of course this has been the case for my family, I don't know about the rest." (Mm03)

Men also find themselves compelled to marry the choice of their parents out of respect for their parents. An 18-year-old man explained his situation:

"My mother made the final decision about my marriage and I had no choice. One night she came and threw [wedding] candy over my head and announced: I have engaged you to your cousin (daughter of mother's brother). I could not disobey my parents and I just accepted it." (Im07)

In some cases, relatives – mainly women – are brought from Afghanistan to marry Afghan men living in Iran. For example, a 30-year-old married man in Tehran described the situation of his own marriage:

"It was a traditional marriage, I mean my father had gone to Afghanistan of course not to bring a wife for me but because of the relatives and other issues and on that trip when he saw that his sister died he brought her daughter back with him to Iran in order for me to marry her and without my knowledge." (Tm11)

Some families arranged marriage for their girl children as young as seven to much older suitors. This was the case for a 23-year-old housewife:

"I was in the first year of primary school when one day I came home from school, threw my bag down and entered the room to find that our house was crowded with people and they told me I have become a bride; I am now married. At that time my husband was about 20 years old. I was engaged for seven years until I was 14 and then we were married. I accepted it but at the engagement ceremony I cried and ran away from my husband. I was only in first grade; I didn't know anything because I was a child. When at aged 14 I was married, I did not dare to disagree." (Mf06)

Twenty-eight percent (N=10) claimed that they were dissatisfied with their marriage, listing reasons as: arranged marriage which did not allow their opinion in relation to the spouse chosen by their parents, lack of mutual understanding, financial problems, and moral and behavioural problems. Of those respondents who were married, many aspired for their own sons and daughters to wisely choose their own marriage partner in consultation with their parents, and marry at a later age, with the average being 25 for

males and 21 for females. A small number (N=5) claimed that satisfactory marriage depended on financial independence and not age at marriage.

Family size preference may also be a source of intergenerational tension. Based on data from the previous Transnational Networks study, family size differed according to the location, from 3.6 children in Tehran to 4.8 children in Isfahan. Second-generation Afghans' aspirations in relation to family size are more aligned with their Iranian peers (2.03 according to the 2006 Iranian census). The majority of married respondents who had children had an average of less than two children. However, this is probably influenced by the young age of respondents and it cannot be assumed that their reproductive life has concluded.

Family size is also related to infant mortality, which is almost four times higher in Afghanistan (161.7 deaths per 1,000 live births)²⁶ than Iran (28.6 deaths per 1,000 live births)²⁷. A 30-year-old married housewife expressed her concerns:

"The healthcare is much better [in Iran] than Afghanistan. We can have a hundred percent hopes to survive here. But in Afghanistan if we fall ill we may not have money for treatment. The mortality rate is very high and diarrhoea is prevalent and can be fatal."
(Tf02)

Intermarriage between Iranians and Afghans

Data on the extent of mixed marriage in Iran are difficult to obtain, however one unpublished recent government report estimated as many as 50,000 such marriages in 2001.²⁸ In this study, one of the respondents had married an Iranian²⁹, but two respondents had Iranian mothers. Marriage between Iranians and Afghans has implications for the identity of the offspring of these marriages, and the residential and national status of the Afghan partner. Regulations affecting the national status of marriage partners and offspring of Iranian-Afghan marriages are contained in Civil Code, and the 2006 Act on *Determination of nationality of children born into marriages of Iranian women with men of foreign nationality*.

The Civil Code of Iran contains regulations on the national status of the offspring of intermarriage. Children have the right to apply for Iranian nationality. Persons born in Iran or abroad whose father is Iranian - and persons born in Iran whose father or mother (one parent) is Iranian - may apply for Iranian nationality under Article 976. According to Article 983, a written application must be submitted directly or through the Governor General of the province or the Governor of the city with certified copies of the identity document of the applicant, his/her spouse and his/her children, and a certificate from the police department indicating the applicant has no criminal record and the period of residence of the applicant, possession of "sufficient finances" or a "determined occupation to earn a living". These documents are to be submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for forwarding to the Council of Ministers for consideration.

²⁶ United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Population, health and socio-economic indicators/policy development, available at: <http://www.unfpa.org/>

²⁷ Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi, M. Hosseini-Chavoshi, M. Koosheshi and M. Naghavi, "Trends and emerging issues of health and mortality in the Islamic Republic of Iran," In *Emerging Issues of Health in Mortality in the Asia and Pacific Region* (New York: UNESCO, 2005), 147-160.

²⁸ Government of Iran (Budget and Planning Organization), *Human Development Report: Islamic Republic of Iran 2005* (unpublished report, Tehran, 2007).

²⁹ A 30 year old SGA respondent, himself a graphic artist, had married a (BA-educated) Iranian woman.

The Civil Code also regulates the national status of persons who marry an Iranian spouse and have children. According to Article 980, persons who marry an Iranian spouse and have children from their spouse may obtain Iranian nationality by getting approval from the Council of Ministers without having fulfilled the precondition of residence (listed in Article 979 as five continuous years of residence in Iran). Under Article 987, an Iranian woman who marries a foreign national preserves her Iranian nationality unless the national laws of the nationality of the husband are imposed upon the wife by virtue of the marriage contract. But after the death of the husband or after separation, the Iranian wife may apply to regain her original nationality.

Legislation which rules on the nationality of children born of an Iranian mother and non-national father, and residency rights of the non-national father, was passed in October 2006 as the *Act on determination of nationality of children born into marriages of Iranian women with men of foreign nationality*. This Act determines that persons born in Iran as a result of the marriage of an Iranian woman with a man of foreign nationality, whose marriage is registered in Iran according to Article 1060 of the Civil Code, shall be accorded Iranian nationality at the age of 18 years. In relation to the status of the Afghan spouse, the Act states that residence permits shall be issued to fathers of such children.

Given the rigorous and detailed application procedure and conditions, it is not surprising that survey data indicate that second-generation Afghans tend to be unaware of the legal rights of residency and nationality for the Afghan spouses of Iranian partners, and their offspring.

Most second-generation respondents (N=77; 96 percent) knew of an Afghan who had married an Iranian, with many having members of their immediate or extended family who had married an Iranian. While the marriage of Afghan men to Iranian women was the dominant pattern, more recently, Iranian men have married Afghan women. According to some female respondents, educated Iranian men were considered to be more liberal and allowed greater independence to their wives than Afghan men. A married 30-year-old housewife explained:

“Educated people are more likely to marry Iranians because their expectations are high. While Afghan men and women do socialise, women observe that Afghan men restrict them, for example they do not allow them to work [paid work outside of the household]. These women have grown up in Iran. They talk with Iranian men because they understand them [Afghan women] because their issues are normal to Iranian men. Now there are many instances where Afghan women have married Iranians, but it was not so in the past.” (Tf02)

Twenty-six respondents said that they approved of mixed marriage on the basis that they increased connection and relations between Afghans and Iranians, assisted in decreasing discrimination, and provided opportunity for understanding each others' cultural values. A married 29-year-old male in Mashhad said: “The good thing is that the distance between the two nations is closed. Marriage produces socializing [between Afghans and Iranians] and result in people becoming familiar by seeing each other face to face [in close quarters].” (Mm12)

Almost 31 percent of respondents (N=24) did not approve of intermarriage between Afghans and Iranians. Difficulties associated with intermarriage were listed as:

- Cultural differences;
- Residential problems;

- Issue of return (Afghan man may seek to return to Afghanistan but his Iranian wife prefers to remain in Iran);
- Identity of offspring (children of Afghan women born in Iran have ambiguous citizenship);
- Discriminatory attitude of Iranian spouse towards Afghans generally; and
- Issues related to relations between respective families.

However, some respondents claimed that difficulties in mixed marriages were not necessarily produced by the mixed nature of the marriage, for the two partners may have been raised in the same neighbourhood in Iran, and be of the same socio-economic status. Incompatibility could be about the dispositions of two individuals and may not necessarily be affected by their national identities.

Given that Afghans in Iran are deemed “illegal” if they do not possess identification and residential permission, issues surrounding citizenship status for offspring is considered important. One 25-year-old single male claimed:

“Perhaps there would be no problem between them [the mixed couple] when they have no children but things change once they have a child. But really what happens to the identity of that child? I think the child would face a crisis. Is he an Iranian or an Afghan? But there are also problems in Iran like not having a birth certificate. The same is true for Afghanistan, they [the authorities] will tell you that because your mother is Iranian you are therefore not Afghan; you have no birth certificate of identification.” (Mm03)

Related to raising a child in a mixed marriage is which customs parents follow. For example a 30-year-old married respondent claimed:

“When children are born the [Afghan] father might say to himself that it is better to bring up the children according to his own customs and values, whereas his Iranian wife may seek to bring up her children according to her own. These conflicts are evident in teaching manners to children.” (Mm08)

The issue of return is also considered problematic by many respondents who compare the relative material and social conditions between Iran and Afghanistan. A 28-year-old married respondent claimed:

“Its problems [intermarriage] are greater than its advantages. One is that after many years of living peacefully in Iran, an Afghan man may decide to return to Afghanistan, but his Iranian wife cannot return because here there are basic utilities such as water, electricity, and gas, and she has grown up in this society, with Iranians. She cannot go to live in a place that is at a lower level than her own society, if it is at a higher level well she doesn’t have a problem. The problem is that Afghanistan is at lower level.” (Mm07)

For Iranian women raised in a society with less rigid attitudes towards gender-restricted division of labour, and which accords higher status to women, they must adapt to living within an Afghan household which may be more restricted. Stricter dress codes are one such restriction that Iranian women face when entering an Afghan household. A 30-year-old male in Tehran explained:

“Iranian women have greater freedom [than Afghan women in Iran] but Afghan men are still conservative in relation to women’s role even though they have been raised in Iran. For example, you rarely observe an Afghan woman without scarf or in short-sleeves or a dress if a male relative comes to her house. In Afghan households, male guests eat together and females eat together [i.e., segregated] but that is not the case in Iranian households. On the one hand, an Afghan man expects this behaviour from his Iranian wife, on the other

hand his wife will expect the sort of freedoms accorded women in Iranian society. This way there will be too much friction between them." (Tm03)

The next chapter looks at how these complex relationships and family dynamics impact on second-generation Afghans' perceptions of their identity.

5. Identity

This case study sought to investigate the factors that influence household decisions about the use of child labour, comparing experiences of poor households who both do and do not put their children into work. This comparison, among households in both categories which experienced difficult economic conditions, served to illustrate that more than income poverty or absence of male earners drives incidence of child labour. This is not to say that reducing poverty is not a necessary first action, but that this will not necessarily be sufficient to reduce household use of child labour.³⁰ Also needed is attention to reducing a broader range of risks poor households face, including risks of ill health and debt, chronic risks associated with social norms and risks that investments in skill building and formal education may not have future pay offs. The latter highlights what appears to be a key difference between the child labour and non-child labour households. Those not using child labour seem more inclined, though not necessarily better able, to struggle though current work-based insecurities and cost of living challenges while keeping their children from work for the pay offs envisaged in future from investing in education. Often very personal experiences drive this difference in risk assessments and responses. Working to assist more poor households to be able to look to and invest in the future of their children and themselves, through providing greater security in the present is the challenge facing the Afghan state and those international agencies working with it. This includes improving economic security, social security and human security, and achieving improvements in all three through interventions sensitive to transforming the social inequalities limiting the options of many people.

Identity is defined succinctly as “ways in which people conceive of themselves and are characterised by others”.³¹ Contemporary social theorists claim identity to be composed of multiple layers, and subject to constant processes of change.³² In the context of living as a migrant in a host society, processes of change are reflected in a person’s convergence or adaptation in relation to attitudes and values.

Identity is made up of certain attachments, including attachment to territory which might be called “homeland”, translated in this study as *vatan* or *meehan*. Theorising about attachment and the migration intentions of refugees and migrants has undergone revision with some contemporary theorists no longer assuming that adaptation or integration is progressive and natural. Instead, ambiguity and ambivalence in the migration intentions and attachments of refugees is taken as natural. It is argued that migration intentions are affected by simultaneous attachments to the homeland and host society. This is reflected in the results of this study which show that a sizeable proportion (35%; N=6) of those second-generation respondents who had no intention to return to Afghanistan and sought to remain in Iran, perceived Afghanistan as “homeland”, not Iran (see Table 14).

One of this study’s main questions relates to the processes of identity formation of second-generation Afghans, their perception of “Afghan-ness”, their relationship to the new Afghan nation-state, the character of their attachment to both Iran and Afghanistan, and how all of the former affects return intention.

³⁰ Note that middle and higher income households also may have children working. Further research is required to understand their motivations for this and the conditions under which these children work.

³¹ S. Vertovec, “Transnationalism and Identity,” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 27, no. 4, (2001): 573.

³² Anselm L. Strauss, *Mirrors and Masks: The Search for Identity* (Mill Valley, CA: The Sociology Press), 93.

5.1 The Iranian state's identification of Afghans

The identification (ID) card constitutes the external layer of an individual's identity and records the individual's personal characteristics. Since the arrival of Afghans in the late 1970s, BAFIA has issued several identification cards in a variety of colours. For example, from 1979-92, most Afghans entering Iran were issued with "blue cards" which indicated their status as involuntary migrants or *mohajerin*. Blue card holders were granted indefinite permission to stay in Iran legally. Until 1995, blue card holders had access to subsidised health care and food, and free primary and secondary education, but were barred from owning their own businesses or working as street vendors, and their employment was limited to low-wage, manual labour.³³

ID cards are required to register children at school and to travel outside of the place of residence registered on the card. Respondents had been issued with various coloured ID cards from BAFIA (pink, red, green, gold), each colour representing a certain year of issue and period of validity (see Table 13). The majority of respondents (N=72) claimed to hold a recognised form of identification which classifies them as "registered" and therefore counted in such census as the Amayesh conducted by UNHCR. Eight respondents stated that they had no documentation at the time of interview and had not participated in the Amayesh. It should be qualified that these figures are only broadly indicative. Given the imperative of the government of Iran to repatriate Afghans, and given the fact that non-registration risks deportation, it would not be in the respondent's interest to disclose non-registration to the interviewer. (Two respondents only had Iranian identification because their mother is an Iranian citizen.) Characteristics of the cards listed as being held by respondents follow:

- Amayesh identification (pink card): issued by BAFIA since 2003, the majority of Afghans in Iran are said to hold Amayesh identification.
- Amayesh identification (gold card): issued by BAFIA, these cards accord additional rights such as the right to have a bank account in Iran, and are issued to high-ranking figures such as Afghan clergy, and those with government positions.
- Educational passport: issued by universities and religious schools to Afghan students to indicate full-time enrolment as students.
- Iranian identification (*shenasnameh*): issued by BAFIA to children aged 18 years and above, born of mixed marriages whose Afghan parent has a passport from Afghanistan.

Table 13. Type of ID cards held by interview respondents (N=80)

Id Card	Amayesh ID Card	Golden ID Card	Educational passport	Iranian ID Card	No card	Total
No. of households	60	4	6	2	8	80
Percent	75.0	5.0	7.5	2.5	10.0	100.0

Some respondents mentioned that the ID card led them to feel like an object rather than an individual. For example, a 25-year-old male in Mashhad explained:

³³ Abbasi et al, *Continued Protection and Sustainable Reintegration: Afghan refugees and migrants in Iran* (Kabul: AREU, 2005), 16.

“The first thing that entered my mind when I saw the card was that - because the cards are large like a car’s number plate – we are more like objects than human beings, they [the Iranian state] know us as a number or a plate rather than as a human. [It reminded me] that we are Afghan migrants and Iran is not our place and that one day we will have to leave.” (Mm04)

An 18-year-old male in Tehran said carrying ID was a constant reminder of his non-national and foreign status:

“When I look at it [the ID card] I hate it especially when I read the sentence that refers to us as foreign refugees. It is disgusting and one feels somehow like a stranger [gharibeh]. If I were in my own country I would not need to carry an ID card in my pocket.” (Tm04)

Others had no emotional reaction to the ID card, referring to its function only. For example, a 30-year-old in Tehran explained: “My ID card gives me assurance, and protects me, and if you don’t have it the police arrest you.” (Tm05)

5.2 Identification of Afghan-ness, and Afghanistan

Dispositions attributed to being Afghan

The eight parents of second-generation children interviewed were asked about the most important thing they had taught their children/grandchildren since living in Iran. Six parents said that they had taught their children about Afghanistan history and recent civil wars, culture and custom, and the difficulties and hardships faced by Afghans living in Afghanistan. They emphasised that children ought to maintain their Tajik or Dari accent, follow Afghan customs in relation to modesty, and demonstrate characteristics deemed “Afghan”: honesty, zeal, and bravery.

In response to the question “what does it mean to be ‘Afghan’”, second generation respondents referred to an unflattering stereotype which they saw as characterising common Afghan-ness. This stereotype would appear to be located in the past, in the generation of their parents, and to some extent, in the present in Afghanistan. Many respondents referred to Afghans in terms of labouring, for example a 24-year-old male claimed: “Being Afghan means being a labourer.” (Mm01) Others referred to characteristics like tolerance of pain and hardship, endurance, resignation to their situation, accommodating - the very characteristics that the second generation criticised in their parents. They also characterised Afghans in terms of illiteracy, for example, a 30-year-old male educated to lower secondary level in Mashhad described: “An Afghan is a backward person, a simple person.” (Mm06) Afghan men were described as long-suffering by a 25-year-old university student:

“An Afghan man is one who wakes up very early to go to work and comes back home late at night. His only holiday is Friday and he has no spare time to enjoy. His job is hard, usually labouring. He just manages to cover the basic living expenses of his family. His concerns are returning to Afghanistan and problems regarding living in Iran.” (Mm04)

The stereotypical image held by second-generation Afghan men living in Iran about Afghan girls and women raised in Afghanistan is that they are: illiterate, oppressed, dependent, unmotivated, obedient, resigned to their fate, and devout in religious terms. In contrast, these same men perceived Afghan girls raised in Iran to be: literate, educated/knowledgeable, motivated, followed Islamic dress code (*hijab*), and had more freedom than women in Afghanistan. Afghan women raised in the West were considered

to have become Westernised, meaning that their own cultural and religious values had diminished, resulting in moral and behavioural problems.

The stereotypical image held by second-generation Afghan women living in Iran about Afghan boys and men raised in Afghanistan is not dissimilar: they are considered to be devout in religious terms, their literacy is confined to reading the Quran, and they do not value women as equals but rather, treat them as servants. In contrast, these women viewed Afghan boys and men raised in Iran to be more liberal and open-minded, better educated, positively influenced by Iranian culture, and accorded women higher status. Note here that among many second-generation respondents, Iranian cultural attitudes towards gender relations were considered to be more liberal and more progressive compared to Afghanistan. For example, a 19-year-old female in Isfahan claimed:

“Afghan men living in Iran listen to their wife and accept her [point of view]. They take their wife to the park for recreation and leisure. But if you were to tell a man who has recently arrived from Afghanistan to take his wife to the park he might get offended, or if his wife talks to a man he will not say anything directly but later he will not allow her to come out of her room. We have Afghan relatives living in Europe who have adapted to European culture: they do not discriminate against women, they are well off financially, but they are not devout in religious terms.” (If07)

Afghan boys raised in the West were considered to demonstrate weak morality and are not devout, are highly educated, wealthy and give too much freedom of choice to women. One respondent was aware that in the West these freedoms given to women were considered to be “normal” and that societies where women were not given these freedoms were labelled by the West as “backward”.

Another disposition that emerges in a patriarchal context is *gheirat*, which is described as the imperative to defend what is considered one’s own, that is, land, property and women. Hardened pragmatism is another trait mentioned which has evolved out of the harsh reality of prolonged civil war. A 26-year-old man explained: “If we were in Afghanistan either we were killed, or we killed - whether we wanted to or not.” (Tm08)

The characteristics that many of the second-generation Afghans interviewed in this study identified with - aspirations to become educated, willingness to embrace change, and determination to improve one’s situation - are not represented in the stereotypical Afghan elaborated above. In other words, most respondents were not describing themselves when they described Afghan-ness or being Afghan. Some respondents categorised Afghans in terms of “traditional” and “modern”. For example a 25-year-old male in Mashhad proposed:

“We can give a new description of the Afghan man. He respects [Afghan] traditions and customs but is modern: educated, thinking, open-minded, paying attention to his dress, and having a shorter beard although not necessarily shaved.” (Mm03)

Afghans who display modern attributes are considered to be moderate in behaviour, and rejecting violence and authoritarian behaviour, as well as flexible, honest, and hard working.

Characteristics attributed to Afghanistan

Second-generation Afghans learned generally about Afghanistan through mass media such as television and radio, as well as through the internet. Many respondents followed regular news about the current situation of Afghanistan including such issues and events as political change, conflict, unemployment, poverty and famine. A 46-year-old father

of a second-generation respondent explained: "We have to search for these things [news] because Afghanistan is our country. The circumstances of migration inevitably lead us to [follow] the media. We have to watch out for what's happening in Afghanistan." (Im03p)

Some respondents criticised Iranian mass media coverage, claiming that it focused exclusively on dramatic events relating to war and conflict only at the cost of everyday life in Afghanistan. This information was sought out from Afghans who had recently visited Afghanistan, and via international news services like BBC radio. Reading about the history of Afghanistan from various published sources provided a more nuanced understanding of the situation of Afghanistan. For example, a 30-year-old male in Tehran stated:

"I have collected and studied most of the books about Afghanistan published in Iran...This published information about Afghanistan changed my perceptions of the place; initially I thought Afghanistan was a miserable country. But after studying I found that it was a country with honour, a country to be proud of. I have tried to transfer my findings to children. Self confidence relies partly on one's origin and past, and we have a noble origin and past. But from Iranian TV I only hear about war and bloodshed. This is the image of Afghanistan in Iran." (Tm03)

One respondent, a 28-year-old butcher, visited Afghanistan recently and was left with a sense of people's resilience:

"When I entered Herat and then went to Kandahar and Kabul I liked these places very much and I felt proud. Iranian TV shows that Afghanistan is ruined, but in fact it was not as ruined as I had expected, and after all it has endured 20 years of war. When I entered my own city Kunduz I realized that life was still going on there in spite of people's poverty. [I thought] well-done to the people who survived Russia and communism and are still living." (Tm14)

Second-generation Afghans in Iran also learned about Afghanistan through regular contact with immediate family members in Afghanistan (siblings, parents, children), and to a lesser extent, with relatives (parent's siblings and children). Modes of contact included: letter, phone call (including mobile phone), email, and visiting one another in Iran and Afghanistan. Forty-one respondents claimed that they had sent money, and to a lesser extent, gifts, to relatives in Afghanistan.³⁴ However respondents were not asked about frequency or amount. Some 30 respondents had not sent any money to Afghanistan.

While several respondents drew attention to cultural differences between themselves as second-generation Afghans raised in Iran, and Afghans in Afghanistan, many also claimed that in the event of their return to Afghanistan they believed that they could adapt, and be accepted over time. Some respondents had returned to Afghanistan for a significant period of time as an adult, and while at first they were ridiculed as Iranians because of their style of dress and behaviour, over time they were able to establish relations with

³⁴ In the previous Transnational Networks study, household respondents claimed that little money was remitted from Iran to Afghanistan, nor was it sent in the reverse direction. Households in Iran appear to expend most of their income on daily household expenses, and infrequently, if at all, remit money back to relatives or other household members in Afghanistan. The few respondent households who disclosed that they were remitting money regularly to Afghanistan said it was to provide for other relatives who had returned but been unable to find work. They did state that they would, if capable, respond to requests for specific urgent needs such as illness, funeral and marriage costs, as well as for land and business investment.

Afghans. According to these respondents this was due to their shared language, phenotype (e.g., in the case of Hazara) and Afghan citizenship.

Maintaining Afghan cultural commemorations and celebrations in Iran

Subtle differences in the way that Afghans and Iranians celebrate Islamic holidays differentiate Afghan practices from Iranian ones. However, in relation to celebrating Islamic Eids and performing Moharram, respondents emphasised that Afghan practices in Iran also differ from the practices of Afghans in Afghanistan.

Comments about differences celebrating events such as Persian New Year (Nowrooz) and the end of Ramazan (known as *Fitr*) in Iran compared to Afghanistan are grounded in differences in household configuration and predominance of the nuclear configuration among Afghans in Iran, that is, they comprise two generations and may not include elders, or extended families such as the household head's siblings or siblings' children (first and second cousins). While many Afghans living in Iran originated from rural areas in Afghanistan where villages comprised fairly intact extended family groups, most Afghans in Iran live in urban areas. These differences change the character of celebration. As one respondent explained:

"In the village where we lived [in Afghanistan], celebrations were elaborate. The [male] elders of the village gathered in one place and the women in another, and the elders visited each house in the village one by one. Each house served tea and sweets. Here [Iran] we only go to relatives' homes nearby, and if they live far away no one bothers to go and visit them." (Im06)

Iranians and Afghans both hold mourning ceremonies to commemorate the death of the Prophet Mohammad and the death of Shiite Imams. The first ten days of Moharram in which Imam Hossein was martyred, and the death of the first Shiite Imam, Imam Ali on the 21st day of Ramazan, are the most important mourning rituals for Afghans, particularly Shiite. As Afghanistan has been ruled by Sunni regimes more or less hostile to Shiite customs, Afghan Shiites in Iran tend to conduct these mourning ceremonies in a similar manner to Iranians. For example, like Iranians, Afghan Shiites in Iran repeatedly beat their chest with a chain [*zanjir zadan*], whereas this fairly dramatic and mass ritual is not performed by Shiites in Afghanistan. In Iran also, mourning rituals differ, albeit subtly, for example:

"The mourning rituals of Moharram are different. Iranian rituals start from 4 pm and a clergyman gives a sermon in the mosque about the Ashora...But because most Afghans are labourers in Iran, their Moharram rituals start at 8 to 11 pm. While the Iranians stand up to beat their chests, the Afghans sit down and beat their chests. The manner of singing religious sermons (Noheh) is also different: while the Afghan clergymen who have studied in Iran have a similar manner of expression to Iranian clergymen, those who studied in Afghanistan reciting Noheh differently."³⁵ (Tm08)

In relation to the mourning rituals of ordinary Afghans, there are also differences in the ceremonies performed by Afghans in Iran and Afghanistan. For example:

"If someone dies in Afghanistan, people come to the house of the person who has died to ask for blessing for the dead [fateheh khandan] for up to one year after their death. But it is

³⁵ Ashora derives from the Arabic word Ashr meaning ten: the tenth day of the month of Moharram is the day on which the Prophet Mohammad's grandson Imam Hossein was martyred at Karbala. Azan time is the call for prayer. Kummel prayer refers to a prayer believed to originate from Ali and recited by one of his followers Kummel, usually recited every Thursday evening.

not like that here [in Iran]; relatives and friends gather together for a funeral ceremony and may gather again for ceremonies at three days, seven days, and 40 days after burial of the deceased. As far as I have heard from my parents and elders it is not like this in Afghanistan as there are no ceremonies held three days and seven days after burial."

Awareness of Afghanistan Independence Day (19 August 1919, which marked independence from the British control over Afghan foreign affairs) was relatively high, with 19 male respondents and only six female respondents disclosing that they were not aware of the day. Most women (N=24) expressed positive feelings such as optimism or pride in relation to this day. However, few men (N=6) expressed such sentiment. Rather, they explained their ambivalence in terms of a history of successive repressive regimes; as though a shift to a democratic government will be trusted when it is demonstrated over a longer period of time. For example, a 28-year-old male stated:

"Two or three times [I celebrated Afghan Independence Day] when I was working in the Afghanistan Consulate in Mashhad. I can say that I didn't have any particular feeling; the sort of feeling that one might have towards his own country. His heart, perhaps, thumps in his chest quickly, or his nerves tingle. No I didn't have any particular feeling. I can say [my lack of feeling] is a result of the continued suffering endured by Afghans in Afghanistan and the violence and backwardness that has persisted since so-called Independence. Perhaps it is this which has caused me to have no feeling." (Mm07)

Second-generation Afghan men were similarly ambivalent about Iran's Revolution Day (22nd day of Bahman) with 10 expressing positive feelings compared to 18 women.

5.3 Perceptions of "homeland"

Homeland was conceived as a place which invokes particular emotions of belonging and attachment. It is an expression of attachment to a location, often a region or a nation-state, the basis of which is commonly defined in terms of birthplace, or the place of one's parents' birth or burial. Living in one's homeland also has a politico-legal dimension as it accords legal rights and security of residency. The sentiment of homeland may also be produced by shared values, attitudes, and cultural practices. In the case of second-generation Afghans in Iran, the mapping of "homeland" onto either Iran or Afghanistan may indicate integration, and may also indicate return intention.

Table 14 shows that the majority of respondents (66 percent; N=50) perceived Afghanistan as homeland compared to 26 percent (N=20) who perceived Iran as homeland. 15 respondents **claimed to have no homeland attachment to either place. The most interesting pattern** for the purpose of this study is the relation between perception of homeland and return intention. The first result is not surprising: 88 percent (N=15) of those respondents taking current action to return to Afghanistan also perceived Afghanistan as homeland (5%; N=1 viewed Iran as homeland). However, the relation between return intention and homeland is more ambiguous than this result suggests, for of those not intending to return to Afghanistan and intending to remain in Iran, as many as 35 percent (N=6) also perceived Afghanistan as homeland. However, it should be said that of those not intending to return to Afghanistan, 58 percent (N=6) viewed Iran as homeland. Among undecided respondents, the majority (71% N=28) also perceived Afghanistan to be homeland, with 20 percent (N=8) perceiving Iran as homeland.

There are several broad patterns in relation to those who are more likely to perceive one country or the other as homeland:

- Iran-born second-generation Afghans are more likely to perceive Afghanistan as homeland than Iran (51 percent; N=15 compared to 37 percent; N=11), but more likely than their Afghanistan-born counterparts to perceive Iran as homeland (37 percent; N=11 compared to 20 percent; N=9). Afghanistan-born second-generation Afghans are almost four times more likely to perceive Afghanistan as home rather than Iran (75 percent; N=34).
- Second-generation men are more likely than women to perceive Afghanistan as homeland than Iran (76 percent; N=29 compared to 21 percent; N=8), and more likely than their female counterparts to view Afghanistan as homeland (76 percent; N=29 compared to 56 percent; N=21).
- Shia Hazaras are more likely to perceive Afghanistan as homeland than Iran (54 percent; N=23 compared to 35 percent; N=15), but more likely to perceive Iran as homeland compared to Tajik Afghans (35 percent; N=15 compared to 17 percent; N=5).
- Across all education levels, most respondents perceived Afghanistan as homeland, but low-educated respondents were more likely to do so (75 percent N=10) than their medium and high educated counterparts (65 percent; N=21 and 63 percent; N=19 respectively).
- Persons of low and medium to low socio-economic status were more likely to perceive Afghanistan as homeland than their medium to higher counterparts (78 percent; N=11 and 75 percent; N=22 respectively compared to 50 percent; N=8, 55 percent; N=5 and 57 percent; N=4 respectively).

The apparent irony that some second-generation Afghans intended to remain in Iran and perceived Afghanistan to be homeland is explained by some respondents. One, a 29-year-old shopkeeper, felt Iran to be home, yet the government's policies and some people's attitudes affected this sentiment: "I have spent a life time here [in Iran], I feel that my home is here, but sometimes when they turn us out [repatriate, marginalise] my feelings [towards Iran] become weak." (Mm09)

Table 14. Perception of “homeland” as Iran or Afghanistan, by demographic characteristics and return intention (N=75)³⁶

Characteristics of second generation		“Homeland”			No. of sample	
		Iran		Afghanistan		No homeland attachment to either
		N	%			
Total		20	26.7	50 (66.7%)	5 (6.6%)	75 (100.0%)
Gender	Male	8	21.1	29	1	38
	Female	12	32.4	21	4	37
Country of Birth place	Iran	11	37.9	15	3	29
	Afghanistan	9	20.0	34	2	45
	Pakistan	0	-	1	0	1
Ethnicity	Hazara	15	35.7	23	4	42
	Tajik	5	17.2	23	1	29
	Pashtun	0	-	3	0	3
	Ghezelbash	0	-	1	0	1
Education level	Low	3	23.1	10	0	13
	Middle	9	28.1	21	2	32
	High	8	26.7	19	3	30
Household SES	Low	1	7.1	11	2	14
	Middle to low	6	20.7	22	1	29
	Middle	6	37.5	8	2	16
	Middle to high	4	44.4	5	0	9
	High	3	43.0	4	0	7
Return Decision	Taking action to return	1	5.9	15	1	17
	No intention to return	10	59.0	6	1	17
	Undecided	8	20.5	28	3	39
	Planning to go abroad	1	50.0	1	0	2

Treatment of Afghans as people who don’t belong in Iran may consolidate the sense of Afghanistan as homeland. A 29-year-old man’s opinion is typical: “[Afghanistan is homeland] since we are Afghan and have a sense of belonging there. Although we were born here [in Iran] we feel like strangers [*gharibeh*] or foreigners [*khareji*] in Iran. And the only place we don’t feel like strangers or migrants is Afghanistan.” (Mm12) Archetypal metaphors such as soil symbolising homeland were also used, for example, by a 22-year-old female in Isfahan: “The motherland is the place which gives me identity and I belong to it and its land is mine even if I never return there” (If03), and a 30-year-old man in Isfahan: “Although I have been far from Afghanistan and raised in Iran, and even when I think of all of Afghanistan’s weaknesses, I still feel a sense of closeness to a piece of that soil and land.” (Im04)

Some were conscious of the sentiment that the notion of homeland may invoke, but claimed they had not personally experienced that sentiment. A 25-year-old man in Mashhad explained:

“[Homeland] is a deep feeling from within which I have not experienced yet. Whether Afghanistan is my country or Iran [I cannot say] because we have been living in Iran since childhood and were even born here and have never seen Afghanistan and never understood

³⁶ The sample of 75 is the result of 5 respondents having no specific response to the question.

it. Although we have been told that we are Afghan, I only have a very superficial feeling that Afghanistan is my country but have never had a deep feeling for Afghanistan.” (Mm04)

Others felt ambivalent about Afghanistan as homeland because of Afghan attitudes towards them. For example, a 21-year-old male described his experience:

“In one respect we are strangers [gharibeh] in Afghanistan, because there have been people who returned to Afghanistan and have been told ‘You are Iranian’. When I go there I’m a stranger [gharibeh] because I cannot talk like them, behave like them, and I become a stranger to them, unless I get used to them. I am more comfortable here [in Iran].” (Tm07)

Preferred place of burial

Some respondents expressed definite ideas about burial in the place of their birth and place of their nation. The question to be asked here is whether aspiration to be buried in Afghanistan affects decision-making about return intention. It is feasible that second-generation attitudes towards place of burial may be different from that of their parents who have been born and raised in Afghanistan.

Second-generation Afghans were asked where they wanted to be buried. Thirty-three respondents said that they want to be buried in Afghanistan based on their relation to Afghanistan as their birthplace and that of their parents’. Religious reasons were also mentioned, namely *fateheh*, where relatives come to the cemetery and ask God for the blessing of the soul of the deceased. *Fateheh* is a recitation from the Quran by the family and friends of the deceased, usually performed on Thursday evenings. It is feasible that if relatives of the deceased are involuntarily repatriated to Iran, or voluntarily return, the graves of buried Afghans in Iran may not be attended, and *fateheh* not recited at the graveside. *Fateheh* may however be conducted either from the gravesite itself, or from a distance.

Seventeen respondents preferred to be buried in Iran, mentioning Mashhad specifically as the location of the tomb of the only Shia Imam to be buried in Iran, Imam Reza. Two respondents aspired to be buried in Mecca (pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia is considered a key tenet of Shiite religious practice) or Karbala (the location of the tomb of Imam Hossein in Iraq). This reflects the findings of other research which found that the decision to return to Afghanistan for certain categories of Shiite Hazara Afghans was influenced by their pilgrimage practices and attachment to shrine locations in Iran, particularly the shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad.³⁷ Ten respondents claimed that the location of burial was unimportant.

³⁷ D. Glazebrook and M.J Abbasi-Shavazi, “Being neighbours to Imam Reza: The pilgrimage practices and return intentions of Hazara Afghans living in Mashhad, Iran,” *Journal of Iranian Studies*, 40, no. 2 (2007): 87-201.

5.4 Effects of Iranian education and socio-cultural milieu on the identity of second-generation Afghans

Thirty-nine percent (N=31) of interview respondents were born in Iran. The remainder arrived as children with the mean age being 5.5 years. All second-generation respondents in this study were raised and educated in the particular socio-cultural milieu which is Iran. The question to be asked here is: what are the impacts of education and socio-cultural milieu on second-generation Afghans? What new attributes have evolved, and do these differentiate second-generation Afghans in Iran from their Iranian counterparts, and from their counterparts in Afghanistan?

Afghan students in Iran are given access “each day [to] new information regarding social, economic and cultural issues” according to the principal of a self-regulated school in Mashhad. Commenting on the outcome of an Iranian education, a 29-year-old respondent educated to diploma level claimed that “an Afghan student who has studied in Iran has expanded [their] knowledge, and socially has reached a point where they can establish good social relations in private and public life”. (Mm12) Being literate for some respondents meant being cultured or acquiring certain etiquette, and manners of living.

While 18 percent (N=14) of respondents mentioned being literate and going to school in terms of one’s individual vocational outcomes, around 26 percent mentioned literacy in terms of knowledge that can benefit the society more broadly, alluding to the notion of social capital. Some drew a link between civil society and literacy, in other words, that civil war and breakdown in Afghanistan was related to the level of illiteracy in the society. For example, a 23-year-old respondent educated to upper secondary stated: “My father decided I should go to school. He valued knowledge and believed that the backwardness of Afghanistan was due to cultural backwardness and illiteracy.” (Mm05)

Another respondent explained that lack of civil society is the product of civil war where family survival becomes paramount. A 30-year-old in Mashhad explained:

“In Afghanistan, there’s less opportunity to know about the world, about things happening in the world, and being involved in world issues. Conditions of war and instability in Afghanistan demand that a man be watchful in order to keep him and his family alive. Perhaps there’s no room for him to serve his people.” (Mm11)

Related to awareness of civil society is Afghan exposure to nationalist thinking in Iran. In the absence of a strong nation-state in Afghanistan, and in the existence of civil war, it was suggested that Afghans tend to think ethnocentrically (also mentioned as tribalism). As a 30-year-old male in Tehran said:

“When I went to Afghanistan I saw the opposite. Those raised in Afghanistan did not have this [national] feeling very much; they did not have a sentiment of nationalism but rather they held tribalist feelings, whereas among Afghans in Iran, tribalism has vanished.” (TmFGD-01)

This is possibly because all Afghans in Iran are categorised as non-national Afghans, and in relation to Iranians, Afghans define themselves as Afghans. Whereas it is only among Afghans themselves that people might define themselves in terms of e.g., Tajik or Hazara.

Cultural progress was mentioned as another effect of education. As one single 25-year-old university student explained:

"Afghans in Iran have made more progress culturally, whether they've studied in self-regulated [Afghan] schools or [state-run] public schools. Afghans raised in Iran have had more progress and improvement compared to those who have been raised in Afghanistan." (Mm03)

This notion of cultural progress enabled by living in Iran implies that elements of Afghan culture are becoming influenced by elements of Iranian culture, and/or that elements of Afghan traditions or customs considered to inhibit progress are being discarded either intentionally, or otherwise.

The final effect to be mentioned relates to the fading of patriarchal ideology which has subtly altered the power structure within some Afghan families in Iran. As a 23-year-old woman educated to diploma level in Mashhad explained: "Previously my father made the final decision but not now; all family members talk and each of the children expresses his or her opinion and the best opinion is chosen." (MFFGD-08) Another female respondent noted:

"Since there's no literacy and education in Afghanistan, the same old tribal method is dominant, just because someone is an elder and has a white beard [he is accorded great power]. But those raised in Iran know their own rights [as individuals] and they respect others to a greater extent. In Iran the view of Afghan families towards girls has changed too, they value girls as people. In Iran, Afghans have developed culturally." (TFFGD-03)

Holding values and dispositions more aligned with Iranian socio-cultural milieu differentiates second-generation Afghans in Iran from their parents, and from Afghans in Afghanistan. But this is not to say that such alignment means that second-generation Afghans identify themselves as Iranians or are recognised as Iranians. Second-generation Afghans then, like most migrants, live between the two cultures and worlds of their parents' nation-state of origin, and the host nation-state. Some respondents problematise this position; others view it in terms of opportunity. The Transnational Networks studies revealed how living between two states can accord opportunity, and in the event of return, help making reintegration sustainable.

What would seem clear is that return to Afghanistan will not necessarily reduce this sense of being "in between"; in fact it may extend that feeling. For example, a 30-year-old male in Tehran said:

"I'm neither Iranian nor Afghan. Because I'm not really Iranian; I don't have Iranian nationality and Iranian society does not accept me. But neither am I Afghan because I have the same values, manners and culture dominant in Iran which has influenced me consciously or unconsciously. And we have this culture now. Particularly during a year when I was in Afghanistan I could see the difference between myself and someone brought up in Afghanistan. Our values, manners, way of interacting/socialising and talking were very different. As migrants we will face a lot of problems being accepted by society in Afghanistan. Even though we are Afghan nationals in Afghanistan and so we have no legal problems, we respond completely differently from someone raised in Afghanistan to a social issue or work matter. Sometimes [second-generation Afghans raised in Iran] are called Iranian in Afghanistan." (Tm11)

How these mixed feelings around identity affect intentions to return to Afghanistan is discussed in the next chapter.

6. Returning to Afghanistan

Some contemporary theorists no longer assume that adaptation or integration is progressive and natural, or that return constitutes resolution of displacement.³⁸ Instead, ambiguity and ambivalence in the migration intentions and attachments of refugees is taken as natural. In the context of Afghans in Iran, the experience of migration may mean that Afghans feel simultaneously ambivalent about both the host society Iran *and* the homeland Afghanistan, or one or the other. Or alternatively, Afghans may have simultaneous attachments to the host society and the homeland. This ambiguity and uncertainty is reflected in the results of this study, which show that among second-generation Afghans interviewed, just under half were undecided about returning to Afghanistan.

Contemporary approaches to migration intention are also influenced by a body of work on transnationalism. Migration intentions in relation to the homeland and host society are described as “shifting” and attachments and identities are said to be “localised differently”, that is, they are no longer said to be localised or grounded in certain places. This approach is supported by the Transnational Networks data which demonstrated the social and economic networks of Afghans spanning Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and abroad. In Elca Stigter’s two case studies conducted for AREU in 2004 on the transnational networks and migration of Afghans from Herat to Iran, and from Faryab to Iran, she makes the important point that return to a country of origin does not necessarily combat insecurity and vulnerability, but may “prompt onward passage, leading to a pattern of multi-directional cross-border movements”.³⁹ Stigter concluded that channels of pre-established transnational networks exist between Afghanistan and Iran, and that migration to Iran constitutes a strategy for Afghan men that is both social and economic. Stigter proposes that migration functions as a coping strategy, with remittances covering subsistence costs and debt repayment, as well as contributing to further accumulation of assets such as houses and land. Sending one family member back to Iran was reported by respondents as a potential reintegration strategy for a returnee household struggling to survive in Afghanistan.⁴⁰

This chapter examines further the process of decision-making in relation to returning to Afghanistan. Analysis of decision-making is informed by Mitchell’s push/pull theoretical model. This model emphasises the setting in explaining why some people leave or remain in a country. These “settings” are economic (e.g., relative wealth or employment opportunities), social (e.g., restrictive practices that compel individuals to

³⁸ G. Uehling, “Sitting on suitcases: ambivalence and ambiguity in the migration intentions of Crimean Tatar women,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 15, no. 4 (2002):388-408; A. DeSantis, “Caught between two worlds: Bakhtin’s dialogism in the exile experience,” *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 14, no. 1 (2001): 1-19.

³⁹ E. Stigter, “Transnational Networks and Migration from Herat to Iran” (Kabul: AREU, 2005); E. Stigter, “Transnational Networks and Migration from Faryab to Iran” (Kabul: AREU, 2005).

⁴⁰ Data from the Transnational Networks study elaborated various return strategies practiced by Afghans interviewed in Iran include: a household may remain in Iran in the medium term in order to continue saving money to purchase land or housing in Afghanistan prior to return; a household member may travel to Afghanistan to arrange accommodation and investigate work prospects as preparation for the household’s return from Iran; a returnee household struggling to cope in Afghanistan may return to Iran to undertake further necessary capital accumulation; a returnee household struggling to cope may send a member back to Iran to work for the purpose of remitting money for the financial needs of the household in Afghanistan; a returnee household head may migrate to another province in Afghanistan to find work and remit money, and a returnee household may relocate to another province in Afghanistan in an effort to improve its economic situation (Abbasi-Shavazi and Glazebrook, “*Continued Protection*”).

leave their country of origin or hinder them from doing so), and political (e.g., legislation which compels or even forces migration between locations) (see Table 15).⁴¹

Sources of information about the situation in Afghanistan also are explored, as well as decision-making processes at the household level. The practice of reconnaissance, and the conditions considered requisite for sustainable return are examined. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the results on second-generation return intention by examining the effect of various demographic characteristics (place of residence in Iran, birthplace, sex, marital status, education level, and socio-economic status).

Table 15. Second-generation perceptions of push and pull factors in relation to returning to Afghanistan or remaining in Iran, 2006

Iran Pull	Afghanistan Push
Access to education opportunities for children and adults Health and welfare facilities Employment opportunities Security Strong economy Religious, ethnic and cultural similarities Access to the Shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, Iran, for the purposes of making pilgrimage Adapted to Iranian socio-cultural milieu Women's status and autonomy	Low level of education opportunity Lack of health and welfare facilities Unemployment Presence of foreign troops Persistent insecurity Weak economy Women's low status and lack of autonomy
Iran Push	Afghanistan Pull
Government's repatriation initiatives Government policies to accelerate repatriation Lack of job security and restriction to low status, manual work for most Afghans Attitude of government and some Iranians towards Afghans as illegal foreigners Non-citizenship resulting in lack of rights accorded citizens	Being a citizen and bestowed rights accorded citizens Sense of belonging and attachment to Afghanistan as birthplace of parents Establishment of democratic government and promise of reconstruction and development

⁴¹ E. Young, "Migration: General Concepts," *Beginning Population Studies*, ed. D. Lucas and P. Mayer (Canberra: National Centre for Development Studies, Australian National University, 1994).

6.1 Required conditions for return

Around 42 percent (N=34) of respondents were dissatisfied with the Afghan government's performance, referring to insecurity and tribal conflict, government corruption, nepotism, weak economy, opium production, poverty and unemployment. They mentioned that these factors discouraged their return to Afghanistan. While most respondents had participated in the 2005 national elections of Afghanistan (although many were unfamiliar with the candidates), only 21 percent (N=17) had a positive view towards the current government of Afghanistan, and perceived that peace and security had been restored to some extent. Related to this, most respondents approved the presence of foreign forces in the medium term, claiming that they were necessary for establishing peace and security and handling tribal conflict. They acknowledged that any government would be confronted with many challenges in Afghanistan, but that they fully approved of the leadership of President Karzai.

Some respondents, such as the following 22-year-old in Isfahan, suggested that state policy was more progressive than civil society:

"I think the government is good and [rather] it is the people who are not adapting themselves and like to live as they did in the past, and think that they can do whatever they want by exercising force. The government is good in this respect: it does not allow people to exercise force and does not allow bribery. Currently, I am satisfied. [Although] people say that unemployment is rife." (If01)

Some respondents had shifted their initially positive appraisal of the Karzai government. For example, a 30-year-old respondent in Tehran stated:

"At first I was very optimistic, but not now because we have [observed] an inefficient government. They have not employed those who can work, and they have employed those who cannot work. If you don't have a connection (if you don't know someone) you cannot get work or get anything done. There's too much corruption in the government." (Tm03)

Several respondents suggested that progress and development could be accelerated if educated and skilled Afghans living in Iran and elsewhere were encouraged to return and given suitable employment conditions.

Many respondents considered illiteracy as the "root of all miseries" in Afghanistan, and reflected on Iran as a role model nation state that had overcome many social, cultural and economic problems. Respondents also advocated development of industrial and agricultural sectors to create jobs, establishment of health and welfare facilities, and elimination of conflict and tribal discrimination. The elimination of tribalism would make way for citizens thinking in terms of the nation of Afghanistan.

The majority of respondents (79%; N=60) were not taking current action to return to Afghanistan; of these, 48 percent (N=39) were undecided about returning. Reasons revolved around the lack of development in Afghanistan in terms of welfare facilities, weak economy resulting in high unemployment, housing infrastructure, and social and cultural life. Many claimed that they would return voluntarily if the economy grew and job opportunities resulted, education facilities were developed, peace and security was restored, health care facilities were established, and women's status was improved. The existence of education facilities, relative security, housing, utilities, employment, and welfare services in Iran also acted to discourage return. Forty-two percent of respondents (N=17) were taking current action to return with the primary reasons being problems associated with living in a foreign country (job insecurity, residential

insecurity, mobility restrictions, derogatory attitudes, raising children in two socio-cultural environments, inability to plan for the future), and their sense of belonging to Afghanistan. The following explanation by a farm labourer was fairly typical: "How long should we be a migrant? When you don't have security, when you have no hopes for the future, when you don't have job security, what is the use of staying here? You always have concerns about your job, and your future [in Iran]."

One respondent made the point that restoration of security without infrastructure development such as welfare facilities and utilities was not sufficient to encourage return. A 30-year-old in Mashhad explained:

"Some people say that if only there was safety and security [they would return]. This is wrong; I think that security is not enough for living. Security [also] needs facilities. I have grown up with security [in Iran] but without facilities. If I'm after security in Afghanistan why shouldn't I remain in Iran?...Absence of war is not sufficient [precondition] for return. Really, you cannot live without facilities and welfare. Love is not enough, love of Afghanistan cannot earn us a living." (Mm08)

Seventy percent (N=56) claimed they did not have sufficient information to make a decision to return to Afghanistan. This response from a 25-year-old male focus group participant was typical: "We have no definite plan; this is a result of our situation. We don't have a definite situation [in Iran] and our country [Afghanistan] also has no definite situation upon which we could make plans". Only 30 percent (N=24) claimed they had sufficient information about such matters as the state of the economy, level of current infrastructure development and utilities, and the security situation. Significantly, these respondents claimed they had received this information by word of mouth: through relatives and friends who had already returned to Afghanistan.

One respondent had returned after hearing about development and reconstruction in Afghanistan through others who had visited:

"We returned to live in Afghanistan because we were told that security and peace had been restored, and that everyone was working towards development. But when we went to observe living conditions, we found that security had not been restored, and that there were not utilities or services. So we came back to Iran to live until things improve. We even bought a piece of land on which to build a house but we saw that the living conditions were not good." (Tm01)

Some respondents' relatives had lost their savings after returning, and these narratives of return effectively discouraged their Afghan relatives and acquaintances in Iran from returning. For example, a 28-year-old male narrated the experience of his aunts:

"My mother's sisters returned to Afghanistan and stayed there for a year and came back to Iran just three months ago. They took with them 50 million Rials [USD5,300] and in Kunduz they paid 30 million Rials [USD3,200] to buy land and build a house. They also bought a vehicle which was ruined by the bad roads and they sold it for half the price of purchase. They planned to earn money by using the vehicle to carry commuters from the village to the city, but the plan failed and they faced a dead end." (Tm14)

The Transnational Networks study found that reintegration experience of those Afghans who have already returned from Iran to Afghanistan heavily influenced their relatives remaining in Iran. Afghans with relatives who had returned satisfactorily were more willing to return to Afghanistan than those whose relatives had experienced difficulties on their return – such as unemployment and the need to spend their savings on daily

living requirements. Those Afghans who had not maintained access to their land or housing, and returned without the capital to start a business or purchase land, were at the greatest risk of failure, and were more likely to return again to Iran.

Three respondents were adamant about not returning to Afghanistan based on persisting poor living conditions that would take a very long time to improve. These respondents intended to migrate to a third country if the Iranian government forced their repatriation. These results reflect those of the previous study which found that 10 percent of respondents (N=17) aspired to migrate to another country, and six percent (N=10) had approached UNHCR for resettlement. Respondents living in Zahedan favoured resettlement in UAE (Dubai) and Pakistan, followed by European countries, while those in Tehran and Mashhad clearly favoured Europe and Canada.

6.2 The future of the children of the second generation

Concern for children's futures also affected return intentions. Expectations in relation to the children of the second-generation can be categorised into four areas:

- Behaviour (demonstrate manners and politeness, respect parents);
- Education (become literate, continue education and enter university);
- Religion (have beliefs); and
- Vocation (gain a job in the formal sector that has satisfactory social status and wage, make progress, serve the people of Afghanistan).

Respondents were asked "where do you want to raise your children?" and "what do you expect of them?" Significantly, 44 percent (N=35) of second-generation Afghans aspired to bring up their children in Afghanistan, eventually. The rationale of those aspiring to raise their children eventually in Afghanistan revolved around issues of identity and belonging, for example:

- The homeland for Afghans is Afghanistan; Afghan people belong to Afghanistan.
- Afghan children should be familiar with the culture and customs of Afghanistan.
- Afghan children raised in Afghanistan have no problems with dual culture.
- Afghan people are not migrants in Afghanistan.
- The Iranian government does not permit Afghans to remain and eventually Afghans will have to return to Afghanistan.

Being raised in two socio-cultural environments (Afghan and Iranian) was considered negative by some respondents. For example a 29-year-old in Mashhad explained:

"Wherever I raise my children I want them to stay in that place forever. I don't want them to have the experience of two societies. And if they are to be raised in Afghanistan they should stay there forever. And if they are to be raised in Iran I want them to stay here forever. The experience of two societies can have a devastating influence, because the cultural differences between the two societies cause many problems." (Mm10)

Some respondents mentioned citizenship in terms of the legal status it accords, and with this, the ability to plan one's future. The future of second-generation Afghans in Iran is ambiguous given the government of Iran's current repatriation imperative. For example, a 28-year-old in Tehran stated:

"I want them [my children] to grow up in my own country because they will be more comfortable there and can make decisions more easily. They can make long-term decisions [plans] with confidence in the knowledge that no one can prevent them. If they grow up in a [host] country like Iran they cannot act in that way." (Tm01)

One-third (N=26) of second-generation Afghans aspired to raise their children in Iran due to better education opportunities, welfare facilities and living conditions. However, several respondents acknowledged that access to university-level education for Afghans in Iran is restricted. Six respondents aspired to raise their children in European and Arabic countries for the same reasons as above. These respondents claimed that Europe and Arabic countries demonstrated greater respect for the rights of non-nationals than Iran.

6.3 Perceptions of conditions on return

Significantly, only 20 percent (N=16) believed that their life would improve upon returning to Afghanistan. Of these, some claimed they could work in higher status occupations in Afghanistan enabling social mobility, and others believed that unlike them, their children would have the opportunity to attend university in Afghanistan.

However, the vast majority of respondents (N=54; 82%) believed their situation would worsen if they returned to Afghanistan. Reasons given related to poor education facilities and teaching, and lack of job opportunities which negatively affect standard of living and social position. All respondents mentioned educational and employment limitations, as well as the lack of utilities (water, electricity, gas). Some mentioned the cost of resettlement. For example, a 25-year-old in Mashhad said: "I think [my financial situation] will be 70 times worse than it is now. Of course, relocating to another place requires spending money; you are forced to sell many things [in Iran] and buying them [in Afghanistan] is very difficult." (Mm01)

It has been estimated that the monthly average household expenditure for a returnee family in Afghanistan was about USD200, and that 90 percent of returnees had found a job (of varying quality) within six months.⁴² Not only does it cost repatriates to resettle, it costs some to leave Iran, evidenced by the need for mediation of legal disputes such as non-payment of salaries by employers to Afghan workers, and non-return of *rahn* (bond) by landlords to Afghan tenants intending to repatriate.⁴³

Some mentioned the vocational, educational and social restrictions for women in Afghanistan as a result of patriarchal ideology which structures gender relations, and the status of women. In direct contradiction to this, some second-generation women who worked as teachers in self-regulated Afghan schools in Iran, or as hairdressers, believed that they could continue their respective professions in Afghanistan.

Finding paid work is critical to sustainable reintegration. Heads of Afghan households in Iran make reconnaissance visits to Afghanistan for the purpose of surveying work opportunities and preparing housing for their family. A 29-year-old male in Mashhad warned:

"The situation for families who do not prepare themselves before returning or do not consider the living conditions will be faced with great hardship. Usually Afghan families who have lived in Iran for several years have enjoyed a certain standard of living. If they return to Afghanistan, particularly if they have children below six years of age, they will find themselves in another environment with many problems. [Compared to Iran] their situation will worsen unless before the return of the whole family one member only returns to

⁴² Wickramasekara, "Afghan Households in Iran", 61.

⁴³ In 2004 BAFIA and UNHCR established Dispute Resettlement Committees (DRC) in seven provinces with sizeable Afghan populations to mediate such legal disputes (US Committee for Refugees, 2006).

prepare everything, and then the family can arrive. I think in this way there will be less problems.” (Mm10)

The practice of reconnaissance visits may facilitate decision-making about return, and increase prospects of sustainable reintegration. Previously, BAFIA required Afghans departing Iran to carry an exit visa (LP) which required them to surrender identification documentation. This resulted in the household head being unable to legally return to Iran to collect his family. This policy has changed since the Transnational Networks study in 2005-6, and according to UNHCR-Iran, Afghans conducting reconnaissance visits are now issued an “unassisted repatriation LP” which does not require them to surrender their Amayesh cards to BAFIA.

Visiting Afghanistan may affect second-generation attachment to Afghanistan, and/or influence decision-making about returning to Afghanistan. Almost one-third of respondents (N=23) had visited Afghanistan (Table 16), with most visits occurring since the installation of the internationally supported interim authority in Kabul in late 2001 (17 of 23 respondents).⁴⁴ Almost 40 percent (N=15) of second-generation male and 20 percent (N=8) of females had visited Afghanistan for various reasons. Of the 15 male SGA respondents who visited Afghanistan, 5 were single and 10 married, and of the 8 female SGA respondents who had visited, 4 were single and 4 married. A further eight women stated that their brothers had returned to Afghanistan for the purpose of building a house or finding a job. Reasons for return included: visiting parents and relatives, participating in the weddings of siblings or close relatives, deportation due to lack of documentation or confiscation of documents by the Iranian authorities, to acquaint themselves with the birthplace/homeland of their parents, to obtain a student visa for their education in Iran, and to buy land or build a house.

Visiting Afghanistan resulted in changed attitudes towards return for some respondents. Several respondents reported that while they had previously understood Afghanistan to be devastated by war, visiting allowed first hand observation of efforts to restore peace and order, and the speed of development and reconstruction.

⁴⁴ Data on the number of visits made by each respondent were not recorded.

Table 17. Visiting Afghanistan, by second-generation characteristics (N=80)

Characteristics of second generation		Visiting Afghanistan		No. of Sample
		Yes	No	
Total		23 (29%)	57 (71%)	80
Gender	Male	15	25	40
	Female	8	32	40
Country of birth	Iran	5	26	31
	Afghanistan	18	30	48
	Pakistan	0	1	1
Ethnicity	Hazara	13	33	46
	Tajik	8	22	30
	Pashtun	1	2	3
	Ghezelbash	1	0	1
Marital Status	Single	9	31	40
	Married/ Engaged	14	26	40
Education level	Low	4	9	13
	Middle	10	25	35
	High	9	23	32
Household SES	Low	5	10	15
	Middle to low	7	24	31
	Middle	6	11	17
	Middle to high	4	6	10
	High	1	6	7

Some patterns in relation to return visits for the respondent group interviewed are discernible:

- Men are twice as likely as women to have visited Afghanistan.
- Respondents born in Afghanistan are twice as likely to have visited compared to their Iranian-born Afghan counterparts.
- Different levels of education had only slight impact and those with lower level education were slightly more likely to have visited than those with medium or higher levels.
- Those with highest SES were least likely to have visited, followed by middle to low, while middle to middle-high were most likely to have visited.

6.4 Participation in decision-making about return

Particular events or experiences provoked discussion about the subject of return at the level of the household. Conversation about various laws and regulations, for example in relation to ID, led to discussion about leaving Iran and returning to Afghanistan. Spending money to renew permits had the same effect. A 38-year-old housewife stated:

"This discussion [about return] becomes hot in our family when we need to renew ID cards and must pay money for them. And God knows how difficult that is for us [to find that money]; we have to spend half of our money on these expenses ... at these times we want to return." (If02p)

Other events that provoked discussion about returning to Afghanistan related to the timing of school enrolments and the beginning of the school year. A 15-year-old student in Isfahan who participated in a focus group discussion explained:

"In our family we discuss this matter [about return] very much particularly when the school term begins, and we don't have an ID card and so we cannot register our children [the respondent's siblings] to attend school. I want to return and raise my child [siblings] in Afghanistan but my family disagrees and says that the living conditions in Afghanistan are too hard."

Sometimes an encounter with an Iranian perceived to be insulting, and usually focusing on the subject of being Afghan or not returning to Afghanistan, provoked discussion about return. For example, a 19-year-old female focus group participant in Isfahan said: "My brother usually initiates discussion about returning. Whenever he goes out and feels insulted [by an Iranian] he comes home and says: 'Let's go, Afghanistan is better - at least we are registered in school'".

In terms of which members of the family are involved in decision-making about returning to Afghanistan, all second-generation respondents claimed that every family member, including female members and children, are consulted. However, there are differences in the relative weight given to the opinion of different members according to gender and age. Female family members may have less decision-making power and their opinions accorded less valued than male members. Ultimately, final decisions are more likely to be made by men. The point was made by several respondents that the decision taken by men in relation to returning to Afghanistan was based on their assessment of the relative benefits or difficulties that family members, particularly children, might experience in the event of return. Where women were household heads (three respondents), they had more decision-making power, and in each case had opted against return.

Household members were relatively aligned in relation to their viewpoint about return. Of those respondents who were against return, nearly all had other family members who shared this view. Several respondents also emphasised that they sought to remain as an intact family group wherever they lived: in Iran, Afghanistan or elsewhere. Eleven respondents stated that their views against return were different from that of their family members and were influenced by their aspiration to finish their education before returning to Afghanistan. Four respondents claimed they would return to Afghanistan after their children had finished their education in Iran in the next five years.

6.5 Current intention in relation to return

"Return intention" is divided into two categories: taking current action to return, and not taking current action to return. The latter category is further divided into those

having no intention to return, and those undecided about return. The relative proportions of those 80 second-generation Afghans surveyed are: 48 percent (N=39) are undecided, 26 percent (N=21) do not intend to return to Afghanistan, 21 percent (N=17) are taking current action to return to Afghanistan, and 3 percent (N=3) are planning to migrate to a third country. Table 19 shows the effect of demographic characteristics such as sex, birthplace, ethnicity, marital status, socio-economic status and education levels on return intention. These trends for 80 respondents surveyed cannot however be used to generalise about SGAs in Iran.

Place of residence in Iran

Respondents living in Isfahan were most likely to be taking current action to return to Afghanistan (31%; N=5). Those respondents living in Tehran (15% N=5) were least likely to be taking current action, and most likely to be undecided about whether to remain or return (53%; N=17). Those living in Mashhad were least likely to return to Afghanistan with 31 percent (N=10) claiming that they had no intention of returning. The result for Mashhad reflects other data that suggest that Afghans in Mashhad experience more secure tenancy due to the institution of *gholnamei* which indicates an unofficial deed of title negotiation between buyers and sellers which has legal recognition but is not officially registered by the government. Another reason may be the pilgrimage practice and residential proximity to the Shrine of Imam Reza afforded by residence in Mashhad.

Sex

Men were almost twice as likely as women to be taking current action to return (27% compared to 15%). Related to this result, women were more likely than men to have no intention to return to Afghanistan (30% compared to 22%), and women were also more likely to be undecided about returning to Afghanistan or remaining in Iran than men (52% compared to 45%). This result reflects the general tendency among Afghan women to be less willing to return than men due to the persistence of patriarchal ideology in Afghanistan which accords low status to women, and the comparatively high labour output required of women living in Afghanistan compared to Iran.

Birthplace

The result for the effect of birthplace on intention to return is not straightforward. Afghanistan-born respondents were split between taking current action to return, and intention not to return. For example, Afghanistan-born respondents were more than twice as likely (27%; N=13) to be taking current action to return compared to their Iran-born counterparts (13%; N=4). Birthplace had no major effect on intention not to return to Afghanistan. However, birthplace did affect indecision with Iranian-born second-generation Afghans more likely to be undecided (58%; N=18) than their Afghanistan-born counterparts (41%; N=20). The relation between being born in Afghanistan and taking current action to return to Afghanistan may be influenced by various factors. For example, being born in Afghanistan and migrating to Iran may affect education achievement, occupation, socio-economic status, and subsequent level of integration into Iranian society. Second, a child born in Afghanistan who subsequently migrates to Iran may sustain certain emotional or symbolic attachments to Afghanistan as birthplace. Iran-born second-generation Afghans have attachment to Afghanistan as the birthplace of their own parents.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity may affect current return intention. Hazara respondents were more likely to be taking current action to return (21%; N=10) compared to Tajik Afghans (13%; N=4).

Ethnicity had no effect on intention not to return to Afghanistan, very slight effect in relation to indecision (Tajiks (53%; N=16) more likely to be undecided than Hazara (50%; N=23). The result for ethnicity showing Hazara current action to be considerably higher than their Tajik counterparts is interesting, as previous analysis showed the reverse (2003 Amayesh figures showed Hazara comprised 41 percent of the total Afghan population in Iran and 25 percent of repatriating Afghans compared with Tajiks who comprised 32 percent of the Afghan population in Iran and 42 percent of repatriating Afghans). There are several possible reasons for this result: fear of religious-ethnic persecution in Afghanistan has decreased among Hazara in Iran, and second, that the government of Iran's imperative to accelerate the repatriation of Afghans has resulted in harassment or pressure upon Hazara whose distinct phenotype distinguishes them immediately as Afghans.

Marital status

There is some effect of marital status on current action being taken to return to Afghanistan by those Afghans surveyed (see Table 18). Single males were more likely than their married counterparts to be taking action to return. Single respondents (35%; N=14) were twice more likely than married ones (17%; N=7) to have no intention to return to Afghanistan. Single respondents (57%; N=23) were also more likely than their married counterparts to be undecided about returning to Afghanistan (40%; N=16). The high return of single second-generation males having no intention to return, and being undecided about return, has particular implications as second-generation men aged 15-25 are almost entirely single according to the 2005 Amayesh.

Table 18. Intention to return, by gender (N=80)

		Taking action to return to Afghanistan	Not taking action, staying in Iran (N=60)		Planning to go abroad	No. of Sample
			No intention to return	Undecided		
Male	Single	7	2	10	1	20
	Married/Engaged	4	7	8	1	20
Female	Single	2	5	13	0	20
	Married/Engaged	4	7	8	1	20

Education level

Results for the effect of education level on return intention are not definitive, although slightly more so for the cohort of higher educated who were clearly inclined towards remaining in Iran. Of those with higher education, 15 percent (N=5) were taking current action to return to Afghanistan, 34 percent (N=11) had no intention to return, and 46 percent (N=15) were undecided. In comparative terms, those with high education levels were more likely not to be taking current action to return to Afghanistan, and not to have any intention of returning to Afghanistan. Additionally, those with higher education were less likely to be undecided about this decision than the other two groups (those with medium and low levels of education), although the figure for indecision among the higher-educated is still significant at 46 percent (N=15). The results for the effect of low and medium levels of education on return intention were more ambiguous. Those with medium level education (N=35) were fairly evenly divided in relation to returning or remaining, with 25 percent (N=9) taking current action to return to Afghanistan, 20 percent (N=7) having no intention of returning, and 48 percent (N=17) undecided. Those with low level education (N=13) were equally divided in relation to return intention with the same proportion (23%; N=3) taking current action to return, and having no intention

to return. This is also reflected in the proportion of those who are undecided (53%; N=7).

Socio-economic status

Those with the highest socio-economic status were similarly least likely to be taking current action to return. That those with low and medium to low SES were also less likely to be taking current action to return might be due to their tendency to be risk averse due to their vulnerable economic position, and their assessment of the cost of repatriation and reintegration (unemployed while finding work, renting or buying housing, renting or buying land, etc.) as unaffordable. However, the lowest SES category was least likely to have no intention of return, and most likely (along with the highest SES category) to be undecided about returning.

The clearest pattern of indecision was indicated for those with the highest SES, of whom 71 percent (N=5) were undecided, 14 percent (N=1) were taking current action, and none had ruled out the possibility of return (i.e., had no intention of not returning). This level of indecision and inaction can probably be explained by the fact that this cohort has most to lose in returning if their reintegration is not successful, on the other hand they also have the greatest resources to ensure the success of their reintegration. Perhaps however, the level of insecurity and prevailing patriarchy are discouraging factors.

There is convergence between the highest and the lowest SES. Combined, these two categories returned very high levels of indecision, low levels of current action to return and low levels of non-intention to return. This might be explained by these households' assessment of the substantial costs associated with reintegration as unaffordable. Yet, reflected in the high level of indecision is the possibility that their vulnerable economic position in Iran also means that they perhaps have little to gain in remaining in Iran, and perhaps, something to gain by returning to Afghanistan. The SES group that was most likely to be taking current action to return to Afghanistan were those in the middle SES bracket (29%; N=5), and the group with the least intention of returning to Afghanistan was the medium to low SES bracket (38%; N=12).

Table 19. Return intentions of second-generation Afghans, by demographic characteristics (N=80)

Characteristics of second generation	Taking action to return to Afghanistan	Not taking action, staying in Iran (N=60)		Planning to go abroad	No. of Sample	
		No intention to return	Undecided			
Total	17	21	39	3	80	
City	Mashhad	7	10	15	0	32
	Tehran	5	7	17	3	32
	Isfahan	5	4	7	0	16
Gender	Male	11	9	18	2	40
	Female	6	12	21	1	40
Country of birth	Iran	4	8	18	1	31
	Afghanistan	13	13	20	2	48
	Pakistan	0	0	1	0	1
	Hazara	10	12	23	1	46
Ethnicity	Tajik	4	8	16	2	30
	Pashtun	2	1	0	0	3
	Ghezelbash	1	0	0	0	1
Marital Status	Single	9	7	23	1	40
	Married/Engaged	8	14	16	2	40
Education level	Low	3	3	7	0	13
	Middle	9	7	17	2	35
	High	5	11	15	1	32
Household SES	Low	3	2	10	0	15
	Middle to low	6	12	13	0	31
	Middle	5	4	6	2	17
	Middle to high	2	3	5	0	10
	High	1	0	5	1	7

7. Summary of key findings

7.1 Profile of second-generation Afghans in this study

Education

- Substantial inter-generational differences exist between second-generation Afghans in Iran and their parents with regard to primary and secondary levels of education.
- Learning certain dispositions (sociality, moderateness, gender equity, national thinking) as a result of being educated in the Iranian system may promote integration and become a source of inter-generational conflict.
- Educated Afghans are more likely than their non-literate counterparts to have higher socio-economic status.
- There is a clear relationship between being educated and having more frequent and more positive interaction with Iranians.

Employment

- There is incongruity between education status and current occupation and income, due to government policy which restricts Afghan workers to non-skilled labour sectors.
- Afghans educated to secondary level and above are twice as likely to be employed in the income bracket defined as low versus medium or high income brackets.
- Level of education affects the composition of Afghans employed in the highest income bracket, as middle and higher educated Afghans are more likely than their lower educated counterparts to be in the highest income bracket.
- No particular relation exists between education level and satisfaction with current occupation.
- A relation exists between job satisfaction and return intention, with those who are satisfied with their jobs more likely to want to remain in Iran.
- The majority of respondents perceive or have experienced discrimination in relation to employment due to government policy restricting occupation.

Inter-generational relations

- Sources of inter-generational conflict include different attitudes and values in relation to marriage, work versus study, and social behaviour (particularly female).
- There is some convergence in second-generation attitudes and preferences with Iranian counterparts in relation to gender relations, the value of education, and economic aspirations.
- Demonstrated adherence to tradition, for example, in high levels of consanguineous marriage among the second generation, reflects both persistence of custom and parental authority.

Social networks

- There is a relation between those who assess their current occupation as satisfactory, and those who assess their relations with Iranian co-workers and employers as “good” and those who are not taking current action to return to Afghanistan.
- Those who have good relations at the neighbourhood level are more likely not to be taking current non-action to return to Afghanistan.
- Relations with Afghan neighbours are twice as likely to be positive compared to relations with Iranian neighbours.
- Those Afghans who had good interactions with Iranian neighbours and attended their funerals and weddings were more likely to be medium to high-level educated Afghans.
- Second-generation Afghan women are unlikely to interact with Iranians at the neighbourhood level, but much more likely to have a good friendship with an Iranian than their male counterparts.

7.2 Identity

The self-identified characteristics of many of the second-generation Afghans interviewed in this study - such as aspirations to become educated, willingness to embrace change, and determination to improve one’s situation - are not represented in their perceptions of the stereotypical Afghan. In other words, most respondents were not describing themselves when they described Afghan-ness or being Afghan.

Second-generation Afghans were either born in Iran or raised there. As adults, many have sought out information about the history of Afghanistan from media. While most learned generally about Afghanistan through mass media such as television and radio, as well as through the internet, they criticised this media for focusing on dramatic events relating to war and conflict, and not on the everyday lives of Afghans. Print media provides a historical basis for the current situation in Afghanistan, giving respondents a more positive sense of Afghanistan. Second-generation Afghans also learned about Afghanistan as visitors – almost half of men and one fifth of women respondents had visited Afghanistan at least once. These visits could either attract or detract Afghans in Iran from returning, depending on the experience of the individual.

Subtle differences in the way that Afghans and Iranians mark Islamic holidays and ceremonies differentiate Afghan practices from Iranian ones. However in relation to these, respondents emphasised that Afghan practices in Iran also differ from the practices of Afghans in Afghanistan, grounded in differences in household configuration and predominance of the nuclear configuration for Afghans in Iran.

The idea of “homeland” invokes particular emotions of belonging and attachment. Living in one’s homeland has a politico-legal dimension as it accords legal rights and security of residency. The majority of respondents perceived Afghanistan rather than Iran as homeland. The relation between perception of homeland and return intention is insightful. The first result is not surprising: the vast majority of those respondents taking current action to return to Afghanistan also perceived Afghanistan as homeland. However, the relation between return intention and homeland is more ambiguous than this result suggests, for of those not intending to return to Afghanistan and intending to remain in Iran, more than one-third also perceived Afghanistan as homeland. However, it should be said that of those not intending to return to Afghanistan, more than half

viewed Iran as homeland. Among undecided respondents, the vast majority also perceived Afghanistan rather than Iran to be homeland.

Preferred place of burial also indicates particular attachment to that place. Substantiating the result for homeland above, one-third of respondents claimed to want to be buried in Afghanistan based on their relation to Afghanistan as their birthplace, and that of their parents'. Seventeen respondents preferred to be buried in Iran, mentioning Mashhad specifically as the location of the tomb of the only Shia Imam to be buried in Iran, Imam Reza.

Many respondents identified intergenerational differences grounded in different values and attitudes. Some of these differences are a result of education, and it can be said that education represents one of the multiple layers that can shape identity. Respondents mentioned several dispositions that have grown out of the process of becoming educated. "Sociality" is also mentioned as an effect of education, as is consciousness about civil society, and the way patriarchal ideology structures gender relations. Holding values and dispositions more aligned with the Iranian socio-cultural milieu differentiates second-generation Afghans in Iran from their parents, and from Afghans in Afghanistan. But this is not to say that such alignment means that second-generation Afghans identify themselves as Iranians or are recognised as Iranians. Return to Afghanistan will not necessarily reduce this sense of being "in between"; in fact it may extend that feeling.

Given the Iranian government's imperative to accelerate the repatriation of Afghans, the challenge for those second-generation Afghans who seek to return to Afghanistan (which they themselves describe as homeland) will be their integration into a society which they tend to perceive in pejorative terms as traditionalist, and which perceives them as different, even Iran-ised. The challenge for those second-generation Afghans who identify themselves as modern like their Iranian counterparts, and seek to remain in Iran, is the fact that the government of Iran identifies them as non-nationals, and accords them different rights and status.

7.3 Return to Afghanistan

Conditions in Afghanistan considered necessary for return focused on restoration of security, a strong economy providing job opportunities, health and education infrastructure, and utilities. While the existence of these factors in Iran (as well as rights accorded to women) acted to encourage second-generation Afghans to remain in Iran, other factors in Iran encouraged return: job insecurity, residential insecurity, mobility restrictions, derogatory attitudes, raising children in two socio-cultural environments, and inability to plan for the future. Respondents who were themselves still studying wanted to complete their education in Iran. While respondents who had young families were unanimous in their intention to remain in Iran because of education and health facilities there, across the entire respondent cohort attitudes were fairly split on whether they preferred to raise their children in Iran.

Characteristics of those who are taking current action to return

Some broad trends exist in relation to the demographic characteristics of those second-generation Afghans surveyed who are currently taking action to return to Afghanistan. Of those surveyed, around 21 percent (N=17) were currently taking action to return. The following broad trends, analysed previously in 6.5, can be discerned:

- *Sex:* Men were almost twice as likely as women to be taking current action to return, reflecting the general tendency among Afghan women to be less willing

to return than men due to the persistence of patriarchal ideology which accords low status to women, and the comparatively high labour output required of women.

- *Place of birth:* Afghanistan-born respondents were more than twice as likely to be taking current action to return compared to their Iran-born counterparts.
- *Ethnicity:* More Hazara respondents were taking current action to return compared to Tajik Afghans.
- *Marital status:* More single men were taking action than their married counterparts, and this was the reverse for women.
- *Education level:* Those with high levels of education were less likely to be taking current action to return compared with those with lower and middle levels of education.
- *Socio-economic status:* Those with high SES were least likely to be taking current action to return, followed by those with medium to low, and low status. Those with medium level SES were more likely to be currently taking action to return.

Characteristics of those who have no intention of returning to Afghanistan

Of those surveyed, 26% (N=21) claimed to have no intention of returning to Afghanistan meaning that they wanted to remain in Iran. Several patterns are discernible:

- *City of residence in Iran:* Those in Mashhad were most likely to have no intention to return to Afghanistan, and those from Tehran least likely to have no intention of returning.
- *Sex:* Women were more likely than men to have no intention to return to Afghanistan.
- Ethnicity had no effect on intention not to return to Afghanistan.
- *Marital status:* Male and female respondents who were married or engaged were more likely than single respondents to have no intention to return to Afghanistan.
- *Education:* Those with higher levels of education were more likely to have no intention to return to Afghanistan, followed by those with low-level education. Those least likely to have no intention of return were those with medium level of education.
- *Socio-economic status:* Those in the medium to low SES ranking were more likely to have no intention to return to Afghanistan, followed by those in the medium to high, and medium brackets. Significantly, none of the high SES respondents claimed that they had no intention of returning, in other words, they were deliberating on when to return but had not made a decision categorically not to return. A low number of those in the lowest SES had no intention of returning.

Characteristics of those who are undecided about returning

Of those surveyed, almost half (48%; N=39) were undecided about whether to remain in Iran or return to Afghanistan. Several patterns are discernible:

- *City of residence in Iran:* Afghans living currently in Tehran and Mashhad were more likely to be undecided about returning than those living in Isfahan.
- *Sex:* Women were more likely to be undecided than men.

- *Birthplace:* Iranian-born Afghans were more likely to be undecided than their Afghanistan-born counterparts.
- *Marital status:* Single respondents were more likely than their married counterparts to be undecided about returning to Afghanistan, with single women slightly more likely than single men to be undecided.
- *Education:* Those of low level education are most undecided about returning compared with those of medium and higher levels of education.
- *Socio-economic status:* Those with higher SES were most likely to be undecided, followed closely by lowest SES. Medium SES were least likely to be undecided.

8. Recommendations

Research findings indicate that most second-generation Afghans living in Iran are not taking current action to return to Afghanistan, and most are undecided about returning, or not. Many claim they would return when evidence of economic and infrastructure development and political stability in Afghanistan allows for sustainable return. Some second-generation Afghans seek to remain in Iran only until they have completed their secondary or tertiary education. Significantly, all second-generation respondents with children sought to remain in the medium term at least for reasons of better access to education, health and welfare facilities for their children in Iran. In opposition to this aspiration to remain in Iran is the imperative of the government of Iran - through regulations aiming to restrict access to education and welfare facilities in Iran - to accelerate the repatriation of Afghans. Between 2002 and 2006, a total of 847,285 Afghans living in Iran were provided with assisted repatriation to Afghanistan. There are currently a little over one million registered Afghans living in Iran, including 341,157 second-generation Afghans aged 15-29, or 33.4 percent of the total population of Afghans.

The key issues for policymakers involved in formulating durable solutions to the issue of the future of all Afghans, including second-generation Afghans, currently living in Iran include:

- creation of the conditions for sustainable reintegration of those second-generations who choose to return to Afghanistan, and
- allowing for the legal status of households that choose to remain in Iran in the medium term.

In light of the findings from this research, the following recommendations are made that will work towards sustaining protection of second-generation Afghans who are refugees, legalising the status of those second-generation Afghan households in Iran that seek to remain in the medium term, and improving the prospects for sustainable reintegration of second-generation Afghans returning from Iran to Afghanistan.

The governments of Iran and Afghanistan, together with the UNHCR, should maintain their membership of the Tripartite Agreement and its supporting arrangements to ensure the safe and voluntary return of Afghans in Iran, including second-generation Afghans.

A strong preference exists among second-generation Afghans who are parents of young children to remain in Iran in the medium term due to the quality of health and education facilities. It can be anticipated that in the next five years when the majority of second-generation Afghans will have married and parented, an even higher percentage of second-generation Afghans with young families will seek to remain in Iran. Health and welfare services should be made accessible to Afghan families that remain in Iran: this is a fundamental humanitarian issue. To enable Iran to maintain these basic services to Afghans, substantial burden-sharing aid should be provided to the government, NGOs, Iranian civil society and Afghan community-based service providers.

In spite of government regulations to restrict self-regulated Afghan schools, these schools have persisted due to demand by second-generation Afghans who are ineligible to enrol in state-run schools or cannot afford their fees. It is imperative that second-generation Afghans and their children are given opportunities for education: this is also

a fundamental humanitarian issue. The Iranian Ministry of Education and the Embassy of Afghanistan in Tehran should act bilaterally to:

- legalise self-regulated Afghan schools in Iran
- continue to provide curriculum support and resources such as school texts
- standardise curriculum so that qualifications from self-regulated schools in Afghan are recognised in Afghanistan as well as Iran
- provide professional development for Afghan teachers in self-regulated schools to improve the quality of teaching in Iran, and improve the quality of teaching in Afghanistan in the event of the return of these teachers to Afghanistan.

Some skilled and university-educated second-generation Afghans in Iran seek to return to Afghanistan and assist in reconstruction and development efforts, but are held back by reintegration concerns, namely, living and working conditions in Afghanistan. Continued support should be provided to the International Organization for Migration in its efforts to assist in reintegration and employment of skilled Afghans and their families. This work should focus on the identification of Afghan graduates and skilled workers living in Iran, matching these with labour needs in Afghanistan and ultimately facilitating their reintegration and employment in Afghanistan.

There is almost parity between the levels of education for those Afghan men and women born in Iran. Research data demonstrate that consciousness about gender equity, and aspirations for greater gender equity within marriage, is high among most female and some male respondents. Assisted repatriation figures show fewer females than males returning to Afghanistan (550,529 males and 470,794 females in the period 2002-06). This is supported by the results from this research, which show women to be less likely to be taking current action to return, more likely to have no intention to return, and more likely to be undecided about return than their male counterparts. Second-generation women's observation of gender relations in their parents' generation, their perceptions of gender relations in Afghanistan, and their own aspirations for greater equity act to discourage second-generation women from returning to Afghanistan. In order to encourage the return of educated Afghan women in Iran and their families, the government of Afghanistan must continue to make concerted efforts to promote the elimination of discrimination against Afghan women.

The mass media in Iran plays an important role in helping to inform second-generation Afghans about the ongoing situation in Afghanistan. However, second-generation respondents perceived the Iranian mass media as propagating negative images about Afghanistan by focusing on incidences of violence and conflict. The member Ministers of the Executive Co-ordination Council for Foreign Nationals should work with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Organisation (IRIB) in consultation with the Embassy of Afghanistan in Tehran to ensure balanced coverage of news about Afghanistan, including coverage of the everyday lives of Afghan men, women and children in both rural and urban areas in Afghanistan.

Some second-generation Afghans who had returned to Afghanistan experienced being called "Iran-ised" by Afghans, while others had heard of this happening from relatives and acquaintances who had visited Afghanistan. The Government of Afghanistan through its broadcasting organisation should act to promote positive images of Afghans who have lived in Iran including: those who are currently living in Iran, those visiting Afghanistan from Iran, and those in the process of resettling in Afghanistan, in an effort to increase the success of reintegration for returnees.

Government of Iran regulations no longer permit second-generation Afghans to compete with their Iranian peers for non-fee paying places in state universities. A feasibility study should be carried out to investigate the positive and other effects of indenturing tertiary students. In the context of Afghanistan, Afghan students living in Iran could be sponsored by international donors to study in the fields of medicine and engineering in the private university sector in Iran. On graduation, they could be indentured to the public sector in Afghanistan for a designated period of time, with suitable employment and living conditions.

Related to international support for higher education of Afghans in Iran, a feasibility study should be carried out to investigate the establishment by international NGOs of trades schools that offer technical skills training for Afghans in Iran, in order to address the technical skills deficit in Afghanistan in the longer term.

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Appendix 1. Locator map: study sites in Iran



Appendix 2. Location profiles

1) Tehran

Shahr-e Rey/Bagharabad

Shahr-e Rey (of which Bagharabad is a sub-district) is located approximately 15 km to the southeast of Tehran city. Tehran is divided into 22 districts, and District 20 (*Mantaghe Bist*) is one of the most populous. The city of Shahr-e Rey is at the centre of District 20, located between Pak Dasht, Varamin, and Ghiam Dasht. Shahr-e Rey has a population of around one million including approximately 160,000 non-nationals: 10,000 Iraqis and 150,000 Afghans working mainly as labourers, farmers, tailors and stonemasons. Both income levels and the cost of rent in District 20 are lower than in other districts, and as a result, the area can be characterised as migrant-receiving, including migrants from other parts of Iran such as Turks, Kurds, Lor and Fars ethnicities. Shahr-e Rey is home to the Shia Muslim shrine of Shah Abdol Azim which is visited by more than one million pilgrims every year.

Kan

Kan is located approximately 25 km northwest of Tehran city. There are approximately 700 Afghan households in Kan, with the majority Tajik Sunni. Most Afghan residents are engaged in the construction sector, gardening and street side shoe mending. Thirty percent of Afghans in Kan have been resident there for over ten years. There is one Afghan school and one government health clinic, as well as several private health clinics. Tajik Sunni residents of Kan use clergy to deal with problems at the neighbourhood level, whereas Shia Afghan residents have an elected committee whose eight representatives work to help resolve neighbourhood-level problems.

Nematabad

Nematabad is located approximately 10 km south of Tehran city. There are 600–800 Afghan households in Nematabad, which includes the areas of Abdulabad, Zamzam, Jalili, Shariati T-intersection and Vasfnard. Nematabad is an industrial area, with mainly metal-turning workshops (lathe), fabric and tailoring. Around 35% of Afghans living in Nematabad are employed in the carpentry industry. There are about ten large tailor workshops in Nematabad with each employing as many as 20 people, as well as several smaller workshops. Around 25% of Afghan residents in Nematabad work in the tailoring industry. There are several shoemaking production workshops which employ about 10% of Afghans. A further 10% are employed as simple labourers and builders, and the rest work as hawkers or metal workers. Most Iranians in Nematabad work as clothes and fabric sellers, and in the metal lathe industry.

2) Mashhad

Golshahr

Located to the northeast of Mashhad in the Tabadgan region, Golshahr lies on the margins of the Mashhad residential area which consists of six regions. Golshahr is a major residential area for Afghans, to the extent that local Iranians call the suburb “Kabul shahr”, or Kabul city. According to informal data, 50–65% of the Golshahr population (35,000–40,000) is Afghan, mainly Shia Hazara. Many have constructed or purchased their own houses; this is accepted at the local level but does not carry the same legal validity as the officially documented and registered ownership known as *sanad*. Facilities in Golshahr include municipal water, gas, electricity and other welfare services such as a 200-bed hospital, five health centre branches as well as private medical clinics. There are several state-run schools: pre-school, primary school, lower secondary school, upper secondary school and technical training facilities for trade professions, as well as a Quranic school sponsored by the Imam Reza Foundation, and two independent Afghan schools (primary and secondary). Other facilities include approximately twelve small libraries, and eight mosques and *hosseinieh*. The work of most Afghan men in Golshahr centres around the construction industry (as builders, labourers, plasterers, stonemasons and bricklayers) as well as some being shopkeepers, welders and agriculturalists. There are also small workshops producing

tasbeeh prayer beads, mohr clay prayer tablets and prayer rugs. Women, children and young people are engaged in the weaving of carpets and kelims, spinning wool, shelling pistachios, agricultural work and some seasonal work such as cleaning saffron. Political parties or groups tend to be based on ethnic allegiance. Residents resolve disputes by seeking advice from elders, and occasionally request government intervention.

Ghalesakhteman (also known as Shahid Rajai)

Ghalesakhteman is an old neighbourhood located in the east of Mashhad on the margins of the city, and at the head of the road to Sarakhs. It is part of Region Five of Mashhad. About 25% of the population (40,000-45,000) are Afghans, both Shia and Sunni. Sakhteman has the following facilities: two health centres, one night and day pharmacy, 4-5 health centre branches, state-run primary and secondary schools, and one independent Afghan school. Afghan Shias have one independent mosque for their own use, three *hosseineh*, and two centres for educational and cultural activities. Afghan Sunnis share two mosques and one theological school with Iranian Sunnis. The occupational structure of Sakhteman is similar to Golshahr except that there are fewer shopkeepers in Sakhteman.

Tollab

In the neighbourhood, Afghans membership tend to be bazaar merchants, traders or officers of the Afghan government based in Mashhad, and have a significantly stronger economic position than those Afghans living in Golshahr and Ghaleakhteman. The neighbourhood is at an average to high region of Mashhad. The neighbourhood has good economical condition and most Afghans who live in this region have good financial condition. The presence of many self-regulated schools in this region is another reason for good condition of this neighbourhood. The streets are paved with asphalt. It has water, gas, electricity and telephone. Many people have mobile phone. It is near to green space and public transportation system. It almost has all educational, healthcare, cultural and recreational facilities. Then, It is near to green space and public transportation system. There are some self-regulated schools in this neighbourhood.

3) Isfahan

Dolat abad

This neighbourhood is one of the centres in which migrants live. Dolat abad is a marginal suburb but it has urban facilities and the roads are paved with asphalt and are stone paved. It has water, electricity, gas and telephone and near the city services such as supermarket and bus. The street is asphalt paved and has sewage canal in this neighbourhood most people are migrant. The relationship of Afghans and Iranians is good.

Zeinabieh Mosque

Zeinabieh is located in the north east of Isfahan and is the first pole of migrants. The neighbourhood has the highest number of Afghan migrants. It has all the urban facilities such as gas, water, electricity and the street are paved with asphalt. The sewage canal and the street lines are regular—and the public transportation is easy to access.

Rahnan

Rahnan is one of the three centres of Afghans in Isfahan. It is located in the west and near the old castle and has a decrepit and old structure and context. The roads are asphalt paved.

Appendix 3. Socio-economic status of the respondent households

Level Indicator	Low	Middle to low	Middle	Middle to high	High
Level of education	Illiterate	Primary	Junior (guidance) school and high school, Hozeh	Diploma	University
Job and job status	Jobless, housewife, laborer, shoe seller, stale bread seller	Clergyman, farmer, student, building painter,	Tailor, plaster worker, bricklayer, butcher, chain maker	Private job, businessman, shop keeper, architect, calligraphy teacher, university student, electrician	Self regulated school teacher and head teacher, merchant, road and construction engineer,
Approximate earning (wage) per month (Tomans)	Less than 100 thousand Tomans	100 – 150 thousand Tomans	150- 250 thousand Tomans	250- 350 thousand Tomans	Over 350 thousand Tomans
Owens farming land and house in Afghanistan	Does not own a house and farming land	Does not own a house and farming land	Owens either a house or a farming land	Owens both a house and a land but the land is less than 3 acres	Owens both a house and a land but the land is more than 3 acres.
Number of property (list of 14 properties)	Less than 2	2-4	5-7	8-10	More than 10
Owens house, cell phone, car in Iran	Does not own any	Does not own any	Owens cell phone but does not own house or car	Owens either a house or a car	Owens the three property
Amount of deposit (Tomans)	Less than 1 million	1-2 millions	2-4 millions	4-5 millions	More than 5 millions
Amount of rent (Tomans)	Less than 25 thousand	25-50 thousand	50-75 thousand	75-100 thousand	More than 100 thousand
SES (Estimate of interviewer)	Low	Lower average	Average	Higher average	High
Status of place of living	Bagher abad/ shahre rey	Ghale sakhteman/ Golshahr nemat abad/ kan, zeinabieh	Atabak, dolat abad, Javadieh	Kohsangi, Navab, tehranpars, Amir Abad, Khavaran	Tolab, Gheitarieh, Rahnan
Index of socio-economic status of household	15 18.8%	31 38.8%	17 21.3%	10 12.5%	7 8.8%

Appendix 4. Sampling frame

Mashhad

SES of Neighbourhood		Low			Middle			Upper Middle and High			Size of Sample
Characteristics of Sample											
Samples	Tribe	Level of Education									
		Low	Middl	High	Low	Middl	High	Low	Middl	High	
Single/engaged Male (15-22yrs old)	Hazara		x	x	x		xx				5
	Tajik		xx		x						3
	Pashtun									x	1
											9
Single/engaged Female (15-22yrs old)	Hazara		x	x		x			x		4
	Tajik		x		x	x			x	x	5
	Pashtun		x								1
											10
Married Male (23-30yrs old)	Hazara		x	xx		x					4
	Tajik			x			x			x	3
	Pashtun										0
											7
Married Female (23-30yrs old)	Hazara	x	x				x				3
	Tajik				x				x	x	3
	Pashtun										0
											6
Total number of second generation samples in Mashhad											32

Tehran

SES of Neighbourhood		Low			Middle			Upper Middle and High			Size of Sample
Characteristics of Sample											
Samples	Tribe	Level of Education									
		Low	Middl	High	Low	Middl	High	Low	Middl	High	
Single/engaged Male (15-22yrs old)	Hazara		x	x	x	x			x		5
	Tajik					x		x		x	3
											8
Single/engaged Female (15-22yrs old)	Hazara	x	x			x	x		x		5
	Tajik			x		x		x			3
											8
Married Male (23-30yrs old)	Hazara	x	x			x	x	x			5
	Tajik		x		x					x	3
											8
Married Female (23-30yrs old)	Hazara		x	x	x		x		x		5
	Tajik	x							x	x	3
											8
Total number of second generation samples in Tehran											32

Isfahan

SES of Neighbourhood		Low			Middle			Upper Middle and High			Size of Sample
Characteristics of Sample		Level of Education									
Samples	Tribe	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High	
Single/engaged Male (15-22yrs old)	Hazara	x				x				x	3
	Tajik	x				x					2
											5
Single/engaged Female (15-22yrs old)	Hazara	x					x				2
	Tajik					x					1
											3
Married Male (23-30yrs old)	Hazara		x		x				x		3
	Tajik	x									1
											4
Married Female (23-30yrs old)	Hazara		x		x						2
	Tajik	x							x		2
											4
Total number of second generation samples in Isfahan											16

Points about sampling framework in three study site:

- 1) A single man or woman who has an Iranian mother and Afghan father (i.e., mixed marriage) should be selected for interview.
- 2) A married woman who is the primary income earner for the household should be selected.
- 3)

Three parents (two fathers, one mother) of second-generation offspring, preferably with significantly different education and vocational experiences, and aspirations from their offspring, should be selected.

Appendix 5. Individual data code number and interviewee characteristics

Second generation interviewees (N=80)

Code	Marital Status	Age at marriage	Country of Birth Place	Ethnicity	Age	Education level	Occupation	SES
If-01	single	.	Iran	Hazara	22	AA	teacher	Middle to low
If-02	married	18	Iran	Hazara	26	Diploma	Housewife	High
If-03	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	22	AA	teacher	High
If-04	single	.	Iran	Tajik	20	Diploma	teacher	Middle to high
If-05	married	18	Afghanistan	Tajik	22	Lower Secondary	Housewife	Low
If-06	married	20	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	Lower Secondary	Tailor	Middle to low
If-07	single	.	Iran	Hazara	19	Upper Secondary	teacher	Low
If-08	married	17	Afghanistan	Tajik	23	Illiterate	Housewife	Middle
Im-01	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	25	MA	university student	Low
Im-02	married	16	Pakistan	Hazara	20	Lower Secondary	Bag producer	Middle
Im-03	Engaged	.	Afghanistan	Tajik	20	Primary	Worker	Middle to low
Im-04	married	27	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	BA	Religious student	Middle
Im-05	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	28	Diploma	Self-school principal	Middle to low
Im-06	single	.	Afghanistan	Tajik	23	Primary	Worker	Middle to low
Im-07	single	.	Afghanistan	Pashtun	18	Lower Secondary	Worker	Middle
Im-08	single	.	Afghanistan	Tajik	19	Upper Secondary	school student	Middle to low
Mf-01	single	.	Iran	Hazara	24	BA	university student	Low
Mf-02	married	22	Iran	Hazara	30	BA	Housewife	Middle
Mf-03	Engaged	.	Iran	Tajik	21	Lower Secondary	TAZRIGHATIE	Middle to low
Mf-04	single	.	Iran	Tajik	15	Primary	school student	Middle to low
Mf-05	single	.	Iran	Hazara	17	Upper Secondary	school student	Middle to low
Mf-06	married	14	Afghanistan	Tajik	23	Primary	Housewife	Middle to low
Mf-07	single	.	Iran	Tajik	18	Lower Secondary	teacher	Middle to high
Mf-08	married	15	Afghanistan	Tajik	30	Diploma	Housewife	Middle to high
Mf-09	single	.	Iran	Tajik	23	BA	teacher	High
Mf-10	married	19	Iran	Tajik	25	Lower Secondary	Housewife	Middle
Mf-11	single	.	Iran	Hazara	21	Upper Secondary	teacher	High
Mf-12	married	21	Iran	Hazara	23	Upper Secondary	Housewife	Middle to low
Mf-13	single	.	Iran	Hazara	17	Lower Secondary	Tailor	Middle
Mf-14	married	15	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	Primary	Housewife	Middle
Mf-15	single	.	Iran	Hazara	23	Lower Secondary	Tailor	Low
Mf-16	married	19	Iran	Pashtun	24	Lower Secondary	Housewife	Middle to low
Mm-01	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	24	Diploma	FANIE-computer	Middle to low
Mm-02	married	18	Afghanistan	Tajik	23	Upper Secondary	work in market	Middle to low
Mm-03	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	25	BA	university student	Middle to low
Mm-04	single	.	Iran	Hazara	25	BA	university student	Middle to low
Mm-05	single	.	Iran	Hazara	23	Upper Secondary	MODARESE KHATATI	Low
Mm-06	married	24	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	Lower Secondary	GACHKAR	Middle to low
Mm-07	married	26	Afghanistan	Tajik	28	Lower Secondary	graphics	Low
Mm-08	married	28	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	Diploma	graphics	Middle to high
Mm-09	married	20	Afghanistan	Hazara	29	Diploma	Shopkeeper	Middle
Mm-10	married	.	Afghanistan	Pashtun	29	BA	Self-school principal	Middle
Mm-11	married	23	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	BA	Self-school principal	Middle to high
Mm-12	married	27	Afghanistan	Tajik	29	Diploma	work in market	Middle to low
Mm-13	single	.	Iran	Tajik	16	Lower Secondary	school student	Low
Mm-14	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	24	Primary	Worker	Low
Mm-15	married	28	Afghanistan	Tajik	30	BA	teacher	Middle to low
Mm-16	single	.	Iran	Tajik	23	Primary	ZANJIRSAZ	Low
Tf-01	married	20	Afghanistan	Tajik	26	Lower Secondary	Housewife	Middle to high
Tf-02	married	19	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	Lower Secondary	Housewife	Middle
Tf-03	single	.	Afghanistan	Tajik	15	Lower Secondary	school student	Middle to low
Tf-04	single	.	Iran	Hazara	25	Diploma	teacher	Middle to low
Tf-05	married	21	Afghanistan	Hazara	25	BA	Nurse	High
Tf-06	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	24	BA	university student	Middle
Tf-07	married	24	Afghanistan	Hazara	27	MA	teacher	Middle to high
Tf-08	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	22	Diploma	teacher	Middle to low
Tf-09	single	.	Iran	Hazara	19	BA	university student	Middle to low
Tf-10	single	.	Iran	Hazara	21	Diploma	teacher	Middle

Code	Marital Status	Age at marriage	Country of Birth Place	Ethnicity	Age	Education level	Occupation	SES
Tf-11	Engaged	.	Afghanistan	Tajik	17	Lower Secondary	school student	Middle
Tf-12	single	.	Iran	Hazara	17	Primary	Tailor	Middle to low
Tf-13	married	20	Afghanistan	Hazara	27	Lower Secondary	Housewife	Middle to low
Tf-14	married	20	Afghanistan	Tajik	29	Illiterate	School Cleaner	Low
Tf-15	single	.	Iran	Hazara	16	Lower Secondary	school student	High
Tf-16	married	19	Afghanistan	Tajik	24	Diploma	Housewife	Middle to low
Tm-01	married	22	Afghanistan	Hazara	28	Primary	GACHKAR	Middle to high
Tm-02	single	.	Iran	Hazara	22	Lower Secondary	Tailor	Low
Tm-03	married	27	Afghanistan	Tajik	30	BA	Self-school principal	Middle
Tm-04	Engaged	.	Afghanistan	Ghezelbash	18	Illiterate	Tailor	Middle
Tm-05	married	21	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	Lower Secondary	House Maker	Middle to low
Tm-06	single	.	Afghanistan	Tajik	18	Upper Secondary	school student	Middle to low
Tm-07	single	.	Iran	Tajik	21	Lower Secondary	NAGHASH e	High
Tm-08	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	26	MA	OTOMOBIL	Middle to high
Tm-09	single	.	Iran	Hazara	16	Lower Secondary	university student	Low
Tm-10	single	.	Afghanistan	Hazara	16	Upper Secondary	school student	Middle to low
Tm-11	married	20	Afghanistan	Hazara	30	MA	school student	Low
Tm-12	married	25	Afghanistan	Hazara	28	Lower Secondary	university student	Low
Tm-13	married	22	Iran	Hazara	24	Upper Secondary	Worker	Middle to low
Tm-14	married	21	Afghanistan	Tajik	28	Upper Secondary	work in market	Middle
Tm-15	single	.	Iran	Tajik	30	AA	Butcher	Middle to high
Tm-16	single	.	Afghanistan	Tajik	24	Illiterate	Self-school principal Tailor	Middle to low

I=Isfahan; M= Mashhad; T=Tehran; m-male; f=female (i.e. If = Isfahan female)

Parents of second generation (N=8)

Code	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Education Level	Occupation
If-04-P	Female	38	Tajik	Primary	Housewife
Im-03-P	Male	46	Tajik	Diploma	Worker
Mf-11-P	Female	48	Hazara	Lower Secondary	Housewife
Mm-03-P	Male	57	Hazara	Illiterate	Agriculture worker
Mm-16-P	Male	48	Tajik	Primary	ZANJIRSAZ
Tf-10-P	Female	39	Hazara	Illiterate	Housewife
Tm-02-P	Male	45	Hazara	Religious Education	Shopper-MAGAZEDAR
Tm-07-P	Male	40	Tajik	Primary	Electricity work

Appendix 6. Average income of registered Afghans in Iran, by occupation

Occupation	Monthly Income Average		Annual Income Average	
	US Dollars	1000 Rials	US Dollars	/1000 Rials
Simple labourer	2.4399	105.322	29.268	3.082.564.296
Farmer	2.354	9.177	28.248	259.231.896
Tailor	2.783	7.133	33.396	238.213.668
Bricklayer	4.709	3.987	56.508	225.297.396
Peddler	1.325	3.709	15.9	58.973.100
Shoemaker	2.65	3.383	31.8	107.579.400
Road construction labourer	1.136	3.053	13.63	41.618.496
Seller	2.779	1.873	33.348	62.460.804
Religious school school	3.142	1.473	37.704	55.537.992
Carpet weaver	0.46	1.324	5.52	7.308.480
Stonecutter	1.754	1.199	21.048	25.236.552
Well sinker	1.208	1.093	14.496	15.844.128
Brick maker	0.758	1.031	9.096	9.377.976
Others	5.144	31.242	61.728	1.928.506.176
Total		174.999		6.117.750.360
Average	2.331		27.978	

Source: 2005 Amayesh data, Abbasi-Shavazi et al. 2007, Country Report on the state of International Migrants and Refugees in Iran, UNFPA and UNHCR, Unpublished report.

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