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The Diaspora of Iranian Intellectuals in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Emigration and the Rise in Academic  
Internationalism

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18 March 2019

“I had suffocated under patriarchy and was raised with bigotry and rancor. My childhood deprived of playfulness because it was contaminated with religion. So I fled.”<sup>1</sup> Abbas Milani’s reflection on life as a young Iranian student mirrors that of many Iranian emigrants to America, over half of which reside in California.<sup>2</sup> For Abbas, life preceding the Iranian Revolution of 1979 in which the oppressive shah regime imposed conservative values onto an increasingly liberal Middle Eastern society provoked him to continue his studies overseas in Oakland at the young age of sixteen. His family, along with countless others in the heart of Iran’s capital, Tehran, felt politically, emotionally, and economically captive under the shah. The aggregate emigration of Iranian upper middle-class families, and especially young people in pursuit of an elite education, influenced western nations and their academia. Preceding and following the cultural revolution of 1979, the Iranian government heavily discouraged the progressive, intellectual modernists from exploring technological and scientific advancements by means of emphasizing traditional values. In doing so, the established government provoked a mass exodus of Iranian scholars that expedited the internationalism-initiative in Western education in the United States and contributed to an evident rise in de-Westernized curricula on the American West Coast.

The cultural revolution of Iran in 1979 was preceded by thirty years of suspense sustained by monarchist rule. Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi was the leader at the time of the revolution and was widely unfavored based on his pro-Western ideals, advocacy of a Persian monarchy, and elitist complex among other internal corruptions.<sup>3</sup> Mohammad Reza was the son of the premier

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<sup>1</sup> Abbas Milani’s memoir, *Tales of Two Cities*, develops and explains his specific journey from Tehran to the United States. Milani is the current head of the Iranian Studies Program at Stanford University. 1. Abbas Milani, *Tales of Two Cities* (Mage Publishers, 2006), 88.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Migration Policy Institute, in the 2000 census, 55.9% of Iranian immigrants lived in the state of California. Abbas Milani was one of these Iranian intellectuals. 1. Shirin Hakimzadeh, David Dixon, “Spotlight on the Iranian Foreign Born” Migration Policy Institute, June 1 2006.

<sup>3</sup> According to John D. Stempel, the Shah regime was “criticized for its authoritarianism, corruption, and brutality.” John D. Stempel, “Inside the Iranian Revolution” Bloomington: Indiana U P, 1981.

Pahlavi monarch: a family that was once a symbol of hope for a constitutional democracy following the fall of Mosaddeq's government.<sup>4</sup> The Pahlavi monarchy further narrowed its executive power into a structure centered around the shah and the governmental leadership functioned as the finale of the monarchist system of imperial Iran. The monarchism in Iran proliferated the conquest of Persia and spanned over two thousand years but was abolished by the Iranian Revolution of 1979, leading scholars to guide their study of the origins of revolt to Mohammad Reza.

Mohammad Reza's motives in leading the Iranian country were embedded in ideas of Western thought and modernity that, while predicted to satisfy Iranians with evolutionary philosophies in all sects of social life, led to economic hardship and academic disappointment. Labeled the White Revolution, Mohammad Reza's political and social initiatives involved primarily land reform, as well as the enfranchisement of women, nationalization of natural landscapes, and a formation of a literacy corps.<sup>5</sup> Land reform is domestically resembled by American past policies such as the Dawes Act,<sup>6</sup> and more modernly the process of eminent domain,<sup>7</sup> but land reform in the Iranian countryside is far different. In the rural area which a traditional land-owning class of farmers, deemed "tyrants" by peasants,<sup>8</sup> has long endured, land

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<sup>4</sup> Karimi-Hakkak, Ahmad. "Protest and Perish: A History of the Writers' Association of Iran." *Iranian Studies* 18, no. 2/4 (1985): 189-229.

<sup>5</sup> Shahbaz, Kurush. "Iran's White Revolution." *World Affairs* 126, no. 1 (1963): 17-21.

<sup>6</sup> The Dawes Act of 1887 was one of the first historical instances in American land reform for minorities. The Act allotted previously communal land for American Indians – Native Americans – to individuals in order to naturalize them through the Reconstruction effort carried onto President Grover Cleveland. Any land left over after the allotment however, was auctioned to non-Natives. Parceling land out to Native Americans had half ameliorated aspects of previous torture and genocide from white men onto tribes and half angered natives who felt that the government had unfairly split their rightful land on authority of "equality". The Dawes Act has been amended three times since its initial introduction. "An Act to Provide for the Allotment of Lands in Severalty to Indians on the Various Reservations (General Allotment Act or Dawes Act)", Our Documents — Statutes at Large 24, 388-91, NADP Document A1887.

<sup>7</sup> Eminent domain is the (American) governmental process of taking private property and converting it to public use (with "just compensation"). This notion is protected by the fifth amendment in the U.S. constitution. "Eminent Domain" (Legal Information Institute, Cornell Law School, est. 1992)

<sup>8</sup> Kurush, 20.

reform was an issue with an equal distribution of favor. However, within the city-centers of most notably Tehran as well as Isfahan and Shiraz, the issues of the White Revolution and the Shah's motives surrounded a discontentment among lower classes, and especially students and intellectuals.

The origin of opposition of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi varied between intellectual groups yet was consistent in their belief of the replacement of a corrupted dictatorship with a democracy free of American intervention. Intellectuals individually formed their rejection of the Shah with written manifestos, opposition alliances, and coalitions that stood alongside student protestors.<sup>9</sup> Iranian poets and authors formed the Writers Association of Iran (WAI), which thoroughly fought against censorship prevalent in the Shah regime and “played a major role in the course of the Iranian Revolution.”<sup>10</sup> WAI arose by a new generation of writers in the preceding years of the revolution and still stands as an intellectual institution in Iran. During the time of the revolution, these individualist writers were oppressed by censorship in unusual circumstances. An apparatus of surveillance on such journalists coexisted with a state-sponsorship of the “right” press. Certain essayists, translators, and other literary figures were increasingly being employed in the Pahlavi government; the authors of free press were ironically being silenced by their literary comrades within the bureaucracy. The SAVAK<sup>11</sup> was a prominent force of censorship, conducting surveillance on noteworthy poets and implementing a Congress of Iranian Poets and Writers: a government-sponsored alliance of select artists that further steered liberated literary Iranians away from the status quo.<sup>12</sup> The Writers Association of Iran

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<sup>9</sup>Dolan, Lindsay, “Global Nonviolent Action Database” Swarthmore College, published May 6, 2009, accessed December 2, 2018.

<sup>10</sup>Karimi-Hakkak, 190.

<sup>11</sup> The Iranian Secret service: considered by liberal Iranians during the 1970s as “the Shah’s personal bodyguard”. Richard T. Sale, “SAVAK: A Feared and Pervasive Force”, The Washington Post, 19 May 1977.

<sup>12</sup> Karimi-Hakkak, 193.

was merely one of the alliances formed by intellectuals, but coincided with others in that “none of [the Shah’s policies] sat well with the non-establishment intellectual community which on the one hand had been exposed to modern ideologies of nationalism and Marxism and, on the other, still cherished the unachieved ideals of the [Iranian] Constitutional Revolution of 1906.”<sup>13</sup>

Alongside its literary downfall, the political impetus of the mass exodus of Iranian intellectuals fell under a dissolution in 1975 of all existing Iranian political parties and the formation of a singular political party by the Shah: the “Iranian People's Resurgence Party.”<sup>14</sup> The Shah stated in a speech that if Iranians did not want to join the political party, then they should leave the country.<sup>15</sup> So, they did. Political activists and scholars who had felt excluded and oppressed by the regime began to leave gradually in the following years.

Adjacent to the venerable intellectual front of literary graduates and politically active members of society were the young university students of the time. Students were not only angered with their experience in academic environments, but were further dissatisfied with political corruption, uneven oil wealth distribution, and poor employment opportunities. With these, and other grievances,<sup>16</sup> the Confederation of Iranian Students (CIS) was formed. The CIS was founded by abroad Iranian students in Europe in the early 1950s and was visibly prominent until three Tehran University students were killed during a protest against vice-president Richard M. Nixon, who was visiting Tehran at the time. Following this event, much of the political involvement of students was suppressed; it was not until the next decade that there was a

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 190.

<sup>14</sup> Akbar E. Torbat. *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring, 2002), pp. 272-295.

<sup>15</sup> Ali Banuazizi, "Iran: The Making of a Regional Power," *The Middle East: Oil, Conflict & Hope*, edited by A. L. Udovitch, (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1976,) P.

<sup>16</sup> Iranian students felt that within universities, there were many problems: “low college acceptance rates, poor university education, insufficient housing and conditions [etc.]” Wise, Krysta (2011) "Islamic Revolution of 1979: The Downfall of American-Iranian Relations," *Legacy*: Vol. 11: Iss. 5, Article 2.

confederation revival.<sup>17</sup> Before the confederation could evolve alongside the White Revolution however, the question begged of scholars and modernists alike was why the confederation materialized abroad when it dealt with such domestic manners? Graduates who had studied abroad pointed out the answer in that for most students receiving federal aid from the Iranian government while studying abroad, they were also in some form obligated to return to Iran and serve their nation.<sup>18</sup> <sup>19</sup> For students abroad, hearing (often polarized<sup>20</sup>) coverage of the state of Iran in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, was all but a reason to work back at home. Once they were aware of the corrupted Shah, they felt they could no longer serve their country – an Iranian Georgetown University student in 1977 relayed to a *Washington Post* reporter that they felt oppressed: “I was sent over on a scholarship [...] I am supposed to go back and work for the government, but I don't see how I can. I have learned too much since I've been here. I can no longer return.”<sup>21</sup> Iranian students abroad, especially in the United States, felt the effects of the Shah regime as it surrounded Western culture. In addition to their dissatisfaction with returning to their country, their experience in American universities were academically liberating – prompting an exponential interest in young Iranians to settle in the U.S.

Students living abroad gained privileges that their classmates at home did not possess: physical, economic, and academic freedom. With a majority of those students living in the

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<sup>17</sup> Matin-Asgari, Afshin. "Confederation of Iranian Students, National Union," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. October 28 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Torbat. 276.

<sup>19</sup> Baldwin, George B. "The Foreign-Educated Iranian: A Profile." *Middle East Journal* 17, no. 3 (1963): 264-78.

<sup>20</sup> Media coverage of the Middle East in Europe was not only limited, but often presented a pro-Western ideal. It is asserted by the BBC that journalistic coverage of middle-eastern countries was often polarized, and one could make the correlation that the image of Iran presented abroad was one romanticized of its violence and deprived of political value. However, those that make that correlation may possibly neglect the unknown aspects of exposure Iranian students abroad had by means of communication with family and friends. In either scenario, abroad Iranians had felt that a confederation needed to form. Lloyd, John, "How the Western media's Middle East coverage has changed." BBC News, September 15 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Courtl Milloy and Juan Williams, "OPPOSING THE SHAH" *The Washington Post*, 16 November 1977.

United States, there is a logical correlation as to why there was a mass exodus towards America.<sup>22</sup> For students in Iran, life under the Shah at the time preceding revolution was vastly limited. Iran, experiencing economic decline, overpopulation in urban centers, inflation, governmental corruption, and an unequal distribution of wealth, was not a location for young graduates to enter the workforce or start families.<sup>23</sup> When it came to the Shah-imposed advances of Western culture, most students had already been experiencing the effects of “globalism” on university curricula: an initiative to broaden the scope of higher academia. This is not to say that students advocated nor agreed with the White Revolution, but quite the contrary. Students, impressed and interested in the West, sought study abroad programs to experience the West.<sup>24</sup> When it came to their sense of country, students as a part of the opposition fought for an independent Iran that existed separate from Western culture. Pre-revolution, a rejection of “Yankee”<sup>25</sup> power existed domestically, but the West and its opportunities excited young Iranians, as did their curricula. Once the Shah had been overthrown in early 1980, and Islamic leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (also the leader of the revolution) had replaced him, there

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<sup>22</sup> The number of Iranian students studying abroad in the 1977/1978 school year was about 100,000, the United States being the most popular destination. The enrollment of Iranian students abroad increased 50% between 1978 and 1979. Furthermore, the number of Iranian immigrants to the United States nearly tripled between 1979 and 1990. See Appendix A, image 1. Torbat. 275.

<sup>23</sup> Wise, 31.

<sup>24</sup> Iranian intellectuals sought out Western nations most prominently in study abroad programs. The chart exhibits the five most popular nations emigrated to, but clarifies that the first significant phase of emigration was one that was characterized by “middle- and upper-class families [who] sen[t] their children abroad for higher education as a means of ensuring socioeconomic security and political access upon return.” This chart demonstrates that the influx of migrants were mainly to the United States (with a sharp increase between the 1970s and 1980s), Germany, Canada, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. See Appendix A, image 2. Hakimzadeh, Shirin., Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>25</sup> Iranians against the White Revolution nicknamed U.S. forces “yankees”, referring to them often in print and protest. “Explaining US hostility to Iran,” Redflag: A Voice of Resistance. Accessed November 23 2018. See Appendix A, images 3-5.

was a new sense of hope in the majority of Iranians. For students, however, there was a massive upheaval in academics that left them without an education.

In 1980, Khomeini's government in its infancy advocated to spread the mission of Islam. In an effort to de-Westernize higher education and implement Islamic foundations of learning, public Iranian universities were unexpectedly closed "indefinitely". Khomeini's initiative, labeled as a "purge" of Western thought, had abandoned university students and angered progressive families searching for a quality education for their children.<sup>26</sup> The purge's purpose was to isolate and remove secular students and professors, by means of collegiate administrators listing and identifying any obvious non-Muslim academics (by legal obligation). Thousands of professors and students were identified, and several of them were politically imprisoned - others ran. Threats of execution, torture and imprisonment frightened students and teachers. Mostafa Neredi, an Iranian activist who spent eleven years in one of Khomeini's prisons, including half of those years in solitary confinement is one of the lone survivors of the political prisoner purge of the 1980s. Neredi recalls the prison as a "slaughterhouse" in which sometimes, up to 400 political prisoners were hung each night.<sup>27</sup> Not only was the execution of hundreds of political prisoners prevalent, but additionally intimidation by Khomeini's government. Members of government would even call the homes of children as young as seven, were at the forefront of

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<sup>26</sup> The closing of universities was initially expected to only last a few months, but universities were on average closed for three years. Auerbach, Stuart. "All Schools in Iran Revamped to Stress Islamic Revolution." Washington Post. June 14, 1980.

<sup>27</sup> Neredi, Mustafa. I was Lucky Enough to Escape with my Life. The Massacre of Iranian Political Prisoners in 1988 must now be Investigated. "The Independent. August 22, 2013.

educated Iranian's minds.<sup>28</sup> Displaced academic Iranians were scrambling to find universities to complete their degrees and teach at, and for many of them, the United States appealed more than any other nation.<sup>29</sup> The U.S., built on immigrants among other enslaved and discriminated peoples, was recognized by Iranian academics as a place of prosperity where they could live out the White Revolution publicized American Dream. Los Angeles and Southern California were publicized through Hollywood blockbusters and media broadcasted in Iran prior to Khomeini's reign, but also possessed social culture unlike anywhere else in the United States.

Iranians emigrating to the United States, specifically California, were not solely non-Muslims fleeing persecution but were a highly educated population of Iranians that differed from previous immigrant groups. Before 1980, Iranian migrants to the United States were often furthering their education in order to return to their home and serve Iran. Emigrants in the post-Revolution period, however, were educated and skilled individuals that did not possess a similar nationalism as the former; they were a group of roughly three million elite members of society who had developed an “internationalist national identity’ that allow[ed] them to respond to the demands of a global market while still maintaining their Iranian cultural identity.”<sup>30</sup> This group of educated individuals, and their exodus from Iran (nicknamed the “brain drain”) caused an

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<sup>28</sup> In a Reuters article published in the New York Times in 1981, the author remarks that “parents of children as young as seven said they had to sign a commitment that their children would not take part in political activities or even ideological discussions while at school.” Tactics such as this were used heavily by Khomeini's government, resulting in an estimated death toll of about 10,000 to 12,000 political prisoners, including the 1988 massacre of political prisoners in which 5,000 political prisoners were killed in a span of five months. Reuters, *KHOMEINI CALLS FOR PURGE OF LEFTIST SCHOOLCHILDREN*. *New York Times*, September 25, 1981.

<sup>29</sup> Torbat, 276.

<sup>30</sup> Chaichian, Mohammad A., “The new phase of globalization and brain drain: Migration of educated and skilled Iranians to the United States,” *International Journal of Social Economics*, Vol. 39 Issue: 1/2. (19).

acute academic loss in Iran and subsequently contributed to a rise in Iranian Studies programs within the United States and a globalist perspective in higher academics.

California attracted such academic individuals as its physical resemblance to the middle-Eastern terrain was a new sense of home after a heartbreaking feeling of exile by their own nation. Not only were they inspired by the American dream of hope and prosperity, but Los Angeles in particular had a social scene and cultural array of life that Iranians took comfort in: “[Iranians] settled in L.A. because so much of it reminds them of Iran - the landscape, the car culture, [and] the mountains.”<sup>31</sup> Iranians, in finding this sense of home, heavily impacted Los Angeles culture as they emigrated to Southern California and began opening businesses and incorporating themselves into the community. Anousha Sedighi, head of Persian studies at Portland State University established in, asserts that Iranians thoroughly impacted the community:

“Obviously LA has a great appeal to Iranians. [...] Because of the majority of Iranians at the time of revolution migrated to L.A. by nature, [it is] very multicultural. Personally, when I go to L.A., I feel like I’m at home. [...] Some of the streets – some of the stores – don’t even have the sign in English, it is all in Persian. So, it seems like there’s so much concentration of Iranians that they don’t even need any [American] clients.”<sup>32</sup>

Not only was there a sense of assimilation into culture through business, but many Iranians enrolled in Californian universities and colleges, or began employment there. A small number<sup>33</sup> of Iranian Studies programs had already formed in the region, and Iranians had become drawn to such academia. Furthermore, Southern California had already possessed a wealth of immigrants

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<sup>31</sup> Shoku Amirani, “How Iranians Made Part of LA their Own” British Broadcasting Corporation, September 29, 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Anousha Sedighi (Head of Persian Studies at Portland State University) in interview with the author, December 2018. See Appendix B.

<sup>33</sup> While many Middle Eastern Studies programs had been established in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, Iranian Studies arose towards the latter half of the century, and initiatives are continuing to surface in the present day. At Portland State University, the Middle East Studies Center opened in 1959, while the Persian Studies program did not arise until 2013. Portland State University: Sustainability: Education: Undergraduate Programs. Accessed 9 March 2019.

from Mexico and was advertised as a place Iranians could prosper. Alongside enrollment and employment was the formation of professional associations that united Iranians and expanded connections across Southern California.<sup>34</sup> Such evolved associations including the Network of Iranian Professionals of Orange County, Iranian Press Club, Society of Iranian Medical Doctors, Iranian Nurses Association, and others, paired with the employment of Iranians in universities such as Stanford University and California State University, laid the foundation for globalism by means of Iranian Studies programs across higher academia.

This is not to say that before the Iranian cultural revolution, there were simply no Iranian Studies programs, as in fact there were. Iranian Studies programs at universities existed, such as Richard Frye's at Harvard in the 1950s,<sup>35</sup> or Wolf Leslau's at UCLA in 1957,<sup>36</sup> but they existed as windows into the mystical and foreign land of Iran, or merely as a scapegoat of failed governmental structures taught in Western nations in order to isolate the Middle East. These programs existed, but they have since shifted from the understanding of a culture to a reasoning of politics and ethics. Iranian Studies programs were adopted in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and consisted of understanding the truth behind the mysticism of the Middle East. The revolution expedited the transformation of studies towards an intellectual sect, as following the 1979 revolution, Iranian exiles were more inclined towards the studies of humanity as means of answering the unexplainable events of their homeland.<sup>37</sup> This transformation on the small and internal scale was the impetus upon which Iranian Studies programs were revolutionized.

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<sup>34</sup> There are about a dozen of these professional associations meant to allow Iranian intellectuals to prosper. Torbat, 281.

<sup>35</sup> Giudicessi, Beth. "Professor Richard N. Frye dies at 94." *The Harvard Gazette*, April 4 2014.

<sup>36</sup> University of California, Los Angeles Center for Near Eastern Studies. "CNES Celebrates Golden Anniversary." Accessed March 4 2019.

<sup>37</sup> Marandi, Seyed Mohamm. "Iranian Studies in the United States and the Politics of Knowledge Production on Post-Revolutionary Iran". *Middle East Studies after September 11*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: BRILL, 2018).

The individuals responsible for this shift were born from the ashes of the revolution, as it created new generations of Iranian intellectuals who were focused on shifting traditional political structures as opposed to a pre-revolution focus on medicine and science. A new generation of social historians such as Abbas Amanat, Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, and Afsaneh Najmabadi<sup>38</sup> who popularized modernity and Western thought within Iran, and once forced into exile, further moved to incorporate Iranian ideals into their new home: The West.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, the odds were in their favor as there was a new initiative within social and political sects that favored multi-perspective ideas. The concept of globalism worldwide in the decades preceding the turn of the century allowed for an environment in which de-Westernizing academia through foreign-studies programs was praised. On economic and political fronts, organizations were racing to tackle what exactly globalism meant for the modern economy and how it impacted a newly liberal society.<sup>40</sup> Globalism surged in American colleges and universities as the political climate becomes increasingly more complex throughout the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations.<sup>41</sup> Globalism initiatives in academics such as Ferris State University's,<sup>42</sup> Columbia University's,<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Each of these three historians were featured in a 2004 conference honoring and understanding Iran's "eventful epochs" throughout the last century through the lens of historiographers. The three historians who know teach respectively at Yale University, University of Toronto, and Harvard University, are some of the few credited historians who wrote about Western political thought at the height of revolution. Today, they reside in the United States, and Canada, and continue to teach about Iranian history. "Historiography and Political Culture in 20th Century Iran", *International Institute of Social History*, 17 September 2004.

<sup>39</sup> Herrera, Linda. "Education, Islam, and Modernity: Beyond Westernization and Centralization." *Comparative Education Review* 48, no. 3 (2004): 318-26.

<sup>40</sup> Kohr, Martin. "A Greater Need for the U.N. In a Liberalizing, Globalizing World." Global Policy Forum. May 1996. Accessed March 6 2019.

<sup>41</sup> John Douglass, "Globalism and the Future of Higher Education" *Berkeley University*, November 20, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Campus Globalization Initiative. Ferris State University. Accessed November 16 2018.

<sup>43</sup> Columbia University: Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Globalism Initiative. Columbia University. Accessed 13 November 2018.

and countless others exemplify the popularity of globalism and internationalism within academics. such as [OBJ:OBJ], and countless others exemplify the popularity of globalism and internationalism within academics. Professor and director of the Roshan Center for Persian Studies at the University of Maryland, Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, explains the importance of Iranian intellectuals within Iranian Studies in the community:

“I mentioned to the university [administration] that the capacity for growth [in global studies] was tremendous because the Iranian-American community were highly educated professionals. And so I insisted that if the university put in the resources at the beginning, the community will then contribute and we’ll see phenomenal growth. That exactly has happened.” (Podcast, 2011)<sup>44</sup>

Karimi-Hakkak's claim resonates with that of other Iranian Studies departments,<sup>45</sup> and further exemplifies the prosperity of the Iranian community within their impact on globalism.

Prosperous Iranian academics consistently give back to their thriving community in hopes of popularizing Iranian culture in the West, and they are successful. The rise of Iranian Studies and their shift in political importance is a case study of the grander shift<sup>46</sup> into internationalist academia exhibited in the United States. Their mobilizing of Southern Californian schools, as well as the role they play in Silicon Valley,<sup>47</sup> is a role that reaches across the nation and contributes to the ever-changing curricula of modern universities.

On the contrary, opposition of this assertion that Iranian intellectuals played a role in prompting a national shift in academia surrounds the rebuttal that the number of Iranians is just

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<sup>44</sup> “37 Years and Halfway Through Encyclopaedia Iranica,” Tell Me More (Podcast). National Public Radio. September 26, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>46</sup> The process of globalization onto education and the rise of international studies programs is a phenomenon increasingly studied by social historians. Joel Spring, an American author and academic, in the Review of Education Research, asserts that the “knowledge economy”, a term he coins for understanding the intellectual playing field that modern careers operate in, is thoroughly enriched and enlivened by international studies programs. In the preceding years of the rise of the digital era and an increased access to global information, experts on global studies developed as a product of a knowledge-driven economy. Spring, Joel. "Research on Globalization and Education." *Review of Educational Research* 78, no. 2 (2008): 330-63.

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix B.

not large enough to impact the nation's education. This claim, while sensible in the macrocosm of American academics, ignores the fact that this shift happened over two decades and was a migration of thought. While originating in the mass concentration of Iranians in Southern California at schools such as University of California, Los Angeles, and Stanford University,<sup>48</sup> this initiative spread across the nation toward Ivy League institutions and the Midwest. Such claims further neglect the fact that immigrants, no matter in what capacity, or country of origin, impact the nation; immigration remains America's foundation and biggest asset.<sup>49</sup>

Preceding the Iranian revolution, the Shah isolated students and limited opportunities, causing skilled Iranians to search for opportunities abroad. With a dissatisfaction in university living, as well as governmental corruption and an imposition of Western thought through the White Revolution, students felt there was no longer an independent Iran. Following the revolution and the rise to power by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1979, promises of a republic for the people were damaged by a renouncement of secularism in any capacity, and a harsh rejection of all Western thought. Iranian intellectuals, struggling to find a balance of nationalism and Western modernity, in addition to being out of academic work or degree-earning programs for an indefinite amount of time, turned towards the United States. California, with a handful of solidified Iranian Studies programs, a larger wealth of immigrants and a social appeal of similarities to the middle-Eastern nation, was a source of comfort for such modernists. At the same time, a rise in globalism within liberal arts and higher education became prevalent and spread across the nation. In beginning their lives in Los Angeles and the surrounding area, several intellectuals were further employed in universities, introducing the concept of shifting

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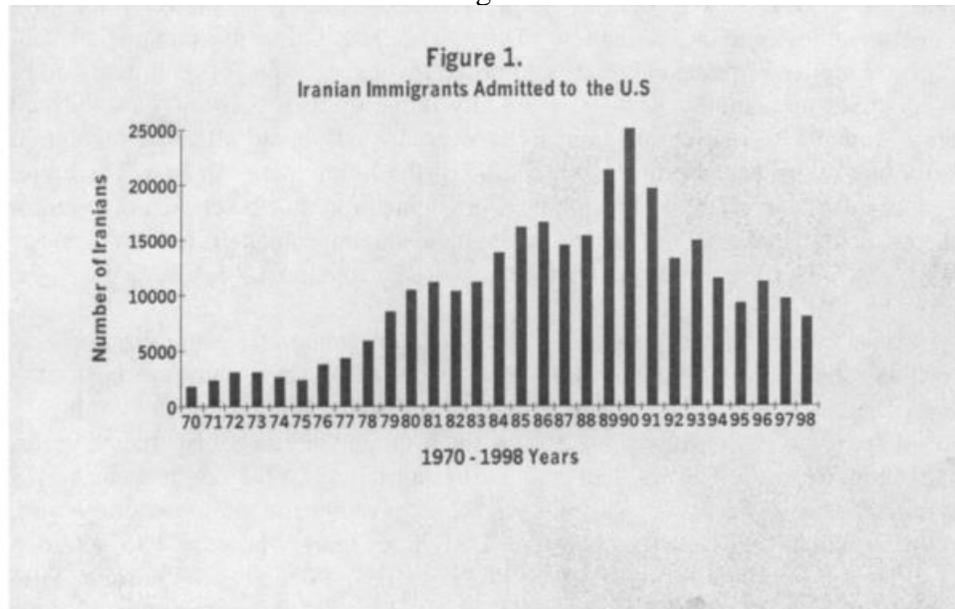
<sup>48</sup> Bozorgmehr, Mehdi. "From Iranian Studies to Studies of Iranians in the United States." *Iranian Studies* 31, no. 1 (1998): 28.

<sup>49</sup> Jenny Minier, Ph.D, "Benefit the Community and Economy", Center for Equality and Social Justice, September 2017.

Iranian Studies programs. Iranian Studies programs experienced a transformation due to the influx of Iranian intellectuals and their impact on academia.

Within globalism initiatives, there was a push towards Iranian Studies as a methodology of understanding politics and philosophy as opposed to the previous notion of Iran as the “mystical East.” The rise in globalism across the nation allowed for Iranian intellectuals to prosper within Californian academic circles and cultivate an environment of scholastic freedom. Within academic spheres in the modern political and global climate, the necessity of understanding different methodologies of the humanities is pertinent. Though this research analyzes the perceived “brain drain” of Iranian intellectuals into the United States, the understanding of the dynamic sphere of academia and its correspondence with a changing workforce, is a proposal for further study. In understanding how an influx of scholars impacts academia, one could further analyze the impact on career wages, and an education-driven economy that persists in the modern realm. Without intellectuals continually expanding the boundaries of debate, the understanding of the world would not only be static and disenchanting, but futile in practice. In fleeing their educational persecution, Iranian scholars, intellectuals, and elites began anew in the American nation and remain a group that perpetually impacts the globalist perspective on academics that defines the modern university.

Appendix A  
Image 1:



*Iranian immigrants admitted to the U.S. between 1970 and 1998.*<sup>50</sup>  
Image 2:

<sup>50</sup> US Bureau of the Census, March 1997 Current Population Survey. Via: Akbar E. Torbat. Middle East Journal, Vol. 56, No. 2 (Spring, 2002), 278. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329755>.

**Table 1. Iranian Immigrants Admitted to the United States, Canada, Germany, the UK and Sweden: 1961 to 2005**

	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-2000	2001-2005
USA	10,291	46,152	154,857	112,597	55,098
Germany	7,298*	14,173	67,022	24,131	6,024**
Canada	620	3,455	20,700	41,329	25,350**
Sweden***	384	3,249	38,167	16,804	6,086
UK	---	---	---	12,665	8,640

Notes: \*excludes 1961; \*\*excludes 2005; \*\*\* In some years Swedish data was based on Iranian immigrants by place of birth while in other years it was based on place of last residence

Sources: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics; Federal Statistical Office of Germany; Sweden Statistics; Statistics Canada; UK Home Office

*Iranian Immigrants Admitted to the United States, Canada, Germany, the UK and Sweden: 1961 to 2005<sup>51</sup>*

Image 3:

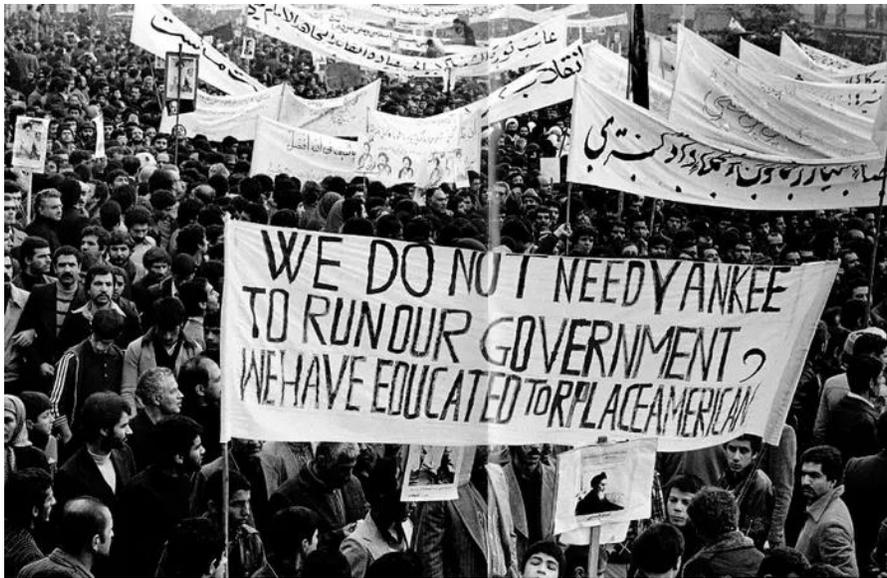


*Explaining U.S. Hostility to Iran<sup>52</sup>*

Image 4:

<sup>51</sup> Hakimzadeh, Shirin. "A Vast Diaspora Abroad and Millions of Refugees at Home." Migration Policy Institute. Accessed September 27, 2018. September 1, 2006.

<sup>52</sup> "Explaining US hostility to Iran," Redflag: A Voice of Resistance. Accessed November 23 2018. <https://redflag.org.au/node/6529>



*To Each His Own Weapon, I Have My Camera*<sup>53</sup>

Image 5:



*Yankee Go Home*<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> “To Each His Own Weapon, I Have My Camera’: Iran’s 1979 revolution - in pictures,” The Guardian. February 8, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/iran-blog/2016/feb/08/iran-1979-revolution-photography-maryam-zandi-pictures-enqelab-e-57>

<sup>54</sup> Source: Klass, Richard. “Googling Iran: The Sources of Mistrust” War on the Rocks. May 11, 2015. <https://warontherocks.com/2015/05/googling-iran-the-sources-of-mistrust/>.

Appendix B  
3:32 pm 12/3/2018

Professor Anousha Sedighi and Skylar Deitch

Interview Transcript: The Diaspora of Iranian Intellectuals in the 20th Century: Emigration and  
the Rise in Academic Internationalism

Sedighi: So, to answer your question of ‘Do you think Portland, or the West Coast, has a certain appeal to either Iranian scholars or people interested in Iranian Studies?’, I don’t think Portland has a certain appeal. Obviously LA has a great appeal to Iranians. [...] Because of the majority of Iranians at the time of revolution migrated to L.A. by nature, very multicultural. Personally, when I go to L.A., I don’t feel homesick, I feel like I’m at home. I don’t know if you’ve ever been there?

Deitch: Yes, I have

S: Yes, so you may know there is a neighborhood with streets with all Iranian stores

D: Yes, my dad actually grew up in L.A. and he told me about how they called it “little Tehran”

S: Yes, exactly or “Tehrangeles” [...] Some of the streets, some of the stores don’t even have the sign in English, whatever they do, it is all in Persian. [...] So, it seems like there's so much [...] concentration of Iranians that [Iranians in California] don’t even need any [American] clients

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S: I would definitely say that UCLA and universities like USC, UC Irvine, have a very strong sense for Iranian Studies. I don't see the Pacific Northwest being a big (laughs) target for Iranian scholars. [...]

\*\*\*

S: Obviously there is a huge population of Iranian diaspora who live outside Iran and obviously their life has – I mean it changed not for the best because they had to leave their homeland. They feel exiled, so [there is] this whole concept that [...] they’re not happy here and they are not happy back home because of the regime and how the government is imposing this [onto] to people.

\*\*\*

S: There are tons of other universities who have really good Persian programs as Chicago has a very good one, Maryland has a very good one, they’re all over the place - UT Austin has a very good one. So, there are many, many - and obviously Columbia with the movement of *Encyclopedia Iranica* has been very successful.

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S: Within the past 20 years with the boom of Silicon Valley: a lot of Iranians have become really very successful in terms of innovation. So, they have made a lot of money and [they have] out of good will. They have done a lot of philanthropy and they have donated millions of dollars to some of these [Iranian Studies] centers so that has helped with the boom of Iranian Studies – recently Columbia received ten million dollars, UC Irvine received five million dollars, and so, [we] see that Iranians in diaspora are giving back beyond [the fact that] they are not necessarily experts of Iranian Studies themselves, but their good deed has really been linked to Iranian Studies in the U.S. I think the big impact comes from their financial philanthropy and help that other Iranians have done. Most of them [wealthy Iranians] have really given back to the Iranian community. In terms of scholarship they have always been there but in terms of resources and support there's more recent support coming from the Iranian diaspora.

\*\*\*

S: In my research of how second-generation Iranians don’t have the same language skill, I have found that they feel in between these two worlds. So, obviously these first-generation immigrants are better speakers and in terms of culture are more dedicated, but second-generation Iranian Americans obviously are more integrated in the [American] culture and they feel a sense of belonging to both the United States and Iran.

[...]

D: Upon my research of Iranian Studies programs, I found a common trend among scholars that they believe Iranian Studies programs have made a shift from an understanding of a foreign

culture to a reasoning of politics and ethics following the cultural revolution. As the founder of PSU's program, does this resonate with you/do you reject it?

S: You're absolutely right. Yes exactly [this resonates with me]. I think that's very true.

\*\*\*

*Note: This is a condensed version of the interview. Full transcript available upon request.*

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