1) Zuzanna OLSZEWSKA
Afghan Refugees in Iran: The Hidden Effects of the Revolution at Society’s Margins

Abstract
Afghan refugees have, over the past three decades, formed a significant population, numbering some three million people at its peak, which has received limited attention in the scholarly literature on the contemporary Islamic Republic. This was despite the fact that many of them were Shi’a Muslims who had fled invasion of their country by an atheist power and openly embraced the values of the Revolution, fought alongside Iranians at the front with Iraq, participated in armed movements supported by Iran and intended to export the revolution to Afghanistan, and trained in Iranian religious seminaries. Thanks to these currents, a group of politically-committed Shi’a Afghan intellectuals arose in Iran, emerging from the very same social strata as the more stereotypical Afghan manual labourers, and played an influential role both in refugee communities and in the civil wars in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s.

From the 1990s onwards, however, densely populated urban Afghan communities such as those in Mashhad have been subjected to the same contradictory social trends that their Iranian working-class neighbours have experienced. Large numbers of refugees, both children and adults, have received a secular state education, including a sizable number at university level. Through education, the mass media, and other state institutions such as health programmes, they have been exposed to the tenets of an Iranian religious modernity which have encouraged rising literacy, falling fertility, new religious practices and institutions, increasing demands for participation in the public sphere by women and youth, and – paradoxically – increasing disillusionment with ideology and a greater emphasis on rationality, reformed religious discourses or outright secularism, individual thought and reflection, and subjectivism in art and literature. There is an exciting ferment of cultural, social, religious and political activity, of which literature is a prime example, in the refugee-dominated areas of Mashhad. But many of their new aspirations have ironically been thwarted by the Iranian state, which not only did not grant refugees any political rights, but has also steadily circumscribed the social rights to which they are entitled over the past two decades.

The marginal and paradoxical position of Afghan refugees – large numbers of whom were fellow Shi’as and Persian-speakers – serves as a fascinating litmus test for the contradictions within the Islamic Republic itself, which are often seen more clearly at the figurative peripheries of the state. It reveals that Iran is far more of a modern nation-state than the community of religious solidarity that it purports to be; it also speaks to the deep-seated insecurity many Iranians still feel about their national identity, particularly vis-à-vis the West. The internal Other thus becomes a trope for reflecting upon the precariousness of the Self. This paper traces the foregoing developments based on ethnographic field research among Shi’a, Persian-speaking self-described intellectuals (roshanfekran) of Afghan origin in Iran, most of whom are now second-generation refugees.

Biography
Zuzanna Olszewska is currently completing her doctorate on ‘Poetry and its Social Contexts Among Afghan Refugees in Iran’ at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford. She is also a Junior Research Fellow in Oriental Studies at St. John’s College, Oxford. She holds a BA in Social Anthropology from Harvard College and an MSt in Forced Migration from the Refugee Studies Centre at the University of Oxford.
2) Amin MOGHADAM
Iran in the United Arab Emirates Between envy and reticence The role of Iranian migration in the “metropolization” of the Gulf

Abstract
While exchanges around the Persian Gulf continue to take place via traditional channels, involving trade - both legal and illegal – between a network of countries to the North and South, the major Iranian presence in the United Arab Emirates is a sign of new migratory trends in the Gulf region, themselves reflecting a broader process of economic globalization and the growth of the urban metropolis. Over 500,000 Iranians live and work in the United Arab Emirates, whose total population is close to 4,500,000 inhabitants. The concentration is highest in Dubai, with 400,000 Iranians. The relatively recent diversity of this Iranian presence makes it hard to identify in full the sectors in which those involved are active - all the more so in that it has not generated a distinct sense of community. This heterogeneity reflects the many different origins of Iranian migratory flows into the Emirates, each of them with its own moral and political economy. It is also a consequence of the geopolitical context of the Gulf nations and of relations between the Arab states and Iran.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, we have seen a move from ancient migratory patterns, based on shared values and a sense of community, towards a more recent, markedly individualistic form. The latter reflects the political and social evolution of the home and host societies, i.e. Iran and the UAE; it has not, however, been to the detriment of the former, even if the Emirates’ determination to create an “ultra-modern”, knowledge-based society, begs the question as to how long a community-based, peripheral economy will be able to survive. The general trend is consequently towards more highly-qualified migrant profiles, so as to meet the demands of a society in search of this ultra-modernity. Iranian migration to the UAE must therefore be studied in all its various forms, from the most to the least visible, whether emerging from regional communities or as individual initiatives from the major urban agglomerations of Iran.

Biography
Amin Moghadam was born in Tehran in 1982. Upon completing a degree in sociology and anthropology in Paris V university, he studied a post-master of geography, and urban and regional planning in both Ecole nationale des Ponts et Chaussées, ParisTech, and Paris IV university. He is also a documentary film essayist and made a movie called “Le souffle d’allegresse” which has been screened in several festivals in France.

He is currently PhD Candidate in Geography of developing countries and his main subject of thesis is “The metropolization process in Persian Gulf” and works specifically on migratory trends.

3) Leili SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI
The Diasporic Children Return To Iran

Abstract
Much theoretical work done on issues of Diaspora is about dispersal, flight from Iran, the formation of new communities and maintenance of trans-national networks. While not taking away from the value of such work, this paper seeks to address the opposite flow, the return of the children of the Diaspora to Iran.

Against the backdrop of a perceived 'brain-drain' in Iran, where the best educated leave, a number of diasporic young Iranians, brought up and educated abroad are returning. I begin from an auto-
ethnographic standpoint, examining a community in which I am a member. Over a year ago I moved to Iran, not knowing how long I would be staying or what I would find. Unbeknown to me, there were many others who have done the same. With a variety of personal experiences that chart the complexity of diasporic experience, we have formed a collective that meets once a week to explore the surprisingly cosmopolitan flavour of life in Tehran. This ever-expanding group were mainly born after the revolution, and have a variety of experiences with Iran and reasons for relocating here. This is an emerging "community", which includes people who work in oil, banking, advertising as well as journalists, musicians and artists with professional experience, skill-sets and values drawn from life abroad.

My paper will be presented as a short photographic essay with sound bites through which I introduce some of the diasporic characters of this community and their personal stories. Through these individual stories, issues around family, socio-economic development, cultural expression and representation are highlighted. The characters in the paper, whose stories will resonate among many, all negotiate being "khareji" and "Irani" daily, debating when to invoke foreign-ness and when to invoke Iranian-ness. We enjoy the luxury and flexibility of two passports and two homes, but also feel the confusion of that predicament. In examining our individual motivations for return, as well as the opportunities and challenges we face, I also look at the ways in which this small but growing community functions in Tehran and the contributions it can make to wider Iranian society.

Biography
Leili Sreberny-Mohammadi received a Bachelors of Social Science in Social Anthropology from The University of Manchester in 2003. She has a background in the arts and broadcasting having worked with British broadcasters Channel 4 and the BBC and as a contemporary arts events producer at London’s South Bank Centre. Since November 2007 Leili has lived both in Isfahan and Tehran working on her Persian language and literature skills, while acting as a research consultant on the AHRC funded ‘Diasporas: Tuning In’ project examining the listening and viewing habits of Tehrani residents.

3) David MATTIN
The Flight from Tehran: Iranians in Britain

Abstract
In the second half of 2008 I travelled around the UK to talk to British-Iranians for a BBC Radio 4 documentary called The Flight from Tehran. The series focused on Iranians who came to the UK during or in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution, and I was keen hear about their experience of those historic events in Tehran in 1979, their quest to build a new life in Britain, and what being an Iranian in the UK means to them today. What I heard gave me a new perspective on British-Iranian identity.

Biography
David Mattin is a freelance journalist and broadcaster, living in London. He was born in 1980, in Hampshire, to an Iranian father and an English mother. David has written on Iran for the Guardian, and in 2008 he wrote and presented a BBC Radio 4 documentary about the British-Iranian experience.