

**CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN**

**Cross-Cultural Adaptation among Young Afghan Refugees Returning from Iran to
Afghanistan**

Masuma Moravej

Supervisor: Dr. Peruvemba Jaya

**Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
For Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the MA Degree in Communication**

Department of Communication

University of Ottawa

Fall-Winter 2013-14

© Masuma Moravej, Ottawa, Canada, 2014

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Acknowledgements

I gratefully acknowledge Dr. Peruvemba Jaya for her valuable comments, suggestions, and insights throughout the writing of this thesis. Many thanks also go to my committee members, Dr. Caroline Andrew and Dr. Rukhsana Ahmed whose comments on this thesis were greatly helpful.

Most importantly, my gratitude goes to my parents and family for their unwavering love, support and continued encouragement. I also want to thank Professor Martha Musgrove, and Mr. Michael Hatfield for their great support for the past two years, as well as all of my friends in Ottawa and Kabul.

Masuma Moravej

Ottawa, September 2013

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

At sunset, when the road's breath is warm, I'll depart.

I came here on foot, and on foot I will depart.

Tonight, the spell of exile will be broken;

Tonight, I will wrap my empty *sofra*.¹

Around the nights of celebration, O neighbor,

You will no longer hear the sound of cries.

That stranger without a piggybank, he'll depart

And that little girl who has no toys -- she, too, will depart.

[.....]

Friends, don't dishearten me

Give me your blessing, even if it's a lie.

I'll leave behind all that I do not have,

I swear on our Imam²; I won't take anything

Other than the dust of his *haram*³.

- "Return"(Bazgash), Mohammad Kazem Kazemi (2009); translated by Adeeba Talukder;

(illustrating the interior monologue of an Afghan returning from Iran to Afghanistan)

¹ *Sofra*: a cloth spread on the floor or table upon which one's daily bread is served; also a symbolic item in cultural ceremonies.

² *Imam*; here it refers to Imam Reza, the eighth Imam of Twelve Shia Muslims, whose mausoleum is located in Mashhad, Iran. It is an important Shia pilgrimage site.

³ *Haram*: sanctuary; here it refers to the shrine of Imam Reza.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

ABSTRACT

This study investigated certain aspects of the cross-cultural adaptation process of Afghan returnees who have repatriated from Iran to Afghanistan. The study's particular focus is the issue of cross-cultural adaptation in the current context of Afghanistan; that is, what challenges face Afghans returning from Iran to their country of origin following years of exile in Iran. Afghan immigration to Iran has a long history. Using Young Yun Kim's cross-cultural adaptation theory as the leading theoretical framework, the researcher investigated the cultural adaptation of those who have lived in Iran for more than 10 years and have repatriated voluntarily to Afghanistan at least three years before the data for this thesis were gathered.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for collecting primary data from participants for the thesis. Twelve young returnees from Kabul City, aged 18 to 40, volunteered to take part in the interviews. Results revealed that language barriers, cultural knowledge and environmental challenges were some of the dominant difficulties that returnees experienced after their repatriation. Furthermore, the findings showed that the three main strategies used by the young returnees to adapt to their unfamiliar, new environment of Kabul City included social interaction, using mass media, and keeping an open mind on current issues. The findings of the interviews revealed the ongoing changing nature of identity formation of the returnees after their repatriation to Afghanistan and, also the majority of participants (9 out of 12) voiced a strong sense of belonging and attachment to Afghanistan.

Keywords: cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural interaction, repatriation and integration, Afghan refugee.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Contents

<u>ABSTRACT</u>	4
<u>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</u>	10
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM	10
<u>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</u>	20
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND ON AFGHANISTAN AND IRAN	20
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AFGHANS' MIGRATION	27
AFGHANS IN IRAN: FROM IMMIGRATION TO REPATRIATION.....	29
REFUGEES OR MIGRANTS? THE LEGAL STATUS OF AFGHANS IN IRAN	33
SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTERACTION BETWEEN AFGHAN REFUGEES AND IRANIANS.....	37
<u>CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK</u>	44
CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION THEORY	44
ACCULTURATION	47
INFLUENTIAL FACTORS EXISTING PRIOR TO ACCULTURATION.....	48
PLURAL SOCIETY AND ACCULTURATION	51
ADAPTING TO A NEW SOCIETY.....	52
CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION: RICHNESS AND FRAGMENTATION.....	53
IN SEARCH OF A BIG PICTURE.....	54
KIM'S INTEGRATIVE THEORY OF COMMUNICATION AND CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION.....	40
ENTERING A NEW CULTURE	43
THE STRESS-ADAPTATION-GROWTH DYNAMIC	43

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

THE STRUCTURE OF CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION.....	45
PERSONAL COMMUNICATION: HOST COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE.....	45
COGNITIVE COMPONENTS.....	46
CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING.....	48
COGNITIVE COMPLEXITY.....	48
AFFECTIVE COMPONENTS.....	49
OPERATIONAL COMPETENCE.....	50
HOST SOCIAL COMMUNICATION.....	51
ETHNIC SOCIAL COMMUNICATION.....	51
ENVIRONMENT.....	51
PREDISPOSITION.....	52
INTERCULTURAL TRANSFORMATION.....	52
INTERCULTURAL IDENTITY.....	53
CONCLUSION.....	54
<u>CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....</u>	58
<u>OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH METHOD.....</u>	58
<u>INTERVIEWS.....</u>	60
<u>LANGUAGE.....</u>	62
<u>RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF DATA.....</u>	62
<u>RECRUITMENT PROCESS AND INTERVIEW SESSIONS.....</u>	64
<u>PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING.....</u>	65

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

<u>MY ROLE AS RESEARCHER.....</u>	<u>66</u>
<u>ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....</u>	<u>67</u>
<u>DATA ANALYSIS</u>	<u>68</u>
<u>CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</u>	<u>70</u>
PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION	72
REPATRIATION EXPERIENCE	73
DAILY LIFE EXPERIENCES IN KABUL CITY.....	75
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY.....	77
CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE/UNDERSTANDING	81
ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES.....	88
STRATEGIES	92
MASS MEDIA USAGE	93
SOCIAL INTERACTION.....	95
<u>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION</u>	<u>98</u>
<u>PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS.....</u>	<u>103</u>
<u>LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....</u>	<u>104</u>
<u>REFERENCES</u>	<u>106</u>
<u>APPENDIX A- AFGHANISTAN MAP</u>	<u>122</u>
<u>APPENDIX B- RECRUITMENT POSTER.....</u>	<u>123</u>

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

APPENDIX C- CONSENT FORM124

APPENDIX D- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....127

APPENDIX E- ANALYSIS129

APPENDIX- F132

SAMPLE OF AFGHAN REFUGEES ID ISSUED BY IRANIAN GOVERNMENT132

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

List of Abbreviation and Glossary

AREU	Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
BAFIA	Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UNHCR	United Nation High Commission for Refugees
Amayesh	A BAFIA census to identify foreign nationals carried out periodically
Ansar	An Islamic term that literally means “helper” and donates to Medinan citizens that helped prophet Mohammad and the Muhajeruin on the
Konkour	Competitive national university entrance examination
Mohajerin	Religious migrants

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Following the removal of the Taliban regime in late 2001, a new hope for peace and security emerged among many Afghans who had been living out of Afghanistan (Kronenfeld, 2011). This optimism resulted in the largest return of refugees in the recorded history of the country (Saito, 2008). More than 6 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2001, equal to one-half of the current refugee population in the world (Koepke, 2011). The highest rate of repatriation, 68.7%, belongs to Afghan refugees who were in Pakistan, while Iran is in the second position, accounting for 28.7% of returnees (Kronenfeld, 2011).

Youth, (defined as persons between the ages of 18 to 35), represent a significant portion of the Afghan refugee population in Iran; 71% of Afghan population in Iran is 30 years old or younger (Abbasi - Shavazi, Glazebrook, Jamshidiha, Mahmoudian & Sadeghi, 2008). The majority of these young people have rarely traveled to Afghanistan during their long-term life in exile (Saito, 2008). The constant unstable situation in Afghanistan was the primary deterrent factor for travelling to Afghanistan during their time in Iran (Kronenfeld, 2011). Consequently, their knowledge about Afghanistan is very limited, mainly gained through sources such as family, school and Iranian mass media (Saito, 2008). Abbasi-Shavazi's (2008) research on second-generation Afghans in Iran revealed that, in some family contexts, little was discussed or known about Afghanistan. Some parents did not talk much about their past lives because of the emotional pain associated with their memories, or concern about upsetting small children. Instead, they focused on their current life and future prospects. Not feeling that they knew enough

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

about Afghanistan sometimes discouraged young Afghans from talking about their homeland even with Afghan friends.

Additionally, due to three decades of war in Afghanistan, this country is facing the problem of insufficient human capital (Margesson, 2007). Considering this fact, young Afghan returnees repatriating to Afghanistan from Iran with experiences acquired from Iran, are considered as great potential assets for the reconstruction of post-war Afghanistan.

As a result, for these youth returning to Afghanistan does not necessarily mean returning home (Abbasi-Shavazi, et al., 2008). In addition, Kronenfeld's study revealed that people in Afghanistan behave differently with returnees from Iran in comparison to returnees from other countries (2011). As the label "Iranigak," a belittling word which means "similar to Iranian" implies, Afghans who had remained in Afghanistan tended not to be welcoming towards some of their peers returning from Iran. The reaction towards returnees from Pakistan, however, tended to be more diverse, depending on the background and experience of each individual. Because such a marginalization rarely happens for returnees from Pakistan, there is not any similar derogatory slang term assigned to them.

Further knowledge of Afghan refugees' life in exile and the extent of their acculturation within the host societies of Pakistan and Iran might explain the reasons for such a marginalization. Farwell (2001) stated bullying and social exclusion of refugees and immigrants in all cases of population displacement are to some extent common. Saito (2008) studied different connotations in the experiences of refugees in the two neighboring countries. Based on Saito's (2008) research, in Pakistan some, if not all, of the non-Pashtun refugees have experienced political discrimination, while Afghan Pashtu speakers had a sense of ethnic solidarity with

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Pakistani Pashtuns (Tober, Taghdisi & Jalali, 2006).

In terms of cultural linkages with Pakistan, Afghan returnees from Pakistan explained that many of the customs and ways of life of Pakistanis were largely similar to their own and many of the returnees were highly assimilated, being very fluent in Urdu, with Pakistani education and Pakistani friends. Pashtun is one of major ethnic groups in Pakistan (Saito, 2008). This fact enabled many Afghan refugees in Pakistan who mainly belonged to Pashtun ethnic group to integrate much better within Pakistani society (Saito, 2008). Furthermore, Monsutti's (2008) research showed that the people of Pakistan not only did not consider Afghan refugees inferior than Pakistanis, but also they regarded Afghans as zealous people.

However, the perceptions of Afghans in Iran tended to be more linked to a cultural hierarchy, despite the fact that many Afghans who left for Iran also shared religious beliefs as Shia followers (Koepke, 2011). A sense of shame in relation to being Afghan, more commonly observed among refugees in Iran, is another influential reason for refugees to keep a low profile in public (Saito, 2009). Many Afghans in Iran have experienced the offensive behavior of individuals in the host society (Koepke, 2011). For example, Afghans may be called "Afghani kesafat," literally meaning "dirty Afghans," implying that they have no culture, no manners, no understanding, and that they are rural people who are backward, barbarian and illiterate (Saito, 2009). Attempting to fit in such an environment, however, some Afghans indeed saw Iranians as more cultured, educated, mannered and wealthier than Afghans even while they concurrently held Afghan nationalist sentiments (Tober, 2007).

Efforts to be less noticeable as Afghans in public, either occasionally or permanently, were more frequent among refugees who grew up in Iran than in Pakistan (Saito, 2011). In

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

various contexts and spaces, however, Afghan refugees in Iran, especially the youth, commonly faced situations in which they felt the need to assimilate and adjust to their environment in order to belong either superficially or more profoundly, a challenging attempt to overcome the ongoing situation of non-belonging in the host society (Saito, 2009). However, the refugees who harbored negative feelings towards Iran, often due to experiencing social exclusion as foreigners, were fiercely passionate about Afghanistan, even though returning to Afghanistan often meant facing further challenges (Tober, et al., 2006).

Repatriation is not just about returning, but involves a complex, long-term and gradual process of reintegration and reconciliation (Long, 2010). For instance, in Cambodia, the actual movement of refugees across the Cambodian border was remarkably effective, but the reintegration itself was fragile (Garcia-Rodicio, 2001). Returnees faced many challenges such as serious land shortages, and as a result, “seventy-three % of returnees were still classed as needy or at risk by the World Food Program” (Garcia-Rodicio, 2001, p.123). In the Cambodian case, neighbors and relatives saw the returnees as both community outsiders because of their long absence from the country, and as community burdens because of their failure to reach economic self-sufficiency (Garcia-Rodicio, 2001).

Studies on returnees in different countries show many varied challenges that they encountered with returning to their country of origin. For example, the empirical study of Tapscott (1994) on young returnees from Namibia revealed the emotional stresses experienced after returning. Tapscott’s (1994) observation of Namibian returnees also specified that the local people in general and the more religious communities in particular found the returnees’ behavior and liberal gender attitudes disrespectful towards the local culture (as cited in Kibreab, 2002). Similarly, Puerto Rican adolescents excluded their peers who had been raised in the mainland

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

United States. The Puerto Ricans saw those with an American background as outsiders who would contaminate the existing culture with their different language, accent and physical appearance (Lorenzo-Hernandez, 1999).

Also, in the case of Malawian children, young returnees from Zambia faced additional adjustment stress because their experiences of being outsiders did not end after returning to their homeland. Rather, these stresses were combined with a lack of material possessions and limited education and work opportunities to produce a set of factors that significantly hindered their successful reintegration (Cornish, Peltzer & Maclachlan, 1999).

In the case of Afghan adults, the repatriation decision is influenced by a set of ‘pull and push’ factors (Saito, 2008). Due to the Iranian government’s repatriation strategy, Afghan refugees face many restrictions in their life while in exile. These measures include the reduction and ultimate cutting of subsidies on food, fuel, health care, and the passing of a law to ban access to free education for Afghan refugees (Tober, 2007). In addition, the number of work permits issued by the Iranian government to Afghan refugees has been cut drastically, and the cost for renewing previously issued permits has been increased (Tober, 2007). There has also been a substantial increase in the number of ‘Afghan-free provinces’; that is, Iranian provinces and cities where Afghans are prohibited from living (Tober, 2007, p.40).

In addition, numerous material and emotional difficulties after repatriation (Saito, 2009) have made it difficult for former refugees to feel “at home” when they return to Afghanistan. Some of the returnees have failed to reintegrate fully into Afghan society because of the significant distress associated with issues of resettlement and the meaning of home. As a result, some have decided to re-emigrate (Saito, 2008). Moreover, Piran (2004) argued that the Afghans who return would not be the same Afghans who emigrated from Afghanistan one or two decades ago.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Purpose of Study & Research Questions

This thesis investigated the subject of cultural adaptation among young Afghans returning from Iran to Afghanistan through the framework of cross-cultural adaptation, concentrating on Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation (Kim, 2001), a comprehensive and well-organized theory (Harvey, 2007) in the field of cross-cultural adaptation.

Accompanying academic or media attention, has been devoted to camp-based refugees in Pakistan while comparatively little is known about Afghan refugees in other contexts in general, and in Iran in particular (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2008). Therefore, any research in the context of Afghan refugees in Iran seems essential to fill a knowledge gap. The political situation in the years of the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s made any field research in Iran difficult, and although a large number of policy-oriented non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international government organization (IGO) reports have been written since then, few academic studies have been carried out among Afghan refugees in Iran (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2008). The unstable political relationship between the two neighboring countries of Afghanistan and Iran was and still is an important factor obstructing research related to Afghans refugees in Iran (Saito, 2008).

This thesis studied the process that young Afghans returning from Iran went through to adapt to their new environment in Kabul, the capital city of Afghanistan. A primary goal of this research was to explore the challenges that the returnees encountered and the strategies that they utilized to interact with Afghan people in Kabul City and to fit themselves into the unfamiliar environment. The guiding research questions for this study were the following:

RQ1. What are the difficulties and challenges that young Afghans returning from Iran to Afghanistan experienced during their adaptation process in the unfamiliar environment of Afghanistan?

RQ2. What are the strategies and mechanisms utilized by young Afghans returning from Iran

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

to Afghanistan in order to adapt to the new environment?

The scope of this research was about people's social interactions while adapting to a new society and the accompanying cultural issues and challenges. Therefore, a qualitative inquiry was selected as an appropriate methodology for conducting the research through applying computer-mediated communication (CMC). Mann and Stewart (2000) indicated that CMC enables the qualitative researcher to "benefit from a level of interpersonal involvement associated with oral interaction and the elaboration and expansion of thought associated with writing" (p.189). The ability to collect data in both oral and written forms is one of the main advantages of CMC (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were conducted for collecting primary data from participants for the thesis. The rationale for selecting interviewing as a means for data gathering is that an interview is an effective method to gain insight into people's experiences, ideas, opinions and views (Miller & Crabtree, 2004). An interview is an organized way to talk and listen to people and also a proper tool to access people's inner perceptions about a phenomenon or an issue (Waltermaurer, 2008).

The researcher selected 16 volunteer participants to conduct interviews with them, employing three criteria: first, they should be a resident of Kabul City at the time of doing the interviews; second, they should have lived at least 10 years in Iran, and also have repatriated to Afghanistan three years prior to the time of doing this study; finally, only individuals within the age category of 15 to 40 years of age were considered for inclusion in this study. However, the researcher used only 12 interviews for further analysis because three participants withdrew

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

during the interview process and one of the interviews was incomplete.

Structure of Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters. After the introduction section, the scholarly literature pertinent to the Afghans' exile life in Iran and the issue of Afghans' repatriation from Iran to Afghanistan is reviewed in Chapter Two.

The third chapter presents the overarching theoretical framework and research questions, examining topics such as cross-cultural adaptation theory, acculturation, influential factors existing prior to acculturation, pluralistic society and acculturation, adapting to a new society, and a discussion of Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to methodology. Justification for the chosen qualitative interview approach is provided, and research methods and tools are discussed, including ethics consideration, recruitment process, participants' qualification, the interview guide and subsequent data analysis.

The fifth chapter presents the findings of the research, and excerpts from interviews are used to enhance the discussion, shedding light on how participants have adapted to the Kabul City environment after their repatriation to Afghanistan from a prolonged life of exile in Iran.

The sixth and last chapter concludes the thesis. The practical implications of the findings are also discussed. Limitations and suggestions for further research are addressed.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Background on Afghanistan and Iran

Afghanistan: A Country of Diverse People and Culture. Afghanistan is a landlocked Islamic country of 251,825 square miles with a strategic location in the heart of Asia, surrounded by the six countries of Pakistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and China (Keshavarzian, 2005). To the south and west, Afghanistan shares borders with Iran and to the south and east, it is bounded by Pakistan along the longest border with Afghanistan (Saikal, 2004). To the north, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan have common borders with Afghanistan, and in the far northeast, China is another neighbor of Afghanistan with the shortest common land border (Keshavarzian, 2005).

Due to its strategic location as a crossroad of Asia, Afghanistan has always been subject to invasions from countries near and far throughout its history (Noorzai, 2006). “From Persians (500 BC), Greeks (330 BC), Arabs (642 AD), Mongols (1219), British (1939, 1878, 1918), Russians (1979), and Americans (2001), different powers from various races, religions and regions” have occupied Afghanistan and have left diverse legacies (Ahady, 1995, p. 621). A divergent society with distinctive races, sects, religions, and languages is one of the legacies resulting from these different interventions (Ahady, 1995). In terms of ethnic groups, Pashtuns comprise the largest population, and they have politically ruled Afghanistan since its foundation in 1747 as a new geopolitical reality in the region (Ahady, 1995). Tajik, Hazara, Uzbek and smaller minorities of Baluch, Nuristani, Pashshia, Turkmen, Aymaq, Arab, Qirghiz, Qizilbash, Gujur, and Brahwui are the other ethnic groups of Afghanistan (Maley, 2009).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Background on Ethnic Discrimination in Afghanistan History

Ethnic competition and tension have been a part of Afghanistan's social structure since it was founded in the name of Afghanistan by the Pashtun tribe in 1747 (Christia, 2010). The years of civil war (1992-1996) marked a period of ethnic claims, which led to polarization between Pashtuns, who dominated the Taliban movement, and the other ethnic groups who form the bulk of the opposing Northern Alliance (Christia, 2010). The Taliban emerged in late 1994; at first avoided ethnic rhetoric, but gradually it began using pro-Pashtun as well as anti-Shia arguments (Christia, 2010). In the aftermath of armed confrontations with other groups, the Taliban often arrested and harassed people only for ethnic reasons (Christia, 2010).

Even after the fall of the Taliban, when the quasi-democratically elected government of Hamid Karzai came into power, the government could not eliminate the ethnic conflict phenomenon in Afghanistan (Jones, 2008). Ethnic fragmentation even seems to be on the rise, especially in the east and the south, racked by an increasingly threatening and sophisticated insurgency; large areas of Afghanistan are still ruled by warlords/drug lords (Jones, 2008).

Language of Afghanistan

In relation to language, Afghanistan is a multilingual country with a wide range of dialects (Kawyani, 2006). The majority of Afghans speak Dari and Pashtu. Both Pashtu and Dari are written in the Arabic script. However, there are variations in some of their letters (Amiri & Schoellner, 2009). Although most Afghans are bilingual and some are even multi-lingual, Dari dominates in daily official correspondence (Amiri & Schoellner, 2009). Dari is considered an Indo-Iranian or Indo-Aryan language, and, as such, is a member of the Indo-European language family, having at least a 2,000 year history (Shahrani, 2006). There has always been confusion

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

among the terms Dari, Farsi, and Persian. Farsi has been recognized mainly as an Iranian language, and therefore, Afghans avoid using this term, preferring to call their language Dari (Yameen, 2007). In fact, Farsi does not belong solely to Iran and it is most accurate to say “Farsi/Dari” when speaking of the language (Yameen, 2007, p.72).

The other Afghan official language is Pashtu, which is alternatively known as Pashtu, Pashto, Pakhtani, Pukhto, Pukhtu, or informally as Awghan. Pashtu is a member of the southern Indo-European language family (Septfond, 2009). There are different varieties of Pashtu such as northern, southern and central Pashtu (Miran, 1969). Currently, northern and central Pashtu is spoken outside of Afghanistan, mainly in Pakistan (Miran, 1969). In spite of various dialects, Afghan Pashtu speakers do not have problems in understanding each other; however, the dialect of Pakistani Pashtu speakers seems incomprehensible for Afghan Pashtu speakers (Alkozay, 2008).

Generally speaking, both Pashtu and Dari share certain linguistic properties. Each language has its own morphology, syntax, semantics, phonology, and phonetics; therefore, technically speaking, each group needs to learn the other’s language to enjoy comprehensible daily conversation (Alkozay, 2008).

The other recognized languages are Hazaragi, Uzbeki, Baluche, Nusristani, Pashia, Qizilbashi, Turkmeni, and Pamiry, which are distinctive in different parts of Afghanistan (Alamyar, 2010). Uzbeki and Turkmani are spoken in the northern part of Afghanistan by minorities in the Mazar e-sharif and Faryab provinces (Alamyar, 2010). Nuristan, Kunar, and some parts of the Nangarhar and Kapisa provinces communicate using the Pashayi language, whereas Baluchi is the dominant language in the southern part of Afghanistan (Alamyar, 2010). Mostly, language, ethnic group, and region are intertwined in Afghanistan. Predominantly, each language group has its own specificities, and behind every language, there is a whole culture of

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

both oral and written traditions and stories (Amiri & Schoellner, 2009).

Culturally, tribalism and the honor of being a member of a particular tribe are considered very important in Afghanistan, and the tribe represents the reputation and the worth of individual members (Frembgen, 2006). When it comes to the issue of women, tribalism and honor determine the behavior of women: the way they dress, their social interactions, education, economic status, and even political activities (Frembgen, 2006).

Regarding demographics and population, the lack of any complete and accurate census has made it hard to know the exact population of Afghanistan (Ahady, 1995). Some scholars believe that the reluctance of Pashtun-dominated governments of Afghanistan to conduct a national survey is rooted in its policy to over-count the Pashtun ethnicity in order to justify their political monopoly since 1747 (Gregorian, 1969; Balland, 2011; Barfield, 2010). Most recently, Afghanistan's population was estimated to be around 28,150,000 of which Pashtuns are 40%, Tajik 25%, Hazara 20%, Uzbek and the other ethnic groups comprise the remaining 15% of the population (Emadi, 2002).

The system of government is an Islamic republic. Basically, the Afghan government is composed of legislative, judiciary, and executive branches (Maley, 2009). The current president of Afghanistan is Hamid Karzi Ahmadzai who is originally from a Pashtun tribe and was re-elected in 2009 (Maley, 2009). The Sunni Muslims comprise the majority of Afghan people (80%), whereas 19% are Shiite Muslims and the remaining 1% is Hindu and Sikh (Emadi, 1997). Hazara people are the dominant Shiite Muslims with Turko-Mongol origin, their ethnicity revealed in round faces, tight eyes, flat noses and light facial hairs which make them very distinct from the rest of the country's ethnic groups who predominantly look Caucasian with big noses, big eyes and long strong beards (Emadi, 1997).

Hazara people speak a dialect of Persian that is very different from the widespread

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Persian dialects in Afghanistan and also in Iran (Ahady, 1995). Nevertheless, Ibrahim (2012) claims that Hazara dialect or Hazaragi is a type of Dari. Grammatically, it is similar to Dari, whereas on the basis of vocabulary it is similar to Mongolian and Turkish.

These specific features of Hazaris distinguish them from the rest of the people in Afghanistan and also from their eastern neighboring country, Iran where a significant portion of Afghan refugees belong to the Hazara ethnic group, 40.47 % (Koepke, 2011). Hazara people migrated to Iran mainly from their cultural homeland, Hazarajat, one of the poorest regions in Afghanistan including three provinces of Bamiyan, Orozgan, and Ghur , and parts of other provinces of Herat, Farah, Qandahar, Ghazni, Parwan, Baghlan, Balkh, and Badghis (Rajaei, 2000,). Based on Afghanistan's provincial map, Hazarajat is located in central Afghanistan. The partial severing of routes to the urban parts of Afghanistan intensified the isolation and made more difficult the migration route both to other regions in Afghanistan and also outside Afghanistan borders (Mansutti, 2007). None of the governments in Kabul has been able or willing to make the necessary attempts to bring any improvements in Hazarajat regions (Mansutti, 2007). However, during the Soviet attacks on Afghanistan, central Afghanistan, the majority of Hazarajat region, was protected from the Soviet invasion (Maley, 2009). The economic and personal insecurity due to the ravages of war led to Hazara people's migration with the vague hope of one day returning to their homeland (Mansutti, 2007). Mansutti in his other research, *Afghan Migratory Strategies*, argues that a combination of political, cultural, economical, and ecological factors are the underlying reasons for Afghans' movement across the border of Afghanistan (2007).

Iran, Its People and Culture. Iran, formally known as Persia, encompasses around 1,648,195 square kilometers in western Asia, on the northeastern coast of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz (Piran, 2004). Iraq and Turkey are the western neighbors while Azerbaijan,

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Armenia and Turkmenistan border to the North, and Afghanistan and Pakistan to the east (Piran, 2004).

Iran is a diverse country with Persians as the largest ethnic group, 51 % of the approximately 66.43 million populations and a range of minorities and tribes. The Azari minority comprises 24% in the northwest (Jones, 2009). Other ethnic groups include Gilaki and Mazandarani, around 8% of the population; Kurds, 7%; Arab, 3%; Lurs, 2%; Baloch, 2% ; and Turkman, 2% (Razzaghi, 2010). The majority of Iranians are youth by international standards, the result of Ayatollah Khomeini's calls for Iranians to procreate in the immediate aftermath of the Islamic revolution (Jones, 2009). A small portion of the population is 65 years and older, while approximately three quarters of the population is between 15 and 64 years of age. The majority of young Iranian women are estimated to be literate (Jones, 2009).

Persian nationalism and Shia Islam are emphasized as two important factors for the state's unity, and as a result non-mainstream groups (who often speak Iranian Persian with an accent) are often seen as second-class people and the subjects of jokes (Razzaghi, 2010). For example, Turkish-Iranians (Iranian nationals but an ethnic minority) were targets of teasing in Iran (Samii, 2000). As a result, second-generation Afghans in Iran faced greater pressures to speak Iranian Persian in public, and this practice resulted in their easy identification as returnees from Iran upon repatriation to Afghanistan (Saito, 2008). The dominance of one national language has created an environment in which international languages are devalued. Consequently, many of the returnees from Iran do not have a good knowledge of the English language, at least when compared to returnees from Pakistan (Saito, 2008). This lack of knowledge of English prevents Afghan expatriates in Iran from accessing the well-paid jobs in Afghanistan (Saito, 2008).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Historical Background of Afghans' Migration

Migration has always been a means for human beings to defend themselves in times of danger. People emigrate from one place to another in order to survive war, political oppression, or economic hardship. Afghan people, like many others, have used emigration as a means to find freedom, happiness and safety. The migration of Afghans across borders has a long history (Abbasi–Shavazi, et al., 2008). In the early 21st century, the Afghan population was estimated to be about 27 million, living in three countries: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan (Gerami, 2008). To explain this diaspora, it must be recognized that decades of war and conflict resulted in millions of Afghans fleeing their country (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). War and its direct and indirect effects, including “pervasive violence and insecurity, compulsory national service, insecurity, threat to female honor (namoos), unemployment and inflation” were the main reasons for Afghans’ emigration to different countries (Abbasi - Shavazi et al., 2008, p.4).

However, it should be pointed out that Afghanistan is a land of extremes (Maley, 2009). For nearly fifty years of the 20th century – from 1929 until 1978 – this country was one of the most peaceful in Asia (Maley, 2009). During the Second World War, Afghanistan retained a neutral position and avoided war with its neighbors, and as a result, it was internally free from mass killing and mayhem (Noorzai, 2006). All this fell apart with a Marxist coup in 1978, the beginning of an extended period of bloodshed (Noorzai, 2006). The first significant fleeing of Afghans happened at the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 (Noorzai, 2006). The Soviet-instigated conflict in Afghanistan lasted until February 1989, and the fighting forced millions of Afghans to flee to other countries (Margesson, 2007).

The repression of extreme opposition from the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a communist political party, by Hohammad Daoud Khan's regime resulted in the Soviet army entering Afghanistan (Noorzia, 2006). Daoud was King Mohammad Zahir Shah’s cousin

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

and served as Prime Minister from 1954 to 1963 (Weinbaum, 2004). On July 17, 1973, Prime Minister Daoud put an end to the monarchy and seized power in a military coup (Maley, 2009). Daoud's government was very popular among the masses, but unpopular amongst the PDPA supporters (Weinbaum, 2004). During the presidency of Mohammad Daoud Khan, the PDPA grew considerably (Maley, 2009). During this repression, Mir Akbar Khybar, a leading PDPA member, was killed by Daoud's regime (Maley, 2009), and this led to massive anti-Daoud demonstration and as consequence, to more conflict between the regime and the PDPA (Maley, 2009).

On April 27, 1978, the Afghan army toppled President Mohammad Daoud's government by a coup and installed the Marxist government of Nur Mohammad Taraki and the PDPA (Maley, 2009). Amidst widespread rebellion and a power struggle between the two factions of the PDPA, “Khalq (masses) and Parcham (flag)”, the Soviet Union sent its armies to intervene in December 1979 (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007, p.3). Soon, four million Afghans fled to the neighboring countries of Pakistan and Iran, and an additional three million were internally displaced (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). Afghans have come to be defined in international humanitarian terms as one of the largest “refugee caseloads” or “one of the world’s largest and most prolonged refugee emergencies” (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007, p.9).

Afghans in Iran: From Immigration to Repatriation

Afghan immigration to Iran has a long history. The initial immigration of Afghans to Iran was due to economic reasons, and this movement has been documented since the 19th century, and probably even earlier (Abbasi–Shavazi et al, 2008). Around 100,000 Afghan labor immigrants were working in Iran during the 1970s oil-led construction boom (Abbasi–Shavazi et al, 2008). Later, more Afghans left Afghanistan for Iran as a result of the Soviet invasion of

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan in December 1979. The Soviet war in Afghanistan lasted until February 1989, and led 2.9 million Afghans to flee to Iran (Margesson, 2007). As the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, 1.4 million Afghans returned from Iran to Afghanistan (Nakanishi, 2005).

Although the Soviet army left Afghanistan in 1989, the Soviet-backed regime governed in Afghanistan until 1992. Mujahedin, Afghan forces aligned against the government of the pro-Soviet Democratic Republic of Afghanistan (DRA), defeated the pro-Soviet DRA and occupied Kabul City in 1992 (Saito, 2008). It was the beginning of Afghanistan's bloody civil war when the Mujahedin started to fight with each other for control of the country (Saito, 2008). The civil war resulted in another large movement of Afghan people to Iran, marking the third wave of immigration to Iran. And finally, fighting between Taliban and opposition groups between 1994 and 2001 led to the fourth round of Afghan immigration to Iran (Nakanishi, 2005).

In light of the Islamic revolution in Iran from 1979, the Islamic principle enshrined in the Quran of hosting refugees and displaced persons developed a particular significance for those Afghans who entered Iran (Margesson, 2007). The Islamic Republic of Iran considered it a religious duty to shield Afghan refugees. They were considered as Mohajirin, which entitled them to a number of advantages and privileges (Hugo, Abbasi-Shavazi & Sadeghi, 2012).

The term "Mohajirin" which is the plural form of the word "Mohajir", is an Arabic word meaning "refugees", but once the word is used in this context it has a much more exalted meaning (Sayeed, 2013). Mohajirin are not considered as refugees but as citizens of a promised homeland where they would not face political or religious discrimination (Saito, 2009). The concept of Mohajir has a historical root in the Islamic context (Sayeed, 2013). When the last Prophet of Islam, Mohammed, was spreading the message of Islam in Mecca City his life was threatened by the Meccans (people lived in Mecca), and Prophet Mohammed, along with his

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

followers, migrated (performed the Hijrat) to Medina City (Sayeed, 2013). Prophet was a Muhajir and his protectors in Medina were the ⁴Ansars (Sayeed, 2013). The migrants from Afghanistan had similarly run away from Afghanistan and were welcomed in Iran with a fervor and generosity displayed by the original Ansars (Margesson, 2007).

However, the Iranian strategic outlook changed from an ideological and religious one to a pragmatic and realistic one following the death of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatullah Khomeini in 1989 (Koepke, 2011). This conversion changed the Iranian perception of Afghan refugees from a coreligionist responsibility to a social and economic burden (Hugo et al., 2012). Simultaneously, the fall of the Communist government transformed the perception toward Afghan refugees from religious immigrants to political refugees (Hugo et al., 2012).

Given the above-mentioned circumstances, the Government of Iran began to encourage the repatriation of Afghans, first in 1993-1994 (Nakanishi, 2005). About one million Afghans were repatriated to Afghanistan between 1993-2000 (Ghods, Nasrollahzadeh & Kazemeini, 2005). Another attempt was made by the Iranian government in 2000 under a joint program with the UNHCR (Ghods, et al., 2005). However, as a result of severe drought and persistent and intensifying hostilities between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance, a large number of Afghans emigrated to Iran in the first six months of 2001 (Nakanishi, 2005). More than 100,000 displaced Afghans were accommodated in centers in Eastern Iran and Western Afghanistan by early April 2001 (Nakanishi, 2005). Moreover, 1,000 Afghans entered into Iran every day during the month of April of that year (Nakanishi, 2005). There was another slight increase in the number of displaced Afghans at the time of the Afghan War in November 2001 (UNHCR, 2003). The

⁴ "Ansar" is an Islamic term that literally means "helpers" and donates the Medinan citizens that helped Prophet Mohammad and the Muhajerin on the arrival to the city of Medina

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

majority of displaced Afghans lived in camps located along the Iranian border as well as in camps inside Afghanistan, although these latter sites were later disbanded (UNHCR, 2003).

In 2003, the Government of Iran signed a revised tripartite agreement with the Government of Afghanistan and UNHCR to facilitate the voluntary return of Afghans by March 2005 (Tober, 2007). Approximately 900,000 Afghan refugees returned from Iran to Afghanistan during the years of 2004-2008 (Gerami, 2008). The repatriation procedure was accelerated by imposing several restrictions on Afghan refugees that resulted in an increase of living expenses (Tober, 2007). These measures included the reduction and finally cutting of subsidies on food, fuel, healthcare, and the passing of a law to ban access to free education for Afghan refugees (Tober, 2007). In addition, the number of work permits issued by the Iranian government to Afghan refugees has been cut drastically, and the cost for renewing previously issued permits has been increased (Koepke, 2011). There has also been a substantial increase in the number of ‘Afghan-free provinces’; that is, Iranian provinces and cities where Afghans are prohibited from living (Tober, 2007, p.40).

The issue of Afghan repatriation got more attention during the Khatami government in 2000 (Koepke, 2011). Although Afghan repatriation had been a part of Iran foreign policy for many years, it was implemented fairly leniently because the Iranian government needed the cheap Afghan labor force (Nakanishi, 2005). Later during the government of President Ahmadinejad, the policy dramatically changed, and the president announced that by 2004, no Afghan refugees would be living in Iran, and the issue of Afghan refugees would not exist anymore in the context of Iranian society (Nakanishi, 2005). This policy and public announcement created a completely hostile environment for Afghans in every corner of Iran (Saito, 2008). The objectionable behavior of individual Iranians along with the restrictive regulations of government made Afghans’ life worse than at any other time in Afghan-Iranian

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

history (Saito, 2008). Although Iran is a signatory to the United Nation 1951 Refugee Convention, the Iranian government imposed regulations for Afghan refugees that were not only against this convention, but also created a great cost for all Afghans seeking integration into Iranian society and trampled on the human rights of Afghans in Iran (Nakanishi, 2005).

Since the UNHCR's repatriation program began in 2002, a total of 1.3 million Afghans have returned to Afghanistan voluntarily; only 4,025 of these have been assisted by UNHCR; the others have returned without availing themselves of UNHCR assistance (Margesson, 2007). 41% of assisted returnees from Iran have returned to Kabul City and Herat City (Hayat, Nilson, Wirak, Tenga, & Thyness, 2005).

Refugees or Migrants? The Legal Status of Afghans in Iran

The status of Afghans in Iran has gone through several changes. Although Iran is a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, Afghans fleeing the Soviet invasion were initially greeted not as refugees but as involuntary religious migrants or Mohajirin (Margesson, 2007). According to the UN's 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, a refugee is " a person who has left his or her country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of being persecuted due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group ("Convention and Protocol," 1966). But from the Iranian government's perspective, based on Islamic principles, Mohajir was technically not an international legal designation. Rather, it was considered a higher status term than refugee in post-revolutionary Iran (Saito, 2009). Mohajirin were given indefinite permission to reside in Iran and access to free education, subsidized health care, and food (Saito, 2009).

However, the welcoming attitude of Iran toward Afghans did not last so long. After the Soviet withdrawal and also the death of Ayatullah Khomeini, the Iranian supreme leader,

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Afghans' status in Iran changed from Mohajir to refugee after 1989 (Nakanishi, 2005). Therefore, Afghans no longer had access to free education and other privileges (Nakanishi, 2005). In 2001 and then again in June 2003, the Government of Iran, through the Ministry of Interior's Bureau of Aliens and Foreign Immigrant Affairs (BAFIA), maintained a fairly detailed list of Afghans whom Iran had accepted as refugees (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). This new registration exercise, largely intended to facilitate repatriation and refugee management by standardizing the status of Afghan refugees, was called 'Amayesh'⁵ (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). A temporary residence permission card was issued for the Afghans who registered in Amayesh in 2001, which was called Amayesh1 (Saito, 2009). These cards, which were also called "blue cards",⁶ were only valid for three months for individuals and six months for families (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). The cards will be discussed in more detail below.

Currently, Afghan people in Iran are divided into three categories in terms of their legal status; the first one is the so-called "blue card" holder, a status granted to those who arrived before 1992 (Nakanishi, 2005). Afghans who are placed in this category benefit from the right of residence and access to government services such as low-priced education and health services. Further, they are allowed to work in a restricted range of jobs that are for the most insecure and often undertaken clandestinely (Nakanishi, 2005). These jobs include laboring, technical and mechanical jobs in manufacturing, artisan work (shoemaking, carpentry, and stone cutting), security, and street bazaar vendors. The second category of Afghans comprises those who came to Iran between 1992 and 1994 and obtained temporary cards at the end of 1994 (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). Although these cards were often renewed, they finally expired in 1996. Many

⁵ In Farsi language "Amayesh" means organizing and standardizing (Dehkhoda, 2011) dictionary).

⁶ These identification cards for Afghans were in a blue color and so were called blue cards. Images of Afghan IDs are attached in Appendix (F).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

of these temporary cardholders have continued to stay in Iran, and they have almost the same rights as the first category (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). The third category includes those who came after 1996 and were not granted any documentation (Nakanishi, 2005). The fall of Mazar-e Sharif to the Taliban in 1998 led to an influx of Afghans into Iran, fleeing the oppression of the Taliban (Nakanishi, 2005). It is generally the case that the limited number of Afghans who arrived after 1996 were legally granted permission to stay for a short period of time (Nakanishi, 2005). It is said however, that only a small number of the Afghans were actually issued temporary cards (Nakanishi, 2005).

It should also be mentioned that in spite of the above mentioned residence permission identification cards, Gerami explains that a small group of Afghans have canceled their blue cards and have Afghan passports with Iranian visas in them (2008). This group can obtain real estate, establish businesses, and acquire social status (Gerami, 2008).

Based on the above-mentioned explanation of these three categories of Afghans, it is clear that the numbers of Afghans who actually are classified as refugees are not so many, yet international donors and NGOs often consider almost all Afghans in Iran as refugees (Nakanishi, 2005). Legally speaking, from the Iranian government's point of view, blue card holders are, more or less, identified as migrants, and thus are allowed to remain in Iran (Nakanishi, 2005). On the other hand, from the viewpoint of refugee status seekers, blue cardholders were the ones who made a refugee claim as they took refuge from the Soviet military (Nakanishi, 2005). Conversely, the blue cardholders could extend their cards regularly once or twice a year based on the BAFIA's announcement (Piran, 2004).

The question remains: who are refugees? Those who arrived after 1998 and received temporary IDs are most likely to qualify as refugees, both from the point of view of Afghans, the claimers, and the Iranian government, which granted temporary permission to stay (Nakanishi,

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

2005). In particular, in March 2000, about 50% of requests by Afghan refugees were granted permission for temporary stays of up to six months in Iran, and the Iranian government regularly extends this residence permission (Nakanishi, 2005). However, there is not anything that can be taken for granted in regards to refugees in Iran (Piran, 2004).

Social and Cultural Interaction between Afghan Refugees and Iranians

Tober cited the “socio-political circumstances - drought, regime changes, wars—and economic structures—pastoralism and agricultural seasonal cycles” as various reasons for Afghans’ emigration to other countries (2010, p. 4). However, this thesis intends to study the cultural challenges that Afghans returning from Iran have faced after repatriation to Afghanistan and the strategies adopted to overcome these challenges to adapt to or to accelerate the process of adapting to a new environment and society, considering the fact that “the migration brings social and cultural changes with it” (Koepke, 2011, p. 8). Furthermore, Piran believed the Afghans who return will not be the same Afghans who emigrated from Afghanistan one or two decades ago (2004). Accesses to education, using Iranian mass media, interaction with Iranian people during their refugee life, and fewer interactions with people inside Afghanistan have affected Afghan immigrants in Iran socially and culturally (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007).

In terms of education, access to literacy and learning in pre-war Afghan society existed only for those who were in urban areas, and just a limited number of males in rural areas had access to school (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). By the late 1970s, there were fewer than 900,000 school pupils for a population of 14 million, and the female literacy rate was assessed as 1% of the whole population (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). Although some sectors of society valued education immensely, for others, especially for farmers who needed manpower, it was not a priority. Sending girls to public schools, meanwhile, was considered as showing a lack of

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

respect for their dignity and to the honor of the men who were responsible for their protection (Abbasi-Shavazi et al, 2008).

With Afghans' arrival in Iran and their gradual integration into Iranian society and exposure to Iranian media, many refugees absorbed the value of education as a means to social mobility, as a religious command, and as a good in itself (Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook, 2006). Afghans' attitudes toward education in general and girls' education in particular gradually changed (Piran, 2004). A report by the United Nations placed the numbers of Afghan students as around 137,334 in 1998, of these at least 47% were girls (Keshavarzian, 2005). Some Afghans, who once protested against compulsory education for girls, gradually encouraged and supported their daughters to continue their education (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007).

In addition to elementary, secondary and high school education, an unknown but significant number of Afghan youth have been educated in Iranian universities, in a wide variety of subjects (Piran, 2004). Until 2004, university education in specific numbers of universities in major cities of Iran was free for those who succeeded in passing the highly competitive "Konkour"⁷ (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). Although in line with the repatriation policy of the Iranian government, the barring of Afghans from formal education during the years 2004 to 2006 resulted in many rallies and demonstrations all over Iran. Iranian police suppressed these protests, and in the meantime, a number of Afghan mothers were arrested for publicly demonstrating for their children's right to education (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). However, at the end of 2006, the Government of Iran reopened the doors of schools and universities to Afghans on the condition of paying a substantial fee (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007). Simultaneously, the cut of subsidies on food and health care, and the passage of restrictive laws for Afghans' employment,

⁷ The standard national university entrance examination.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

made it almost impossible for many Afghans to afford the educational fee. As a result, at least 100,000 Afghan children were withdrawn from school (Koepke, 2011).

The creation of dozens of informal schools operated by Afghans paved the way for the Afghan refugees without Iranian immigration documents (Saito, 2008). These schools were financed by student tuition and by the donations of some Afghans in Iran or out of Iran, mainly in western countries (Saito, 2009). However, from the perspective of facilities, they were not comparable with Iranian public schools (Saito, 2009). However, attending Afghan schools offered the opportunity of becoming familiar with background information about Afghanistan, encouraging students' loyalty to their homeland, and offering socialization among Afghans because, in addition to Iranian course of studies, the students were taught some Afghan courses as well, such as history, Pashtu and Dari language (Saito, 2008). The teachers, who were mainly Afghan university students or even high school graduates, risked arrest and deportation for their activities (Piran, 2004). The students who graduated from these Afghan schools cannot register in the Iranian schools because their diplomas are not certified by the Ministry of Education in Iran (Saito, 2008). However, if the Afghan embassy in Tehran endorses these diplomas, then the Ministry of Education in Kabul will accept the diplomas, and therefore the students can continue their education in Afghanistan (Saito, 2008).

Howze-ye elmiye or religious seminary was another opportunity to gain a higher education degree in Iran (Keshavarzian, 2005). These schools not only provided an education in religious studies but also taught Islamic law, history and philosophy (Keshavarzian, 2005). However, not everyone attended these institutions with the intention of becoming clerics; for many it was a way to enter universities in a situation where the alternative was to work in ill-paid, backbreaking jobs as laborers (Keshavarzian, 2005). Obviously, when the government of

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Iran focused on Afghans' repatriation policy, all schools belonging to Howze-ye elmiye decreased the numbers of admissions to Afghan applicants (Adelkhah & Olszewska, 2007).

Vocational centers established by a few international organizations made it feasible for Afghans to learn first aid, basic pharmacology, midwifery, the Pashto language, journalism, filmmaking, design, and handicrafts, including rug-weaving and artificial flower-making, while English language and computer skills were the two top areas of study (Piran, 2004).

The attitude shifting on the issue of reproductive health has been viewed as another impact of social interaction between Afghan refugees and Iranians during the exile life (Piran, 2004). Both Shiite Muslim and Sunni Muslim Afghans mainly have extended families, which are male dominated, and exhibit patriarchal characteristics (Koepke, 2011). Consequently polygamy, early marriage, pre-arranged marriages by elders, and marriage among close relative are distinctive characteristics of such a family structure (Koepke, 2011). Research has revealed that the majority of Afghan refugees considered contraception as against God's will and therefore punishable (Abbasi-Shavazi & Glazebrook, 2007). For example, Piran (2004) explained that Afghan women avoid discussing sensitive issues like pregnancy and marital intercourse even with a female physician, as they considered it contrary to Afghan social and community expectations, values and norms. However, the gradual but steady increase in interest in contraception, family planning and reproductive health was reported by Piran (2004) who called it a revolutionary change in Afghan refugees' attitudes toward reproductive health.

The above-mentioned educational opportunities and the privilege resulting from living in a modernized society rather than Afghanistan created a different cultural environment for Afghan refugees in general and for adult Afghan refugees in particular (Abbasi-Shavazi et al., 2008).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

These changes are more visible among women who believe in female independence and female social contributions, which are far from Afghan traditions and norms (Keshavarzian, 2005).

According to Abbasi-Shavazi et al., (2008), Afghan refugees in Iran transferred the core of their cultural values to some extent to the more modern standards than their country of origin, Afghanistan, during their exile life in Iran. Data from the Statistical Center of Iran in 2009 offer evidence of how Iran has changed in terms of household expenditures, education attainment, and access to health and basic services (Salehi-Isfahani, 2009). The greatest achievement during the last 30 years has been the expansion of educational opportunities, especially for women. Mainly due to increased education and improved access to health and other basic services such as electricity and piped water, the fertility rate has decreased especially in rural areas (Amuzegar, 2005). In 2004, 95.1% of rural households in the lowest expenditure quintile had electricity and 79.4% had piped water, compared to 37.0% and 31.0% in 1984 (Abbasi-Shavazi, Mehyar, Jones & McDonald, 2002). By 2005, about 90% of the rural population was served by rural health houses and, schooling was extended to almost all rural areas elevating the level of educational attainment of these areas (Salehi-Isfahani, 2005). Together with women's gains in education, family planning has substantially advanced gender equality in Iran (Salehi-Isfahani, 2009).

CHAPTER THREE: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Because we live in a world of “simultaneous events and overall awareness, the broad interface of national, cultural, linguistic and religious traditions has blurred any clear definition between us and them” (McLuhan, 2011, p. 40). Although we may challenge various cultural differences, nevertheless we search for human similarities (Kim, 2001). At the forefront of this reality are millions of people who move across cultural boundaries, such as immigrants and refugees. Being displaced from their familiar homes and needing to re-settle in new environments requires a learning process of how to adapt by learning how to behave and communicate within a new and different culture (Wiseman, 1995).

There are several approaches to incorporate the concept of culture into communication theories (Wiseman & Koester, 1993). First, culture can be integrated with the communication process in theories of communication (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1986). For example, Applegate & Sypher (1983/1988) integrated culture into constructivist theory, while Cronen & Pearce (1988) integrated culture into a coordinated management of meaning (Gudykunst, 2005). In other words, culture is linked to communication within theory and, theories can be designed to describe and explain how communication differs across cultures (Wiseman & Koester, 1993). However, many of the theories explain communication between different people with different cultures (Wiseman, 1995).

Culture as applied to cross-cultural and intercultural communication

In this thesis, the researcher has tried to explain how culture is conceptualized itself in the field of cross-cultural and intercultural communication. First a general definition of culture is

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

been explained and then, an outline of the basic idea of culture as it is applied in the field of cross-cultural communication.

The classic definition of the term culture comes from Tylor's 1871 conceptualization, which is mainly applied by anthropologists and other behavioral scientists (Geertz, 1977). Tylor's definition of culture is "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Varenne, 2006, p.2).

There have been numerous attempts to define the meaning of the term culture following the classic proposal of Tylor in 1871 (Aneas & Sandin, 2009). For example, Gudykunst and Ting-Toomy (1988) stated, "no consensus has been achieved when it comes to formulating an interdisciplinary definition which can be accepted across the diverse fields of study" (p.27). Furthermore, the sociologist Pedersen (1997) also pointed out the difficulty in defining culture when, following an extensive literature survey he explained "people use culture in the same way as scientists use paradigms to organize and normalize their activity; the elements of culture are used, modified or discarded depending on their utility in organizing reality" (p.159).

When it comes to the complex situation of cross-cultural communication, scholars such as Adler (1975); Kim (1988) or Pedersen (1994) have proposed the use of an interactive approach of culture; wherein they define culture as "the universe of information that configures the patterns of life in any given society" (cited in Geertz, 1977, p. 15). Aneas's (2003) defines culture as "the set of knowledge, values, emotional heritage, behavior and artifacts which a social group share, and which enable them to functionally adapt to their surroundings" (p.120). Thus, culture affects individuals in the way they interact with their environment (Aneas & Sandin, 2003).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Cross-cultural adaptation theory

The concept of cross-cultural adaptation has been studied broadly across social science disciplines since the 1930s in the United States, a nation that has dealt with a large and continuous influx of immigration (Harvey, 2007). Scholars such as Spicer (1968) and Stonequist (1968) have worked in this field (Gudykunst, 2005). Very recently scholars such as Berry (1980), Jasinskaja-Lahti, Leibkind, Horenczyk, and Schmitz, (2003) and Ward & Kennedy (1993) have done significant research on adaptation-related phenomena throughout Northern and Western European countries, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and, Israel (Gudykunst, 2005).

The core tenet of the cross-cultural adaptation theory is the influence that cultural factors have on the development and presentation of individual human psychology (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Haslberger (2005) offers a broad definition of adaptation, stating: "Cross cultural adaptation is a complex process in which a person becomes capable of functioning effectively in a culture other than the one he or she was originally socialized in" (p. 86). Cross-cultural psychology has revealed an important link between cultural context and individual behavioral development (Gudykunst, 2005). The focus is on how individuals who have developed in one culture can manage to adapt to an unfamiliar context (Harvey, 2007). Talking about cross-cultural adaptation requires explaining one of the most complex areas, acculturation (Berry, 1997). The subject is complex because acculturation phenomena result from contact between two or more cultures (Berry, 1997), so that each of these cultures has to be taken into consideration. Research on acculturation, like many other areas of cross-cultural psychology, needs to be comparative in order to understand variations in psychological outcomes that are the result of cultural differences between the two groups in contact (Berry, 1996).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Acculturation

The classical definition of acculturation was presented by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovist (1936) who defined the term as those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with each other, and there is an expectation of changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups. In effect, acculturation is a process of cultural and psychological change that happens during intercultural contact (Berry, 2003). Cultural changes include any revision in a group's customs and in its members' economic and political life, while psychological changes include modification in individual attitudes toward the acculturation process (Phinney, 1992), and in social behaviors in relation to the groups in contact (Berry, Wisten, Virta, Vedder, Rooney & Sang, 2006).

Wiseman (1995) stated that during the acculturation process, the new cultural elements are not simply added to previous internal conditions because, as new learning processes occur, deculturation or unlearning of some of the old cultural elements indeed occurs. Generally, acquiring something new causes the loss of something old. During the continuous interplay of acculturation and deculturation, newcomers experience an internal transformation, "from changes in superficial areas such as overt role behavior to more profound changes in the fundamental values" (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 382). The newcomers are mainly sensitive to conformity pressures from the host environment as cultural expectations increase, and they need to develop their cultural learning (Gudykunst, 2005). As long as a difference between the host society's demands and the newcomers' internal capacity to fulfill these demands exists, the learning process continues (Gudykunst, 2005).

Acculturation is also a widely employed concept in the context of intercultural psychology, and Vasquez (1984) has used it as a synonym for assimilation. However, Berry

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

(1997) emphasized that assimilation is not the only kind of acculturation. There can be other forms such as reactive, meaning "triggering resistance to change in both groups;" creative, meaning "stimulating new cultural forms which are not found in either of the cultures in contact;" and delayed, meaning "initiating changes that appear more fully years later" (Berry, 1997, p. 3). Furthermore, Gudykunst (2005) argued that for a large numbers of settlers, assimilation remains a lifetime goal rather than an optional goal and, most of the time, needs the effort of the multiple generations.

Influential Factors Existing Prior to Acculturation

Individuals go through acculturation with a number of existing personal characteristics, both demographic and social (Berry, 1997). The existing personal characteristics impact the process of acculturation (Berry, 1997). Age, gender, the distance between the culture of the original society and the new society are some of the popular influential personal characteristics in the notion of acculturation (Berry et al., 2006).

Age. Age is one of those influential factors. When individuals enter a new society at an early age, for example at the age of elementary school or earlier, the acculturation process is generally smoother, although there is not a distinct and clear reason for this observation (Berry et al., 2006). Perhaps personal flexibility and adaptability are maximal during these early ages, or perhaps at the later stages of life, the original culture has been fully shaped, when and a new culture cannot take hold, this creates cultural conflict (Choi & Thomas, 2007). Older youth often experience problems during acculturation, mainly at the age of adolescence (Phinney, 1990). For example, teenagers might experience conflict between the demands of their parents, of their peers, and of the society of settlement (Phinney, 1990).

Gender. Along with age, gender can have a variable and significant influence on the

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

acculturation process (Berry, 1997). For example, Carballo (1994) stated that females might be more at risk for developing problems during the process of acculturation and eventually during adaptation procedure. However, this generalization mainly depends on the relative status and differing treatment of females (Berry, 1996). What a female can do or the new behavior that she performs to take on new roles available in the society of settlement might bring her into conflict with her heritage culture and eventually place her at risk (Berry, Dasen, Saraswathi, Poortinga, Pandey, Segall & Kagitcibasi, 1980).

Additionally, it is more common for women to be criticized when taking on new cultural patterns and behaving differently from their heritage norms (Jonson, 2004). Although Berry (1997) believed gender does not vary much with the level of acculturation, more interestingly, Gibson (2001) speculated that boys might have more difficulty than girls in the process of acculturation. For example, Sam's (2000) study among Chilean, Turkish, Vietnamese and Pakistani adolescents with immigrant backgrounds in Norway showed that girls scored higher than boys on several items related to mental health. Ghuman's (1997) research among Asian Indians in the UK also presented a higher acculturation level of the girls than the boys.

Education. More educated individuals were more likely to have a positive attitude toward acculturation than those with less schooling (Tomas & Choi, 2007). Education has a positive effect on the adaptation process since higher education is predictive of lower stress (Berry, 1997). Education endows individuals with a broader vision to analyze problems, more likely to provide better acculturation and adaptation (Berry, et al., 1980). Furthermore, education is a correlate of other factors such as income, occupational opportunity and support networks (Berry & Sam, 1996). Educated individuals can more easily learn about the features of a new society such as its history, values and cultural norms (Berry, et al., 1980). However, the impact of education on job opportunity and income depends on the amount of difference between the two societies of origin

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

and settlement (Berry, et al., 1980). For example an individual who had a good job status in the country of his/her origin, but frequently cannot obtain the same job status in the country of settlement may face great acculturation difficulty (Choi & Thomas, 2007). Such individuals may experience the devaluation of their educational and work experience credentials on arrival in the settlement country (Choi & Thomas, 2007).

Cultural distance. This factor, representing the dissimilarity of the two cultures in contact, is another factor that influences the acculturation process (Ward & Kennedy, 1992). The extent of cultural difference specifies the amount of cultural learning required and, most likely, large differences generate negative intergroup attitudes and induce greater cultural conflict, leading to delayed adaptation (Ward & Kennedy, 1992).

Personal factors. Personal characteristics, including being introverted or extroverted and the degree of flexibility when facing differences also influence the course of acculturation (Berry, 1997). However, these personal factors in themselves do not play a great role in an individual's adaptation; it is mainly an individual's fit with the new cultural setting that matters (Kealey, 1989).

Plural Society and Acculturation

A plural society is one where people from different cultures live together in a diverse community (Berry, 1997). As a result of immigration, many societies become culturally plural (Berry, 1997). In many plural societies, the different existing cultural groups are not equal in power (numerical, economic, or political) (Berry, et al., 2006). The fact of power differences among the cultural groups has given rise to popular and social science term such as mainstream, or dominant group, minority or non-dominant group, and ethnic group (Berry, 1997).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Based on the definition of acculturation and mainly from a psychological perspective, the assumption is that minorities inevitably become part of a mainstream culture. However, this situation does not always happen in all plural societies, and in some cases confrontation between dominant and non-dominant cultural groups disrupts the cultural diversity of many contemporary societies (Kymlica, 1995).

Immigrants selecting to enter a new society encounter an acculturation process, while others such as indigenous peoples or the national minorities have had the new culture brought to them (Berry, 1997). However, the new arrivals exhibit different patterns in terms of their settlement period; some, such as immigrants, intend to stay relatively permanently in the new society, while for others such as sojourners, asylum seekers, guest workers and international students, the situation is a temporary settlement (Wiseman, 1995).

Adapting to a new society

Acculturation of immigrants and the adjustment of sojourners has been a focus of interest of scholars for years (Berry, 2005). New arrivals need to go through a learning process to improve their settlement in unfamiliar conditions. Therefore, they begin to undertake a “gradual process of personal transformation beyond their original cultural perimeters and toward a more inclusive and less categorical self-conception and self-other orientation” (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 12).

Generally defined, adaptation refers to changes that take place in individuals or groups in responding to environmental demands (Malzberg & Lee, 1956). This adaptation can happen in a short period or extend over the longer term (Gudykunst, 2005). Berry (1997) believed that short-term adaptation could be negative, as it is often disruptive in character. An individual’s fit into new society increases when that individual applies specific assimilation or integration strategies

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

and also when the dominant society has a receptive attitude toward an individual's acculturation process (Berry 1997). Still, the fit does not happen when individuals settle in a pattern of conflict with their new society rather, this confrontation results in separation/segregation and marginalization (Berry, 1997).

There are two fundamentally distinct types of adaptation: psychological and sociocultural (Searle & Ward, 1990). Psychological adaptation refers to mental well being or satisfaction, mainly focusing on how to deal with stress. Sociocultural adaptation relates to social skills, the ability to fit in with the host society, and depends on social learning and social cognition approaches (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Psychological adaptation, then, is interwoven with stress and coping processes, while sociocultural adaptation is derived through cultural learning (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). However, the two dimensions of adaptation, both sociocultural and psychological, are interrelated, and both are affected by the size of relocations (Berry, 2005). The degree of impact depends on the extent of the differences between the host and original societies (Berry, 2005).

Psychological adaptation is affected by personality factors, life change, and social support (Ward & Kennedy, 1993). Searle and Ward's (1990) research on Malaysian and Singaporean students in New Zealand, for example, showed that extroversion, life events, and satisfaction within the host society were the most influential factors for psychological adjustment for the students. Furthermore, loneliness was recognized as the most powerful predictor of mood disturbance among American women living in Singapore (Searle & Ward, 1990).

Sociocultural adaptation, as assessed by social difficulty, is theoretically embedded in a social learning and social cognition framework (Berry, 1997). Social difficulty is related to

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

cultural knowledge (Ward & Searle, 1991), language ability, and length of residence in the host culture (Ward & Kennedy, 1992). Moreover, with the emphasis on cultural learning, sociocultural adaptation is also influenced by cultural distance (Berry, 1997). Immigrants who find less similarity between the land of their origin and the land of settlement experience more social difficulty during cross-cultural adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1997).

Cross-Cultural Adaptation: Richness and Fragmentation

As previously described, many scholars have done significant research in the field of cross-cultural adaptation and, more recently scholars such as Berry (1980), Jasinskaja-Lahti, Leibkind, Horenczyk, and Schmitz (2003), Ward and Kennedy (1993), and Chen & Starosta (1995) have done significant research in the context of regions other than the United States (Gudykunst, 2005). According to Beard (1948), the various researches in the field of cross-cultural adaptation have added extensive amount of information and insights to better understand the concept of cross-cultural adaptation. However, Beard (1984) claimed that the lack of connectedness among all the different terms (assimilation, adjustment, acculturation, cultural shock, integration and adaptation) has made it difficult for individual investigators to gain a clear and cohesive picture of the issue of cross-cultural adaptation. In this regard, Gudykunst (2005) explained that introducing and explaining the above-mentioned terms has fractionated the concept of cross-cultural adaptation. A comprehensive and realistic understanding of the concept of cross-cultural adaptation has been frustrated by “the narrowly based linear-causal reasoning that conceives cross-cultural adaptation as either a dependent variable or an independent variable of something” (Beard, 1984).

Recent scholars such as Hedge (1998) and Young (1996) have further spurred pluralistic conceptions of cross-cultural adaptation, assuming that adaptation is a matter of conscious choice

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

individuals make for themselves, and not a matter of necessity (Harvey, 2007). These scholars have mainly questioned the “legitimacy of traditional normative-representational social scientific theories for not stressing cultural diversity, not highlighting the predicament” in which immigrant groups and ethnic minorities find themselves to be victims of systematic cultural oppression (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 376).

In Search of a Big Picture

Considering the above-mentioned fragmented backdrop in the field of cross-cultural adaptation, Kim (2001) tried to search for a broadly based general theory to help rectify the disintegration problem in order to gain a systemic insight into what happens when someone crosses cultural boundaries (Harvey, 2007). With this aim, Kim (2001) tried to introduce the following key missing links in the cross-cultural adaptation literature (Harvey, 2007).

Kim (2001) believed that “most of the existing concepts of the cross-cultural adaptation can be grouped in two categories of macro and micro level” (p.13). In the macro level, both anthropologists and sociologists have focused on the structural issues involving immigrants and newcomers who enter a new environment (Kim, 2001). From a macro level perspective, researchers have approached the issue of cross-cultural adaptation by examining the ideal type of personality or dominant values and life patterns of a cultural group. In this category the primary emphasis has been on the internalization of new personality traits or personality among the newcomers in the new environment (Kim, 2001). Kim stated that little attention has been given to the experience of individuals in the notion of cross-cultural adaptation. Therefore, Kim suggested that for a fuller understanding of cross-cultural adaptation process, both the macro and micro level of cross-cultural adaptation need to be taken into account (Kim, 2001).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Among the micro level cross-cultural adaptation studies of individuals, there is a division between the studies of immigrants and refugees living in a new culture more or less permanently and the issue of short-term adaptation among the sojourners (Kim, 2001). Although the experiences of those new comers who intended to stay for a long time in the host society can be different from those who enter a new society with the intention of staying for a short time (Wiseman, 1995), still there are certain similar experiences of cross-cultural adaptation among all new comers regardless of the length of the stay in an unfamiliar society (Kim, 2001). Therefore, “as long as there are commonalities, short term and long term adaptation phenomena can be identified in a broader theory” (Kim, 2001, p.14).

Furthermore, Kim (2001) believed that in both short-term and long-term adaptation studies, the main emphasis has been the problematic nature of cross-cultural adaptation experiences. The problematic viewpoint of the cross-cultural adaptation is most likely observable in the studies of cultural shock (Kim, 2001). In the field of the culture shock, the main focus is on individuals’ frustrated reaction to their new environment. The concern regarding the problematic nature of cross-cultural adaptation has also been a force behind many long-term adaptation studies (Wiseman, 1995). Considering this fact, Kim (2001) explained that all individuals’ experiences of cross-cultural adaptation are both problematic and growth producing. Kim (2001) summarized that the cross-cultural adaptation is “thus a double-edged process, rather, because of the difficulties crossing culture entails, people do and must change some of their old ways of life” so as to be able to integrate and adapt to a new environment (p.21).

The process of adaptation is different from person to person; no two individuals adapt identically (Gudykunst, 2005). A variety of theoretical models have been developed to address the issue of differential adaptation (Gudykunst, 2005). These theoretical models have included factors ranging from psychological, personality characteristics and communication pattern skills

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

to demographic skills (Gudykunst, 2005). Kim (2001) believed that the lack of consensus is obvious and visible among these existing models because “different models have been based on different conceptions of what constitutes the domain of cross-cultural adaptation in varying foci and levels of comprehensiveness” (p.23). Regarding this weakness in the field of cross-cultural adaptation, Kim (2001) tried to organize and consolidate the factors influencing the cross-cultural adaptation process so as to achieve a wider coherence in describing and explaining differing levels or rates of adaptive changes in individuals.

Traditionally, “studies of cross-cultural adaptation have been largely predicated on the assumption that cross-cultural adaptation is a natural phenomenon and that successful adaptation is a desirable goal” (Kim, 2001, p.23). Based on Gudykunst’s (2005) research, the majority of theories and empirical studies in the field of cross-cultural adaptation, including both short term and long-term adaptation, have been developed in a way to help to ease the transitional period of newcomers in their new environment. Furthermore, Kim (2001) stated that this affirmative view of cross-cultural adaptation “reflects the widely accepted assimilationist or melting pot social ideology.” Kim (2001) suggested, “the divergent ideological premises of assimilation and pluralism need to be recognized and incorporated into a pragmatic conception of cross-cultural adaptation as a condition of host environment as well as of the individuals adapting to that environment” (cited in Harvey, 2007, pp.3-4).

Kim’s Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-cultural Adaptation

Kim started her scientific research and investigating of cross-cultural adaptation more than two and a half decades ago (Gudykunst, 2005). She got interested in the issue of cross-cultural adaptation when she was a graduate student, and later she began to address adaptive struggles and successes through surveys among Korean immigrants in the Chicago area during

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

her doctoral research (Kim, 2001). Kim later expanded her studies among other Asian and non-Asian immigrants (e.g., Japanese, Malaysian, Indian, Mexican) and among immigrants in the context of countries other than the US (Harvey, 2007).

Kim's initial attempt to develop a comprehensive, integrative theory emerged through her article "Toward an Interactive Theory of Communication-Acculturation" (Wiseman, 1995), which she later followed up with and enhanced to a full theory, "Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation: an Integrative Theory" (Kim, 2001). This theory elaborated and refined what Kim called "Becoming Intercultural: An Integrative Theory of Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation" (Kim, 2001).

Her most recent theory (Kim, 2001) aimed not to support any particular ideological position but to represent the regularities that individuals experience when they go through the adaptation process in a new environment (Gudykunst, 2005). Furthermore, Kim (2001) argued that cross-cultural adaptation is an evolutionary process that individuals experience when faced with an unfamiliar environment, and the adaptation process is influenced by both external and internal forces. Kim (2001) further explained that external forces act on individuals and cause limits on their adaptive processes, while other forces are internally located within individual behaviors (Gudykunst, 2005). Thus, the issue of cross-cultural adaptation should be studied as a dynamic interplay of the individual and the environment (Gudykunst, 2005).

By placing adaptation at the intersection of the individual and environment, cross-cultural adaptation will be possible through the channel of communication activities (Kim, 2001). Thus, communication will be the necessary vehicle for adaptation or, in other words, cross-cultural adaptation happens only as long as there is an interaction between individuals and the host environment (Kim, 2001).

Based on what Gudykunst (2005) explained, Kim's theorizing process exhibits a back and

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

forth movement between deductive and inductive processes. Gudykunst (2005) defined the deductive process as a “conceptual realm of logical development of ideas from a set of basic open system assumptions about human adaptation, and the inductive process as empirical substantiation of ideas based on proof available in social science literature” (p.380). Moreover, in an open system, the interaction between internal elements and the environment is allowed, and there is a possibility of breaking down the components into a kind of continuous exchange with the external environment (Harvey, 2007).

Generally speaking, Kim (2001) defined cross-cultural adaptation as the situation that someone experiences upon relocating to an unfamiliar sociocultural environment while striving to create and maintain a relatively stable, mutual and functional relationship with that environment (Harvey, 2007). Regarding this definition, the goal is that settlers achieve an overall person-environment fit within the new society (Harvey, 2007). Therefore, positioning adaptation at the interaction of person and environment, adaptation will be an interactive communication process that comprises other similar but narrower terms such as assimilation, acculturation, adjustment, as well as integration (Gudykunst, 2005). Because, according to Berry’s (2005) explanation, assimilation mainly refers to the acceptance of the mainstream cultural element of the host society, acculturation employs a process in which the acquisition of some but not all of the aspects of the host cultural elements happens. Adjustment refers to the psychological responses to cross-cultural difficulties that individuals face entering a new environment, and integration is often outlined as social participation of the individuals in the host society (Berry, 2005).

The term of “stranger” is a frequently applied concept in Kim’s theory. She defined stranger as an individual who enters or resettles in a new cultural or subcultural environment (Harvey, 2007). The concept of stranger includes other terms such as immigrants, refugees, sojourners, re-settlers, and returnees (Kim, 2001). Gudykunst (2005) indicated that in addition to

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Kim, Simmel (1908/1950) also had used the term of stranger as “a ubiquitous and heuristic concept for analyzing the social process involving individuals who are confronting an unfamiliar environment” (p.381).

Entering a new culture

Kim (2001) explained that entering a new culture involves starting an enculturation process. To define enculturation, Wiseman (1995) explained that through continuous interaction with the environment, people’s internal systems undergo a series of changes to accept concepts and attitudes, and consequently to integrate culturally. Thus, this process that people undergo to fit themselves to live in the company of others in a new environment is what Kim (2001) called “enculturation.” The enculturation process happens through and within communication, as people learn to speak, listen, interpret, and understand the verbal and nonverbal messages in a way that enables them to interact with those they select for interaction (Gudykunst, 2005).

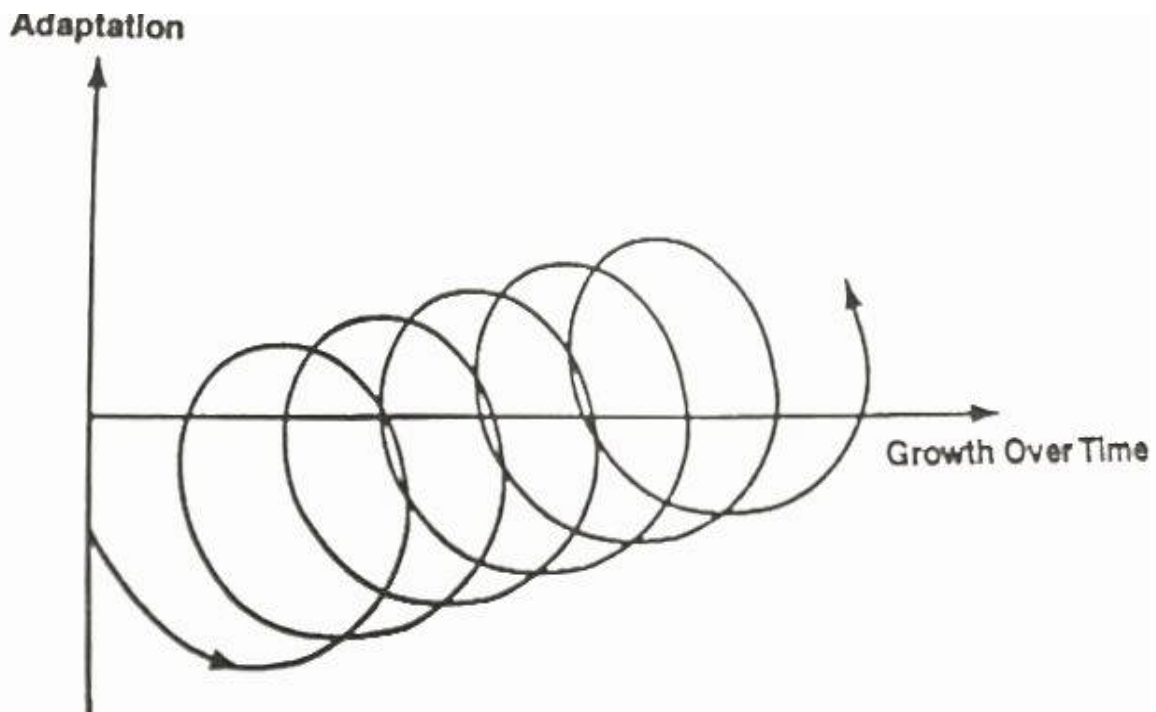
Entering a new culture, strangers come face to face with a situation and environment, which are not similar to their familiar and internalized original cultural patterns (Kim, 2001). As a result, the strangers find themselves in a situation where they need to learn new patterns and symbols to enable them to communicate with the new society (Kim, 2001). This activity of learning new things is the core of acculturation, and as the new learning is continuing, “unlearning” of some of the old cultural elements also has to happen (Burke, 1979). As long as the host environment demands that strangers learn new patterns and strangers’ internal capacity can meet these demands, the customary habits of strangers are in a process of change (Kim, 2001).

The Stress-Adaptation-Growth Dynamic

Any experience of adaptive change comes with stress as the stranger attempts to change

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

behavior to find harmony with the new environment; conflict often results from the need for acculturation and resistance to the deculturation. Gudykunst (2005) elaborated this notion of acculturation and deculturation that happens for individuals as “the push of new culture and the pull of old culture” (p. 390). Gradually, the period of stress decreases as the stranger learns new ways of handling problems (Kim, 2001). Thus stress, adaptation and growth are the highlighted elements that strangers experience over time (Kim, 2001). These factors produce a “three-pronged stress-adaptation-growth dynamic of psychological movement in the forward and upward direction of increased chances of success in meeting the demands of the host environment” (Kim, 2001, p. 56). The progression of the stress-adaptation-growth dynamic does not work in a steady and linear fashion but in a “dialectic, cyclic, and continual draw-back-to-leap pattern” as is shown in the following figure (Kim, 2001, p. 57).



CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

The stress-adaptation-Growth Dynamic figure, Kim (2001, p.57)

The Structure of Cross-Cultural Adaptation

Building on the above description and explanation of the cross-cultural adaptation process, the other part of Kim's theory is to identify the structure interconnecting adaptive changes which will help to explain the different speeds at which each stranger can adapt to a new environment (Harvey, 2007). Kim (2001) believed that some newcomers experience a kind of smooth and speedy transition while others struggle to fit into the new environment. Still there is a category of newcomers who might even refuse to accept the idea of changing their cultural habits in order to fit into the new environment (Kim, 2001).

Kim tried to explain the underlying reasons why some strangers/newcomers culturally adapt faster than others. In order to address this question, she identified a number of key dimensions and factors that influence the issue of cross-cultural adaptation as a process. These key factors include personal communication, host social communication, ethnic social communication, environmental factors, and predisposition (Harvey, 2007). According to Harvey, these factors/axioms have an impact on what Kim defined as intercultural transformation, or the process of reaching functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity. Each of these factors is briefly explained in the following section.

Personal Communication: Host Communication Competence

The successful adaptation of a stranger is realized only when their personal communication system sufficiently overlaps with those of the host society (Harvey, 2007). Ruben (1975) defined personal communication as "private symbolization and all the internal mental activities that occur in individuals that dispose and prepare them to act and react in a certain ways in actual social situations" (Cited in Kim, 2001). The stranger's capacity to receive and process

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

information sufficiently and properly (also known as decoding) and to design and produce a mental plan to initiate or respond to the message is what Kim (2001) labeled as host communication competence. Through host communication competence, the stranger can understand the way things are carried out in the host society and the way that they themselves need to think, react and behave in that society (Gudykunst, 2005). At the same time, strangers should be equipped with intercultural communication competence, “the ability to communicate in all kinds of context regardless of the specific cultural context” (Kim, 2001, p. 65).

Specifically, host communication competence can be conceptualized in terms of three interrelated types of components including cognitive, affective, and operational (Booth-Butterfield, 1981). Although the development of these components is not simultaneous and at the same speed and rate, development in one facilitates the development of the others, thus an overall balance and integration of all is expected to be achieved over time (Kincaid, Yum, Woelfel & Barnett, 1983). Each of these components is further elaborated below.

The cognitive component of the host communication competence is the mental ability to understand the meaning of different verbal and nonverbal codes (Kincaid, et al, 1983). On the whole, cognitive competence reflects the capacity to identify and understand a message in different situations of interaction with the environment (Kincaid, et al., 1983). The cognitive aspect of communication competence embraces an individual’s knowledge of the communication system, cultural understanding, and cognitive complexity (Wiseman & Koester, 1993), each of which has been briefly defined below.

Cognitive components

Cognitive competence includes knowledge of the communication systems operating in the host society (Kim, 2001). One of the most important factors of cognition in cross-cultural

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

adaptation is the knowledge of the host language; this knowledge includes not only linguistic abilities in phonetics, syntax, and vocabulary, but also involves practical information about everyday use of the language, including the many details of the way that language is spoken and interpreted in various formal and informal social interactions and engagement (Wiseman & Koester, 1993).

Language is the primary channel for strangers to adapt; therefore, the more linguistic knowledge, the greater the capability to learn new cultural issues and to engage in new social processes (Gudykunst, 2005). The development of host language competence gives psychological and social status and power to a stranger because individuals do not speak just to be understood but also “to be believed, obeyed, respected and distinguished” (Kim, 2001, p.101). Host language competence is a primary agent to enable strangers’ access to the mainstream culture of the host society and to pursue personal and social goals (Kim, 2001).

In addition to host language knowledge, the nonverbal codes of the host society help strangers to have more efficient social engagement (Wiseman & Koester, 1993). Effective communication is possible when strangers have good knowledge of not only the language but also of the existing norms, rituals and standardized behavior of the host society (Wiseman & Koester, 1993).

The verbal and nonverbal codes and rules of the host culture define the local communication rules about correct behavior (Argyle, 1975). Communication rules direct the flow of messages from individual to individual in all types of communications situations, formal, non-formal, verbal, and nonverbal (Argyle, 1975). As a result, strangers need to learn the communication rules as well as the language of the host society to be able to have a proper interaction with the new society (Kim, 2001).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Cultural Understanding

Gaining a full knowledge of the communication codes and rules of host society necessitates a broad and deep understanding of the cultural and subcultural setting. Fisher (1988) argued that strangers need to learn more than verbal and nonverbal patterns; he argues that they should also learn the cultural mindsets operating in the host environment. In order to achieve such an understanding, strangers need to acquire a deeper level of knowledge concerning the host society's historical, political, economic, religious, and educational institutions as well as its values and mutual role requirements (Gumperz, 1982).

As Wiseman (1995) explained, initially the stranger's knowledge of the host society culture tends to be simplistic, neither very deep nor particularly accurate, and this lack of understanding causes insecurity for strangers. However, through continuous social interaction with the host society, the stranger will gain a more efficient understanding of the host society culture (Wiseman, 1995). This kind of advancement is more visible in the extent of language knowledge, not only the phonemic, semantic and syntactic knowledge of language but also understanding and applying the cultural aspects of the language (Wiseman, 1995). As time passes, strangers' cultural understanding increases so they not only can understand the host society communication rules but also can implement them (Kim, 2001).

Cognitive complexity

Kim (2001) identified cognitive complexity as the third element of the cognitive aspect of communication competence. Kelly (1955) described cognitive complexity as the refinement of an individual's structural meaning; cognitive complexity addresses the structure of patterns of information processes. Development of a stranger's cognitive complexity is a time-consuming process, connected with the other indicators of cross-cultural adaptation (Wiseman & Koester,

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

1993). For example, the research of Seelye and Wasilewski (1981) on immigrants and refugees in the United States showed that as cognitive complexity increases, strangers' flexibility in interpersonal interactions also increases. Strangers expand their social interaction within their new environment when they learn and understand more complex cultural rules and patterns (Kim, 2001). Lindgren and Yu's (1975) research on Chinese immigrants in the context of the United States showed that as strangers boosted their contact with Americans, their understanding of the American culture was enhanced.

Affective components

Along with cognitive competence, affective competence is another factor that facilitates cross-cultural adaptation to enable strangers to deal with different challenges in the host society (Kim, 2001). Affective competence is reflected in willingness to learn the host language and culture and to make some changes in the stranger's original culture (Taft, 1977). Affective competence can be defined as "the stranger's ability to appreciate and empathize with the emotional and aesthetic sensibilities of the natives" (Kim, 2001, p. 108).

According to Kim's (2001) integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation, affective competence comprises three main components, including adaptation motivation, identity orientation and aesthetic orientation. Kim (2001) defined adaptation motivation as "the stranger's preparedness to participate and become functionally fit in the host environment" (p.110). Adaptation motivation influences and is influenced by how strangers visualize their relationship with the host environment (Aitken, 1973). The stranger with high adaptation motivation tries to improve their cultural knowledge of the host environment (Aitken, 1973). For example, Coelho's (1958) finding in a study on Indian students in the United States showed substantial difference in adaptation motivation between those students who intended to stay in the United States compared

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

to those who planned to return to India. Those who intended to stay had more social interaction with the host society to enhance their functional fitness.

Along with the adaptation motivation factor, identity flexibility is another influential factor in the affective component, which is one of the elements of communication competence (Wiseman, 1995). As Kim (2001) explained, if strangers have a flexible self then they will be ready to learn new cultural rules, and their defensive and critical posture toward new cultural patterns lessens. Furthermore, flexible self-orientation leads to a more active interaction between and among groups (Young, 1988). For example, Ward and Searle's (1991) research on American and Japanese business managers working overseas showed that the American business managers assessed their overseas experience more positively than their Japanese peers, and the researchers concluded that the Americans' identity flexibility was the reason for such a result.

Along with the strength of adaptation motivation and flexible identity, strangers' affective orientation is reflected in the extent to which they are able to fulfill their aesthetic needs in the host environment (Mansell, 1981). As the strangers continue their interaction with the host society, and gain exposure to different social situations, they become familiar with the host aesthetics (Kim, 2001). When strangers learn and gain better understanding of host aesthetics, they can empathize with host cultural products such as music, art, and sport, and they can also appreciate the daily cultural experience of fun, joy, happiness, and even of anger, distress and disturbance (Gudykunst, 2005).

Operational competence

Closely linked with the cognitive and affective components of the host communication competence is operational competence (Taft, 1977), which is also called behavioral competence or enactment tendencies (Buck, 1984). This competence helps strangers to “enact or express their

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

cognitive and affective experiences externally” (Kim, 2001, p. 114). During daily interaction, strangers make decisions based on their knowledge and their cognitive capacity to process their knowledge about the host culture, as well as their “motivational and attitudinal capacity to figure out situations and to join in the host emotional and aesthetic experiences” (Kim, 2001, p.115). Therefore, operational competence enables strangers to select the right combination of verbal and nonverbal behavior to make a balanced interaction with the host society (Gudykunst, 2005).

Host Social Communication

Host social communication, as an influential factor in adaptation, includes interpersonal communication and mass communication (Wiseman, 1995). Host interpersonal communication refers to interaction at the interpersonal level between strangers and individuals of the host culture, while host mass communication works as a means to distribute and perpetuate the host culture to strangers (Harvey, 2007). Both traditional media such as radio, television, and newspapers and also non media-based institutions such as schools, shopping centers, theaters or any public place where communication takes place are included under mass communication (Harvey, 2007).

Ethnic Social Communication

Another influential factor in adaptation is ethnic social communication that can be broken down into the same categories as host social communication; that is, interpersonal communication and mass communication (Gudykunst, 2005). In many current societies and communities, strangers’ interpersonal communication and mass communication activities include their co-ethnic or co-national and home cultural experiences as well (Gudykunst, 2005).

Environment

To the extent that strangers participate in host social communication including

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

interpersonal and mass communication activities, the host society exerts an influence on strangers' adaptation processes (Wiseman, 1995). Three environmental conditions -- host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group strength (Kim, 2001) -- are important factors in strangers' adaptation processes based on Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation. The eagerness of the host culture to provide opportunities for strangers to take part in social communication is called host receptivity (Almeida, 2012). Along with receptivity, host conformity pressure varies across societies and communities (Gudykunst, 2005). Host conformity pressure refers to "the extent to which environment challenges strangers to act in accordance with the normative patterns of host culture and its communication system" (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 388). The extent of host environment receptivity and its conformity pressure is linked to ethnic group strength which can be defined as the capacity of the strangers' ethnic group to influence the surrounding host environment (Kim, 2001).

Predisposition

The fifth influential factor in adaptation based on Kim's integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation is predisposition, referring to the personal state of strangers when they arrive in the host culture (Harvey, 2007). Predisposition illustrates what type of background and experiences strangers have before joining the host culture (Harvey, 2007). Kim (2001) clarified predisposition as a readiness to change, ethnic closeness, and adaptive personality.

Intercultural Transformation

As strangers experience a progression of internal change, they undergo a set of recognizable change in their habitual patterns of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses (Gudykunst, 2005). Through deculturation and acculturation processes, some old habits of strangers are then replaced by some new ones, and gradually strangers gain a proficiency in self-

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

expression that empowers them to fulfill their social needs appropriately (Gudykunst, 2005). Kim (2001) believed that three interrelated aspects of the intercultural transformation involving functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity are essential to outcomes of cross-cultural adaptation.

Through continuous new cultural learning and self-organizing and reorganizing, “strangers achieve an increasing synchrony between internal responses and external demands of the host environment” (Kim, 2001, p. 190). If strangers adapt successfully, then they can make a satisfactory relationship with the host environment, resulting in the functional fitness of strangers in the host environment (Kim, 2001).

Many researchers (e.g., Dyle, 1981; Huhr & Kim, 1981; Kino, 1973) have shown that psychological health increases with development of strangers’ functional fitness (Harvey, 2007). Additionally associated with the growth of functional fitness and psychological well being in strangers, the phenomenon of intercultural identity emerges, “an identity that is increasingly richer in content and more complex in structure” (Kim, 2001, p. 191).

Intercultural Identity

The term intercultural identity thus refers to an acquired identity formed after the early childhood enculturation process through the individual’s communicative interaction with a new cultural environment (Kim, 2001). Hall (1976) argued that when the original cultural identity gradually loses its distinctive and rigid form, an expanded and flexible definition of self emerges. Identity is shaped not only by the influence of culture during childhood, but also the later contacts in the new cultural environment impact the identity formation procedure. Scholars such as Waterman, (1992) and Phinney (1993) indicated that identity is not a state; rather it is a continuous evolutionary process, which is moving toward psychological integration and health.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Adler (1982) argued that the development of an intercultural identity places strangers in the position of constantly negotiating with their surroundings.

Internalizing new cultural elements causes strangers to transfer from “the passive self, based on ascription, to an actively constructed and achieved self, based on learning” (Kim, 2001, p. 191), or what Kim (2001) called transformation from cultural identity to an intercultural identity. Just as cultural identity links individuals to a specific culture, intercultural identity links people to more than one culture and to humanity itself (Gudykunst, 2005). Therefore, strangers can better experience different cultural worlds with a greater capacity for making choices in different situations rather than just acting based on the dictated norms of the cultures of their childhood (Kim, 2001).

As individuals become capable in two or more cultures and gain a more inclusive group identity, they will then be able to make a better, more rational comparison between themselves and different cultural systems (Kim, 2001). Overall, intercultural identity is a “special kind of orientation toward self, other and indeed, the world” (Kim, 2001, p. 195). Furthermore, Gudykunst (2005) indicated that the notion of intercultural identity focuses on the expanded psychological orientation beyond national and ethnic boundaries.

Conclusion

Human beings have a natural tendency to adapt to new environmental challenges that threaten their “internal equilibrium” (Gudykunst, 2005, p. 394). The conceptual framework presented here aims to situate the subject of this thesis, young Afghan refugees returning from Iran to Kabul City, Afghanistan and the notion of their cultural adaptation in the unfamiliar environment of Afghanistan. To better understand the returnees’ experience, literature was reviewed that focused on describing relevant concepts including acculturation, cross-cultural

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

adaptation, influential factors existing prior to acculturation, pluralistic society, communication competence, and intercultural identity.

Among different approaches to the issue of cross-cultural adaptation, the theory of Young Yun Kim, integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation, was selected as the main conceptual framework for this thesis. To better understand why Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation has been selected as the guiding theory for this thesis, the main features of the theory have been explained along with a rationale and justification for selecting this theory.

Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation illuminated the process of adapting to a new cultural environment (Gudykunst, 2005). During the process of cross-cultural adaption, which ultimately results in intercultural transformation in strangers, increasing levels of functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity development occur within strangers (Kim, 2001). Kim (2001) believed that cross-cultural adaptation is influenced by various factors of environment and the predisposition of strangers. Also, host communication competence, interpersonal communication activities, and mass communication activities of individuals within and outside of their ethnic community are influential factors on strangers' cross-cultural adaptation processes (Kim, 2001).

The terms applied in Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation is generic terms (Harvey, 2007). For example, the term 'strangers' in Kim's theory incorporates the existing terms of immigrants, refugees, sojourners and also returnees (Gudykunst, 2005). And also, Kim's theory combines the two previously separate areas of long term and short term adaptation (Harvey, 2007). Kim believes that since adaptation is a continuous developmental process, the distinction between short term and long term seems theoretically irrelevant (Kim, 2001).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Employing the dynamic of stress adaptation and growth, Kim's theory has integrated the two different perspectives of cultural shock phenomenon that emphasize the problematic nature of cross-cultural adaptation experience and, on the other side, the notion of learning and growth in the processes of cultural adaptation (Gudykunst, 2005).

Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation is a multifaceted and multidimensional theory which has brought together macro-level into micro level analysis (Harvey, 2007). Kim has tried to investigate the issue of ethnic community, interethnic relation, social integration and ethnicity (macro level) and also the intrapersonal issues such as cultural shock reactions, psychological adjustment, attitude toward the host society and culture learning (micro level) (Gudykunst, 2005). Haslberger (2005) argued, studies which consider multidimensional aspects (McEvoy & Parker, 1995; Mendenhall & Oddou, 1991; Kim, 1988, 2001) to adjustment are superior to ones that only explore certain aspects in isolation, such as behavioral, emotional, cultural or environmental (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1988; Grove & Torbiorn, 1985; Oberg, 1960).

In addition to what has been mentioned about Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation, this theory has tried to explain that cross-cultural adaptation is something that happens naturally and inevitably through the channels of communication, as strangers learn new cultural rules (acculturation) while some of the strangers' original cultural patterns lose their relevance in their daily life activities (deculturation) (Harvey, 2007).

In the end, based on Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation, the reality is of the experiences and accompanying changes in individuals who are living in an environment different from their familiar original society (Gudykunst, 2005). There is no doubt that cross-cultural adaptation happens (Wiseman, 1995), and the theory presented here also confirms this phenomenon (Kim, 2001). When the reality of undeniable cross-cultural

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

adaptation is understood, then it is the choice of individuals as to what extent they are willing to undertake the new cultural changes during their cross-cultural adaptation process (Kim, 2001).

Finally based on the above literature review, the following research questions were developed to guide this thesis to study the nature of the adaptation process of young Afghan refugees returning from Iran to Afghanistan from a prolonged exile life:

RQ1: What are the challenges that the young Afghans returning from Iran to Afghanistan experienced during their adaptation process?

RQ2: What are the strategies and mechanisms utilized by the young Afghans returning from Iran to Afghanistan in order to adapt to the new environment?

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section provides an overview of the research method that was used to conduct this study. First, the qualitative research method and online interviewing are discussed, demonstrating why this particular research strategy was employed. Next, language for data collection, recruitment of participants, my role as researcher, sampling and thematic analysis, the ethical considerations, and data reliability and validity are outlined to explain the approach chosen for this thesis.

Overview of the Research Method

As Korzenny noted, “there are no proven cross-cultural or intercultural communication research methods” (1984, p. 92). Qualitative research is one of two leading methodological approaches used across different disciplines to explain social phenomena (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Qualitative research methodology is helpful in studying and understanding an individual or group’s perspectives (Creswell, 2009). The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The method provides information about the human side of an issue; that is, often-contradictory behaviours, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals (Creswell, 2009).

Ryan (2001) explained, “Qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values” (p. 1). Based on this definition, the focus of qualitative research is on the data generated and/or used in this inquiry, which is in the format of text, images, and sounds. Essentially, the data in qualitative research are nonnumeric and less structured data than those generated through quantitatively oriented inquiry, because the data collection process itself is less

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

structured, more flexible, and inductive (Gibbs, 2007). Furthermore, the qualitative inquiry procedure involves creating research questions, collecting data, analyzing the data inductively “from particulars to general themes,” and interpreting and reporting on the material (Creswell, 2009, p. 4).

Quantitative and qualitative methods are two valid ways of gathering research, often complementing one another. In the qualitative method, researchers use multiple methods and means to collect rich, descriptive, contextually situated data in order to seek an understanding of human experience or relationships within a system or culture (Silverman, 1999). The scope of this research is about humans’ social interactions, studying their adaptation to a new society from the cultural perspective. Qualitative inquiry was considered a proper methodology to conduct the research, especially through applying computer-mediated communication (CMC).

The practical benefits of incorporating CMC into qualitative research include allowing the researcher to contact hard to reach populations and those who might be difficult to work with on a face-to-face basis (Coomber, 1997). The target audience for this research was returnees, that is, those who had repatriated from Iran to Kabul City in Afghanistan. Unfortunately, travelling to Kabul City was considered very risky and expensive, not only because of the uncertain security situation in Afghanistan, but also because I did not have access to a base to conduct my research living in Kabul City at the time of data gathering.

CMC is a language mode “which enables the qualitative researcher to benefit from, a level of interpersonal involvement associated with oral interaction and the elaboration and expansion of thought associated with writing” (Mann & Stewart, 2000, p.189). The Internet makes possible a number of types of CMC including real time chat or synchronous CMC, which is an interchange of messages between two or more individuals simultaneously logged on different computers (Mann & Stewart, 2000). Asynchronous CMC involves most email systems

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

that allow the online message recipients to read, reply, print, forward or file the message (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Collecting data in both oral and written forms is one of the advantages of data collection through CMC (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

Voice and video via Internet is another possible research tool, which many researchers find to be a proper medium for their study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Internet research is not concerned with online behavior, what people do in the virtual and mediated environment; rather, it is concerned with using computer-based tools and computer-accessible populations to study social issues in general (Walther, 1999). Some examples of this latter use include Stewart and Eckermann's (1999) study of the issue of youth and health risk and Anders' work in an international examination of women with disabilities and education (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In both cases, researchers used CMC to minimize the constraint of time and space (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Allowing researchers to interview people in other continents facilitates the participation of those who might otherwise have been inhibited due to disability or financial constraint (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

Interviews

Data for this thesis was collected through interviews with Afghan returnees who had lived in Afghanistan for more than three years, and had returned to Kabul City from Iran. There were several reasons why participants were selected from Kabul City. First, this city has the highest number of returnees from Iran. According to Hayat et al. (2005) more than 41% of returnees are living in the cities of Kabul and Herat. Kabul is one of the fastest growing cities in the world (Kilroy, 2007, p.3). Its population was 400,000 in the 1970s and has increased to 5 million in 2010 (Ahad, 2010). Many thousands of rural-urban immigrants and Afghan returnees from neighboring and other countries are being added each year (Ahad, 2010).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Conducting interviews is an effective method to gain insight into people's experiences, ideas, opinions and views (Miller & Crabtree, 2004). Interviews are an organized way to talk and listen to people and also a proper tool to access people's inner perceptions about a phenomenon or an issue (Kvale, 1996). Through interviews, the data are collected from the respondents; Levy and Hollan (1998) defined respondents as people who willingly discuss the "characteristics, beliefs, experiences, and behavior" (p.334).

Interviews are divided into three categories: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Harrell & Bradely, 2009). The semi-structured type was applied in this study. In this technique, the respondents find the time to talk about their opinions on a particular subject through an interview, and the focus is on understanding each respondent's point of view, instead of making a generalization (Knox & Burkard, 2009). The semi-structured type allows the interview subjects to speak freely about their experiences, while at the same time, allowing for follow-up questions to obtain more information or to clarify uncertainties. According to Liamputtong & Ezzy (2006), the semi-structured interview ranges between the "fixed questions and forced responses of surveys" and the "open-ended and exploratory" interview with no fixed schedule (p. 56). It is a way of exploring the interpretations of others while recognizing the role of the interviewer as a participant in the interview process

Another feasible way to conduct an interview is online; again, this method is divided into different types such as asynchronous or synchronous, public or semi-private (Mann & Stewart, 2002). Many Internet interviews such as email exchange include text which influences the procedure of data collection and analysis, while face to face interviewing mainly does not include text (Kazmer & Xie, 2008). For instance, Internet interviews can preserve more contextual naturalness because "participants can use language the way they do in most of their everyday interactions" (Kazmer & Xie, 2008, p. 80), but this is not possible in face-to-face interviews

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

(Mann & Stewart 2002, p. 604). Furthermore, it does not matter if the recipient is not at home or is asleep when the email is sent because the interviewee can read the message at a convenient time (Mann & Stewart, 2000). Increasing the number of email interviews does not add to the cost, and the attachment feature makes possible sound and other text transferring facilities (Mann & Stewart, 2000). In spite of these advantages, the lack of real time communication is sometimes referred to as a drawback for email interviews (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

“Chat” is a “generic term for real time communication using computers and Internet, which is also known as synchronous communication” (Mann & Stewart, 2000, p.11). An online chat can be done either through texting, or verbally using a camera to allow video chatting so that people can see each other as they are talking to each other (Mann & Stewart, 2000).

Different features of CMC including online talking through Skype, email exchanging and online text chatting were integrated in data collection.

Language

The interviews were conducted in Dari and were transcribed by the researcher to identify common themes for further analysis. Although this process was time-consuming, the researcher took this step because “it is important to initiate the process of analysis of the material as a whole, and from there start to identify common themes, so no material gets lost” (Seidman, 2006, p. 115). The transcribed interviews were then translated into English by the researcher for further investigation and identification of themes.

Reliability and Validity of Data

Although reliability and validity are two notions more frequently associated with quantitative studies, these principles of evaluating research also apply to qualitative studies

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

(Neuman, 2004). Validity is checking “the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures,” and reliability is making sure that “the researcher’s approach is consistent across different researchers and different projects” (Gibbs, 2007, cited in Creswell, 2009, p. 190).

In order to ensure accuracy in the transcriptions, the researcher emailed the transcribed interviews back to the interviewees. In a qualitative inquiry, the researcher deals with mainly people’s ideas and opinions about a phenomena; therefore, testing the credibility of research is a main concern for any researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). McCall and Simmons (1969) believed that applying proper strategies against potentially invalidating factors improves the probability of credible findings.

One of the invalidating factors that can arise is bias on the part of either researcher or respondents. Such a problem may arise from wrong impressions formed by the researcher both in the early and later phases of research; these wrong impressions may derive from an incorrect first impression, slavish adherence to hypotheses worked out earlier, or a role and status differential (Guba & Lincoln, 1981). The respondents may also introduce distortions simply out of their desire to be helpful (Guba & Lincoln, 1981).

House (1978) proposed some tactics to overcome these possible distortions. One applicable tactic for this research project was member checks. According to House (1978), member checks involve taking data and interpretation to the sources from which they were drawn and asking directly whether they find the results plausible. This tactic is the backbone of satisfying the truth-value criterion (House, 1978). The researcher repeatedly conducted member checks by sharing the transcribed interviews by email exchanges or by talking online. However, to avoid an inappropriate response, I tried to keep the interviewees unaware of the fact that I was doing a member check.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

For reliability, I tried to collect data (conducting interviews and recording data) in a consistent manner, using the same process for each participant. Furthermore, I am aware that as an Afghan returnee from Iran to Kabul City, my personal background could have an influence on my data analysis, and to add more accuracy to my research findings, I tried to engage in honest and open self-reflection prior to and during writing. I kept a journal to write down my impressions of biases as they occurred during both the interviews and data analysis.

Recruitment Process and Interview Sessions

Recruitment was done by posting messages about my research on online social networks, especially Facebook. I also sent emails to friends and related organizations such as IOM (International Organization for Migration) and to the Afghan Ministry of Immigration and Repatriation to share my recruitment message with Afghan returnees from Iran living in Kabul City to recruit participants from various ethnic groups. This latter step was important because a majority of the individuals who primarily contacted me belonged to the Hazara ethnic group, while Afghan refugees in Iran come from several different ethnic groups (Abbasi-Shavazi et al., 2008).

As soon as I posted a message on my Facebook page to inform my friends about my research and the need to find participants, I received three messages from contacts that confirmed their interest in participating in the study. I then sent the consent form via their emails, and two days later they confirmed their participation and also the appropriate time to do the interviews. One of the interviews went very well, but the second participant's Internet speed did not allow any voice chat. Therefore, I was forced to transfer the conversation to a textual format, real time chat. During text chat, if any sentence seemed unclear or ambiguous, I typed out for the interviewee my understanding to prevent any misinterpretation. This successful text chatting

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

inspired me to use this technique and email exchanges in addition to voice chat for further interviews.

The interviews were scheduled cooperatively between interviewees and the researcher, at the convenience of the interviewees. In order to provide the researcher with a way to refer back to the interviews, all of them were audio-recorded. For all email exchanges, I had no doubt about who said what since the textual data were directly linked to each individual's email address and thus were easy to find. I also saved all the data received through email and online chatting in a dedicated folder in my laptop, which constantly was backed up in an external hard disk to prevent any possible data loss. During recording, there was no way to maintain anonymity of the participants; however as researcher, I guaranteed confidentiality, and this commitment was clearly stated in the consent form that had to be signed by both parties. An assigned number identified each participant in the analysis and results sections of this thesis. For instance, the first participant will be referred to as Participant 1 (P1) and so forth, up to 10. Finally, the researcher transcribed each interview for further analysis.

Participants and Sampling

Potential participants were selected from those who had lived in Iran more than 10 years and had repatriated voluntarily to Afghanistan. Being between 18 to 40 years of age and living in Kabul City were two other criteria for eligibility. The rationale for the age criteria was that the participants had to be in the category of youth.

The researcher recruited 16 participants based on snowball sampling. Snowball sampling, also known as "chain referral sampling, is nonprobability method of survey sample selection that is commonly used to locate rare or difficult to find population" (Johnson, 2009, p.1). In snowball

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

sampling, the researcher finds accessible participants and requests those participants to identify other appropriate potential participants (Ross, 2005). Snowball sampling is also defined as “a method for identifying and sampling the cases in a network” (Neuman, 2004,p. 140). This is very similar to a purposive sample selection, but it is used when the researcher has challenges with accessing a population pool (Ross, 2005). In this method, the members of the population have more access to each other than to the researcher (Johnson, 2009).

Lindlof & Taylor (2002) explained that a researcher could manage snowball sampling in ways to increase the sample’s diversity. For example Espiritu (2001) succeeded in obtaining a pool nearly a hundred Filipinos immigrants living in United States with different socioeconomic backgrounds ranging from “poor working class immigrants to educated professional who thrived in middle or upper class neighborhood” (cited in Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 126).

However, only 12 interviews, with six males and six females, were transcribed for analysis. After the first interview session, two participants withdrew as they found their participation very time consuming, and two of the interviews were not sufficiently complete to be suitable for this study.

My Role as Researcher

As a researcher, my role was to act as a channel to convey the findings of my data gathering (Creswell, 2009). I made every effort to maintain a neutral position throughout the data gathering and analysis. However, I was aware that, as Creswell & Miller (2000) explained, any researcher has his or her self-interest in the subject of study, and it is hard to be completely unbiased (cited in Creswell, 2009, p.196).

I lived as a returnee in Kabul for several years, and this experience helped me as a researcher. Locke et al (1987) believed that “the researcher’s contribution to the research setting

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

can be useful and positive rather than detrimental” (cited in Creswell, 2009, p.196). For example, during the recruitment procedure, the optional participants had a more cooperative attitude when they found out that I had experiences similar to theirs.

In order to gain the trust and cooperation of the participants, first of all I made clear that the focus of the research is on the cultural aspects of Afghan returnees’ life in Afghanistan, rather than the political relations between the two neighboring countries of Afghanistan and Iran. Secondly, I emphasized that I would respect their confidentiality and points of view to make sure that they felt comfortable enough to explain and share their ideas and views freely. Thirdly, I made a commitment that their interviews would not be shared with any organizations or other individuals.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to engaging with any respondents in this thesis, the researcher received permission from the Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Ottawa where this study was completed. The REB is responsible for holding researchers accountable for their projects as well as to ensure participants that there are minimum risks in participating in studies. For this thesis, the researcher presented to the REB a comprehensive thesis proposal, a participants’ recruitment statement, and a detailed list of interview questions that explained how the participants would be recruited, how their confidentiality would be respected, and how their name would be kept anonymous during the thesis writing. The REB determined that risks with this study were minimal. On the matter of voluntariness as a main ethical concern, the researcher who executed this study with respect to each participant, ensured that each of the participants had the right to drop out of this research project at any time, both while doing interviews and later.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Data Analysis

Data analysis is “the process of labeling and breaking down (or decontextualizing) raw data and then reconstructing them into categories, patterns, themes, concepts, and propositions” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011, p. 243). In qualitative research approach, data analysis systematically starts with the creation of categories and coding pattern (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Regarding data analysis in a qualitative research, Keyton (2006) explained, the data analysis process begins with data collection process. After each interview was completed, the researcher immediately transcribed the recorded dialogue. Once interviews were transcribed, the researcher read the participants’ responses to each question. Following that the researcher compared the responses to find frequently mentioned concepts and themes. As Schmidt (2004) advocated, care was taken to consider how each individual articulated and understood his or her experiences, as well as the meaning of the concepts and themes raised.

The researcher applied thematic data analyses in this thesis to analyze the data gathered through interviews. Ryan and Bernard (2000) stated that thematic analyses move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes. Codes are then typically developed to represent the identified themes applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000).

To define code and coding, Gibbs’s (2007) explained, “codes are simply a way of organizing your thinking about the text and your research notes” (p. 39), and coding is a fundamental analytic process for many types of qualitative research. However, terms such as index, category and, theme are also used to refer to code (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). For example, scholars such as Richie and Lewis (2003) have used the term index, as they believed that code refers to one or more passages in the text about the same topic in the same way that entries in a

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

book index refer to passages in that book. Some other writers such as Dey (1993) have used the term category. Gibbs (2007) explained these terms are also used in both quantitative and qualitative research. Smith (1995) stated that the terms index and category are more common in the context of quantitative research rather than qualitative research. Gibbs (2007) explained, “Coding consists of identifying one or more passages of text that exemplifies some thematic ideas and linking them with a code or theme, which is a shorthand reference to the thematic idea” (Gibbs, 2007, p. 54). Further study of the themes results in a development of interpretive positions, which then enables the researcher to perceive what the participants meant (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

Generally speaking, thematic analysis is a very useful method to capture the complexities of meaning within a textual data set. It is also the most commonly used method of analysis in qualitative research (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). However, reliability is of greater concern with thematic analysis than with word-based analyses because more interpretation goes into defining the data items (i.e., codes) as well as applying the codes to blocks of text (Guest, et al., 2012). According to Gibbs (2007), reading, listening to, and summarizing the raw data several times will improve the reliability of a thematic analysis.

This chapter outlined the research method applied in this thesis, explaining the underlying reasons for selecting qualitative approach and using doing interview for data collecting. The ethical considerations, recruitment of participants, interview process, data reliability and validity, as well as the data analysis were discussed. The following chapter will present the results and findings of data gathered through interviews with 12 young Afghan refugees returning from Iran to Afghanistan and living in Kabul City during data collection for this thesis.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter explains the results of interviews. To gain a better data analysis, all interviews were transcribed and, later the transcribed data were read through three times to ensure the accuracy of transcription. In case of any doubt in proper understanding and interpretation of what participants meant, the researcher attempted to contact the participants for further clarification of their comments. Also the researcher sorted the interview questions into four categories of individual's background, repatriation experience, daily life, and the degree of adaptation to accelerate the process of analysis. The transcribed answers to each question were then printed to make easier the further analysis of data. A second photocopy of all transcripts was made to cut off the answers to each question and to paste all answers in one separate sheet in order to have a better comparison among all responses from the 12 participants. The researcher identified common themes emerging from the responses, and the details of these themes are explained in the appendix (E).

Considering the research questions, the emergent themes were reorganized and categorized as language knowledge, cultural knowledge, ethnic discrimination and environmental challenges to identify the difficulties that returnees experienced after their repatriation to Afghanistan. Using mass media, social interaction, and keeping an open mind were the emergent themes, which pointed to the strategies that the returnees applied to overcome those challenges. Each of these themes will be explained fully in this chapter.

The results of the interviewing process and data analysis are presented largely in the form of interview excerpts. As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) explained, there is no need for the researcher to speak on behalf of the participants, as they are perfectly capable of speaking for themselves. Therefore, I have included rich quotes where needed to help clarify how participants made sense

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

of their procedures to adapt to a new environment. Where less critical, summaries of responses are provided, drawing on concise and relevant participant quotes.

Considering the fact that the researcher had gone through the same process of adaptation when she returned to Afghanistan from Iran, the researcher took great care and interest to analyze the gathered data from participants' experiences. While some aspects of experience discussed by participants resonated with the researcher's personal experience, other experiences did not. Although complete objectivity is impossible, still as a researcher, I verified findings against other participants' experiences to avoid personal bias, or focusing on the extreme or the abnormal. The researcher has attempted to highlight overall tendencies as well as differences to provide readers a sense of which perceptions and experiences were common to the group.

To understand the essential nature of adaptation of Afghan immigrants returning from Iran and living in Kabul City, the researcher drew insights from various sources and perspectives, but Kim's integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation remains the main framework, which guides the process of understanding adaptation of returnees in the context of Kabul City. To fully address the research questions, this chapter begins with a review of participants' background and demographic information, repatriation experience (from Iran to Afghanistan), daily life experience in Kabul City, the issue of language proficiency among young Afghan returnees from Iran to Afghanistan, returnees' cultural knowledge in the new environment of Kabul City, and the question of new environmental challenges as well as the strategies that Afghan returnees used to adapt to Kabul City environment.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Participants' Background Information

Code	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Place of Birth	Years living in Iran	Years Living in Afghanistan ⁸
P1	F	21	Hazara	Iran – Mashhad	17	4
P2	M	34	Tajik	Afghanistan- Kabul	20	10
P3	F	26	Hazara	Afghanistan- Bamiyan	21	3
P4	F	24	Hazara	Afghanistan- Daikundi	18	5
P5	M	28	Pashtun	Afghanistan- Kandahar	17	9
P6	M	25	Torkman	Afghanistan – Mazre-Sharif	14	11
P7	M	27	Tajik	Afghanistan- Kabul	15	12
P8	F	31	Hazara	Afghanistan- Gazni	27	4
P9	F	19	Tajik	Iran- Tehran	15	4

⁸ Some of participants had lived in Pakistan before migrating to Iran

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

P10	F	25	Hazara	Afghanistan- Bamiyan	20	5
P11	M	24	Hazara	Afghanistan- Samangan	18	6
P12	M	33	Pashtun	Afghanistan- Kabul	15	14

Regarding the language that participants used in their daily conversation, a majority (10 participants) mentioned that they spoke in the Dari language; one participant specified the Hazaragi dialect as the dominant language in her daily conversation; and another participant cited Farsi as her main language. When the researcher asked about the reason the participant spoke in Farsi, the participant explained “I like the Dari language, but it is not as complete as the Iranian Farsi language, so I cannot express my ideas as I would like; I have to use one word instead of its sub concepts or I have to use many English words since there is no relevant Dari for that.”

Repatriation experience

Repatriation is not just about returning, but involves a complex, long-term and gradual process of reintegration and reconciliation (Long, 2010). When individuals return to the country of their origin after a long exile life, they would face various material and emotional difficulties after repatriation (Saito, 2009).

In response to the difficulties that participants had experienced after their repatriation from Iran to Afghanistan and presently in Kabul City, the common challenges were lack of job opportunities, difficulty in finding the proper accommodation to live in, lack of daily life amenities such as water, electricity, heat for winter, proper public transportation systems,

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

insecurity, corruption in almost all governmental and even non-governmental sectors (bribery and nepotism are taken for granted both among high state officials and the general population), and cultural and language difficulties. Interestingly, cultural challenges were cited most often by female participants and also by three of the male participants. However, all male and female participants had faced cultural and language difficulties to some extent, as will be explained later. One participant described the practical difficulties encountered on returning to Kabul:

When I arrived in Kabul City (five years ago), I needed to find a place to live with my family, my wife and my four-year-old daughter. I started to search for an apartment with the help of some friends. It took me almost a month and half to find a place, and it still was very far from my workplace. Many of the houses did not have a piped water system, and you had to pump water from a well located in the yard of the house. And the new houses, which were modern and well equipped, were very expensive to rent and beyond what I could afford. I think I cannot afford to buy a house in Kabul City at least in the next seven or eight years; it is very expensive. Maybe if I find work with a good salary (3000\$ monthly), I can buy a two-bedroom house in a not very expensive area". P7 sighed and continued, "but it all depends on security; I am hoping there will be no more war" (Participant 7).

Language and cultural knowledge were the common themes that many referred to. P10 (a female participant) explained:

Afghan mindsets and attitudes toward females are what bothered me a lot, and they are still a big problem for me. Sometimes I think I am not the same human being as a man is. Here (in Kabul City), the society is man-dominated and a woman does not have so many rights. It seems as if we, the women, are created just to give birth and do house work.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Other common challenges were tribalism attitudes and ethnic discrimination found to be among the dominant social norms in Afghanistan among almost all Afghan people.

Friends and family members who were still living in Iran were missed most by many participants. For example, Participant 1 told the researcher, “ I am happy that I am in Afghanistan although in Iran the level of life was much better than here, with more facilities and a cleaner environment Still I had no rights in Iran; I could not work or [...]. The only thing that I really miss is my friends who are there and my sister and her family who still lives in Iran.” Other participants elaborated on this theme of missing family members:

I know that I belong here since here is my country; I am Afghan. Still, I miss all my childhood experiences such as the school that I went to, the street that I lived on when I was a child and even the playground near our home in Iran. But this is so sad that I cannot go to Iran often as, Iranian do not issue a visa easily. Last year when I had a trip to Iran, I enjoyed visiting my friends a lot, but also I experienced many bad behaviors from Iranians; they looked down on me as an Afghan, which made me crazy (Participant 6).

There are many things about Iran that I miss. Since I have spent most of the best time of my life, childhood, in Iran but still I do not feel like living in Iran again. To be honest, I have the contrary feelings of missing and also trying to not miss Iran (weird). Sometimes I wish that my parents had never immigrated to Iran or at least had gone to another country (Participant 11)

Daily Life experiences in Kabul City

A majority of participants indicated that they tried to communicate with both categories: returnees and those Afghans who had never left Afghanistan. These participants do not stick just

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

with returnees from Iran. However, they revealed that they felt more comfortable with returnees as they had more in common and could understand each other better.

Spending time with family members, visiting friends, reading books, listening music, hanging out with friends were the main activities that the participants listed that they did during their free time. Participant 4 explained, “I mainly try to communicate with people to learn more about here and sometimes visit different exhibitions that are held in Kabul City.” One participant explained the difficulties associated with common pastimes:

I like to go out but here in Kabul there is not so much to do for women. Once I went to a family park with some of my girlfriends, and we could not stay very long as people were looking at us strangely. There is some very nice sightseeing out of Kabul City but due to security issues, people do not go there so often. I mainly spend my free time with my family and visiting friends (Participant 9).

From those who watched Afghan TV channels (9 participants), they mainly watched Tolo TV and Tamadon TV. P6 explained, “I watched Afghan TV more in the first year of my arrival in Kabul City as I needed to improve my language and cultural knowledge, but now I do not watch a lot. Just my daughter watches Tamadon and Tolo TVs, the kids’ program, which show mainly cartoons.” Participant 8 stated, “I do not watch Afghan TV as the programs are of a very low quality, and I have bought a dish antenna and watch other countries’ channels.” In response to question whether the returnees still watch any Iranian TV/radio channels, the majority of participants answered that they did not watch Iranian TV, but two participants told the researcher that they watched Iranian TV for the educational programs and sometimes the TV comedy shows. Participant 2 explained, “I like Mehran Modiri’s (an Iranian director) serials.”

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Out of 12 participants, 10 said that they did not follow Iranian news. Participant 3 explained, “I have no interest in Iranian affairs, and since now I am living in Kabul City, I do not feel the need to know about what is going on in Iran. However, I watch news about Iran through Afghan Medias.” Two participants mentioned they followed the news about Iran through the Internet. Participant 4 indicated, “my sister and her family live in Iran, and as you might know the policy of subsidy removal has increased the cost of living for Afghans in Iran, plus the international sanctions against Iran influence Afghans’ life too as the prices go higher”.

Language proficiency

In regard to language proficiency, many participants observed that when they arrived in Afghanistan, they could not speak Dari very well, and learned it informally on a daily basis. Four participants further explained that they mainly spoke the Dari language with a Kabuli accent, but using many words from the Iranian Farsi vocabulary, and this practice distinguished them from indigenous Afghan people.

I use Dari language in my daily conversation. At the early stage of my repatriation, I mainly spoke in Iranian Farsi but later I tried a lot to speak in Dari with Kabuli accent. Although my family mainly talk in their regional language (Ghandehari, Pashtu language with Ghandehari accent) still they frequently use some Iranian vocabulary words and idioms in their daily conversation. I have tried a lot to speak Dari as fluently as a person from Kabul but I need more time and practice (laughing). When I am with friends who have come from Iran, we mainly switch to Iranian Farsi. To be honest, we do not speak Farsi the same way as we did when we were in Iran. It is an Iranian Farsi language but with some Dari vocabulary. For example, I have almost forgotten the word “Khiyaban” (Farsi word for “street”) and mainly use “sarak” (Dari word for “street”). (Participant 5)

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Two participants explained that the different meanings of the same word in two languages, Farsi and Dari, led to misunderstanding between the returnees and Afghans who did not emigrate. Participant 10 stated that once he needed A4-sized paper for his printer and by habit he used the Farsi word for it, “Kaghaz Achar”, which caused great confusion for the listener because the second component of this word, “Achar”, means a type of pickle in Dari. Participant 3 narrated her experience below:

My parents are not in Kabul City so I have to share an apartment with two other girls. Once a friend who knew this fact wanted to know with whom I share my apartment. Responding to her, I used the common Iranian word of “bacheha” which caused an unbelievable misunderstanding. My friend thought that I shared my apartment with two other boys since in Dari language, the word “bacheha” only refers to boys not both boys and girls as in Farsi.

Two participants who had experienced difficulty in language claimed that the semantic structure of the Dari language is poorer than Iranian Farsi. They believed the common Dari in Kabul City has borrowed many words from the English language and some from Arabic, Pashtu and other ethnic languages in Afghanistan. The fact that those borrowed words had Farsi equivalents and the majority of Dari speakers did not know the Farsi words, made Dari speaking more challenging and unpleasant for returnees. Participant 11 noted this experience:

I like Dari language but still I cannot express myself very well when talking. I think Dari language that the majority of people in Kabul speak is not as comprehensive and integrative as Iranian Farsi language. I have to use the same word many times, one word instead of its sub concepts, or use many English words since there is no relevant Dari for them. Because the Farsi language is rich in semantics, I do not need to use English words or repeat the same words many times in my conversation.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Studies of Mohanty and Perregaux (1997) comparing Swedish-Finnish bilingual children and Swedish monolingual children between the ages of five to seven have also shown that the bilingual children have a smaller vocabulary than monolingual children. However, American bilingual children have greater cognitive flexibility, better perceptual skills and tend to be divergent thinkers as compared with monolingual children between the ages of five to ten. The Afghan returnees have grown up in the monolingual country of Iran where, based on its constitution, Farsi/ Persian is the only national language, the Persian culture is firmly grounded, and there are not very many venues through which other ethnicities can preserve their own culture. In contrast, the Afghanistan environment not only allows individuals to maintain their customs and speak their native language, but also many other languages, ethnic groups and regions are intertwined in Afghanistan (Ghubar 1981). As Participant 4 expressed it:

I do not have a lot of problems with understanding people except the times that they use idioms or talk with a local/ regional dialect, but many Afghans have experienced difficulty in understanding me, especially when I talk fast or sometimes they (“stayees”, that is people who never left Afghanistan) do not like the way that I talk. For example, some Afghans girls believe that I talk in a vocal soft tone, which is annoying for them, but I think I just speak softer than they do. Their tone is very loud and even sometimes impolite to me. They mainly speak in an imperative and direct way. Women try not to smile or use any body language in their talking, although in Iran some women did not move their hands either.

Another point brought up by participants who claimed to be competent in Dari was that they still could not express themselves effectively at times, especially when engaging in complex conversations. This lack of proficiency thus generated a barrier in communication between

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

returnees and individuals in Kabul City, posing a challenge to the process of adaptation.

In summary, the data suggested that there is a fundamental difference between knowing a language and actually expressing oneself effectively in that language. In fact, Baker (2012) claimed that it is challenging to learn a language without acknowledging the cultural context in which it is used. Mohanty & Perregaux (1997) stated, “language acquisition research, despite the dominant impact of linguistic theories, is beginning to view language more as sociocultural phenomena” (p. 227). As a result, the formal properties of language as symbol system (the form and structure) have gradually received less attention compared to the social and communicative aspect of language use (Mohanty & Perregaux, 1997). Yin (2011) also explained, “Language is a mirror of culture because language not only reflects the environment in which we live, but also reflects cultural values, human relationships and the way the society operates” (p. 111).

As previously mentioned in the literature review chapter of this paper, Kim (2001) believes that one of the most important factors of cognition in cross-cultural adaptation is the knowledge of the host language. Furthermore, Wiseman and Koester (1993) stated that language knowledge does not only include linguistic abilities in phonetics, syntax, and vocabulary, but also involves practical information about everyday use of the language, including the many details of the way that language is spoken and interpreted in various formal and informal social interactions and engagements. Regarding the relevance and importance of language proficiency in adapting to a new culture, Gudykunst (2005) indicated language is the primary channel for strangers to adapt; therefore the higher the level of linguistic knowledge, the greater the capability to learn new cultural issues and to engage in new social processes.

The findings also revealed that the participants were aware of their need to integrate in the host environment, and learning both national languages was crucial to understand the culture. Thus they increased their communication competency. However, regarding Pashtu language,

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

except those participants who belonged to Pashtun ethnic groups who could understand and to some extent could speak in Pashtu language, participants indicated that they could neither speak nor understand it. Many of the participants did say that they would like to learn Pashtu. Participant 6 stated “I had no chance to learn Pashtu language when I was living in Iran, and because it is my national language I want to learn it as well. Also, if I know Pashtu language, I will gain more job opportunities.”

Kim (2001) explained the development of host language competence brings psychological and social status and power for a stranger because individuals do not speak just to be understood but also “to be believed, obeyed, respected and distinguished “(p.101).

Cultural Knowledge/Understanding

Another emergent theme from the data analysis was the issue of cultural knowledge and cultural understanding. All of the female participants and three of the male participants referred to some kind of cultural challenges due to their insufficient knowledge of existing norms, rituals and standardized behavior of the host society. Participants pointed out some occasions of misunderstanding and miscommunication as they attempted to communicate and interact with their surroundings. Participant 4, a female, explained:

I do my best to behave based on Afghan norms or at least behave in way that Afghans who have never left the country will accept me, but it is hard to understand what is acceptable behavior. I need more time to learn the cultural mindsets operating in the Afghanistan society. There are many more differences between what I consider good and bad behavior with what the majority of residents of Kabul City consider. Sometimes I feel totally misunderstood in this new environment. Many times I have been misinterpreted or, could not understand the wider meaning of what people had told me or, what I had done.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Wiseman (1995) defined culture as a network of shared meanings or a common view of the world derived from similar experiences. Samovar & Porter (2000) viewed it as "the deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, social hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, special relationships, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving" (p. 7). Gudykunst and Kim (1992) offered a similar view of culture, conceiving it as "systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people" (p. 13). Culture can therefore be understood as a set of meanings, shared values and viewpoints that are unique to a group of people over time.

According to Wiseman and Koester (1993), strangers need to learn the nonverbal codes of the host society as well as its language. Nonverbal codes help strangers in more efficient social engagement (Wiseman and Koester, 1993). Effective communication is possible when strangers have a good knowledge not only of the language but also of the existing norms, rituals and standardized behavior of the host society (Gudykunst, 2005). The verbal and nonverbal codes and rules of the host culture define the local communication rules about correct behavior (Argyle, 1975).

Participant 6, another female participant, recalled, "When I came to Kabul City, I had a lot of problems during the first year of arrival till gradually I learned how to fit myself into the new society." As Kim (1988) noted, "The greater their social communication participation, the greater their host communication competence, and the better adapted they are likely to be in the host environment" (p. 105). Therefore, there is a clear link between cultural communication and successful adaptation. Kim (2001) noted that individual's ability to adapt to their new surroundings could improve over time.

Gudykunst (2004) explained, "Communication is effective to the extent that the person

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

interpreting the message attaches a meaning to the message similar to what was intended by the person transmitting" (p. 29). The better the comprehension and familiarity with the new culture, the higher the chances that individuals can fit into their new surroundings. This is a crucial factor in a successful adaptation process. Furthermore, Wiseman (1995) explained, initially the stranger's knowledge of the host society culture tends to be simplistic, neither very deep nor particularly accurate, and this lack of understanding causes insecurity for strangers. This lack of security is what seven participants out of 12 referred to feeling very uncomfortable when communicating with Afghans who had not experienced emigration.

Based on Hall's (1970) work, societies can be categorized as low context or high context. Hall (1970) defined low context as a society where information is "vested in explicit code" meaning, and the communicator is more clear, open and direct, making the message easier to understand (p.70). For example, in Western cultures, people are more open in their communication, saying what they mean, with little ambiguity. In a high context society, "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message;" thus, minimal information is available to the receiver (Hall, 1970, p.79). Traditionally, Asian cultures "which are embedded with cultural cues, tend to communicate in an indirect manner that is best understood by members of that culture" are placed in the high context category (Hall, 1970, p. 70). The latter type of communication is therefore more difficult to understand for someone not familiar with the social cues of the host culture as not all information is spelled out directly. A newcomer will need more time and practice to become familiar with the society's cultural cues and also particular cultural norms. Until that understanding is gained, communication can be very difficult and frustrating, often leading to miscommunication.

Two female participants explained about their experiences as follows: "My colleagues at

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

work generally do not have a good opinion about me. They believe that I behave more like Western people rather than based on Afghan culture” (Participant 6). When the researcher asked her to explain more about what she meant as being like Western people, she continued, “From many Afghans’ viewpoint, I behave very liberally. For example, I easily expressed my ideas even when the others do not take my ideas very seriously, mainly because I am a girl. Or during lunch break, I communicated with everyone, not just with female colleagues and many stayees⁹ do not consider my interactions as standard behavior for a young Afghan girl”. She continued:

Once I wanted to practice guitar so I bought a second hand guitar, but I had to take a taxi to bring it home, as it was bad for me if our neighbors saw me with a guitar in my hand in the street. People do not like the way that I dress. I am not used to the way that they dress; their clothes are very familiar to Pakistani people. For example, I have no problem wearing tight clothes or a small scarf. Once a lady in my workplace told me to wear a bigger scarf. I think she really meant to cover the front part of my body (laughing). (Participant 6)

Tapscott’s (1994) research of Namibian returnees showed that the behavior of many young returnees has been considered “a source of consternation to older members of the community” (p. 258). To some community elders, “the manners and liberal attitudes of young returnees are symptomatic of a loss of respect for local culture” (Tapscott, p. 258). This expression of disapproval is more severe in those traditional societies where religious influences

⁹ Stayees refer to who have not been displaced and who have remained in their country of origin in a post-war context (Kaun, 2008). In this thesis, stayee refers to that Afghan who have been living in Afghanistan and have not lived out of Afghanistan.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

are strong. Many traditionally minded members of the host society found the independent attitude of repatriated women unacceptable and annoying (Tapscott, 1994).

What Participant 8 described was very similar to two other female participants' experiences, behaviors that challenged the Afghan culture. "I like to go out but here in Kabul there is not so much for women to do. Once I went to a family park with some of my girl friends and we could not stay very long there as people were looking at us strangely. While when I was in Iran, I frequently went mountain climbing or other places with my friends including both girls and boys" (Participant 8). Similarly, Participant 2 narrated her experience: "Here (in Kabul City) people are very traditional and the majority have not been educated to higher degree levels. The majority of women are illiterate, and the standardized norms and behavior are much different from what I experienced in Iran. Afghan people expect me to behave very traditionally; as a girl, I should do shopping with a male family member or with an elder female."

Although, the issue of cultural difficulties was mainly highlighted by female participants, nevertheless male participants also experienced a different cultural environment after repatriation to Afghanistan. Participant 5 explained, "I returned to my country one month after my marriage. Once I was walking in the street with my wife, as a man who was passing by told me "Shame on you". I grabbed his hand and wanted to know why he said such a thing. It was then I found out that walking hand in hand with your wife is not something you can do in Kabul City."

First axiom of Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation stated that, strangers would go through both acculturation and deculturation during their adaptation process. From the information collected, there was no single, specific way participants said they were leaving behind some of their own habits or gaining new habits, but they did indicate that a shift has happened in their experiences and behaviors. Participant 7 said for

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

example that he was trying to learn some of the habits of Afghans who had never emigrated, such as being hardworking and patient. He noted, “Afghans in Kabul City are very self-sufficient and hardworking; when sometimes I do not work hard enough and complain about difficulties, my father asks me: ‘Are you becoming Iranian!’” Another participant believed that he should work on improving his self-confidence and self-esteem. He explained:

We (returnees) have experienced many offensive behaviors in Iran, and we were forced to be less noticeable as Afghans in public. My experience of living in the very discriminating society of Iran had (forced me) to lose my self-confidence. For example, once I had a job interview, and the interviewer asked me about my web designing skills. Although I had designed two websites, one for government and one for a private company, still I did not answer that I am experienced in web designing. Yet I know that my Afghan friends, who only have passed the relevant courses and do not have any practical work experience, easily tell interviewers that they can perfectly design a web page. I should improve my self-confidence and self-esteem (Participant 9).

Tajfel and Turner (1979) postulate that when individuals are able to identify themselves with a particular social group, they try to obtain a sense of positive self-esteem from that identity. The desirable distinctiveness that is recognized in the in-group over the out-group produces positive self-esteem (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). However, in order for these effects to occur, “an individual must subjectively identify with that category. In cases where this identification is weak or absent, these effects may not occur” (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, p. 30).

Another participant even said that residents of Kabul should learn from returnees and vice versa, because both have acquired good cultural habits which can contribute to each other. Participant 8 explained that Afghans do not care much about environmental health, and the poor standard of cleanliness in Kabul City really bothered him. He tried to not throw garbage in the

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

street, even though there were no public garbage cans. Participant 8 further explained, “I mainly try to keep the garbage in a plastic bag to find a garbage can. I am hoping the Afghans behave the same as I do.” Participant 1 believed that in terms of personal features, she found herself different from many Afghans in Kabul City. As she explained:

Team working and considering others’ interest is a value for me based on how I was raised, but here people prefer to work alone or to cooperate only with those from their own ethnic group or tribe. I sometimes felt that I must be very simple since I used to share my knowledge with my Afghan friends, but when it came to their turn, they tried not to share their experiences or knowledge with me. Even sometimes they tried to block my success. It is so sad as we all are Afghans and should cooperate to build and make better our country.

Participant 11 referred to the fading of patriarchal ideology among Afghans who have grown up in Iran as, she stated:

At the early stage of our exile life in Iran, it was my father who made the final decision but later as time went by, all family members talked and each of the children expressed his or her opinion and the best opinion was chosen, while here (Kabul City) 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.

Furthermore, data also revealed that participants were aware of the need to keep an open mind toward learning the ways of the host environment. Participant 5 stated, “ I think Afghans

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

are very kind and hospitable people. Many of the unpleasant behaviors and problems here have been brought by war. Otherwise we (Afghan) have a great country with rich cultural background.”

Environmental challenges

On the other side of the spectrum, there were participants who said they feel discriminated against and looked down upon by the community of those who stayed in Afghanistan. They claimed to be subject to contempt, labeled as “spoiled,” “loafers” or “not Afghan.” Although there were respondents who did not agree with the statement about the presence of discrimination, almost the same number remarked that they agreed there was discrimination. Facing exclusion because of one’s returnee status was only one of the discouraging experiences for respondents. Encountering discrimination based on one’s background (such as ethnicity, religion, and gender) was another stressful experience for returnees in their native land. One participant noted:

On my arrival, I went to the Office of Population and Census to get my Afghan national ID card (Tazkera). After two hours standing in line, I was told by the staff of there “You should come with your father or your uncle to get your Tazkera.” I took a photo with my cellphone of a notice pinned on the notice board, including the section listing all the documents required to receive one’s Tazkera and showed that to the staff. The staff looked at the photo, sneered and replied, ”Rules and requirement are for Afghans, not for people like you” (the participant could not continue as she got emotional and asked the researcher to postpone the interview). (Participant 2)

One of the participants said that being a returnee from Iran meant experiencing various

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

types of discrimination and withstanding a certain degree of stereotyping by the local community (other Afghans). Thus, most of the time, returnees need to try harder to be successful in their work and other sectors of their life in the new environment.

My brother holds a university degree in mathematics from one of the best university in Iran, and his published book even was taught in many of Afghan private high schools. He applied for a teaching position in Kabul University. Despite his expectations, a recently graduate from Kabul University was hired instead. The logic of the chancellor for this employment procedure was the priority placed on hiring a local graduate rather than someone who graduated abroad. The chancellor also revealed to my brother that an Afghan graduated from Iran is listed at the bottom of their selection priorities. Somehow he wanted to prevent my brother from trying for a second time. (Participant 3)

Regarding the impact of environment on the individuals' cross-cultural adaptation in a new society/environment, Gudykunst (2005) explained that cross-cultural adaptation should be studied as a dynamic interplay of the individuals and the environment because the external factors such as environment can cause as many limits on the adaptive process as the internal factors located within individual behaviors. An individual's adaptation into a new society increases when the dominant society has a receptive attitude toward an individual's acculturation process (Berry 1997). Still, the adaptation does not happen when individuals settle in a pattern of conflict with their new society, and this confrontation results in separation/segregation and marginalization (Berry, 1997).

Based on Kim's integrative theory of communication and cross-cultural adaptation, three environmental conditions including host receptivity, host conformity pressure, and ethnic group

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

strength (Kim, 2001) are the influential factors on strangers' adaptation processes. The eagerness of the host culture to provide opportunities for strangers to take part in social communication is called host receptivity (Almeida, 2012). Along with the receptivity, host conformity pressure varies across societies and communities (Gudykunst, 2005). Host conformity pressure refers to "the extent to which environment challenges strangers to act in accordance with the normative patterns of host culture and its communication system" Gudykunst, 2005, p. 388).

Concerning the relationship between the returnee and the residents Kibreab (2002) believed that returning refugees might be perceived as a burden by the residents, because their arrival may constitute increased competition for limited and inadequate resources such as "land, water, pasture, jobs, housing, health-care, school places, veterinary services, extension services, credit facilities and employment opportunities" (p.5). To further clarify this issue, Tapscott (1994) stated "Returning exiles have, thus, not only exacerbated the problem of unemployment, but also compete for jobs with the local population" (p. 257).

Three participants claimed that the residents displayed a non-welcoming behavior towards them. The residents viewed them as opportunists and carpetbaggers who escaped during the war time and now repatriated to Afghanistan to gain benefit from the partial stabilized situation of the country; a situation where more job opportunities were created mainly through international donation and support. Ethnic discrimination was another problem the majority (10 out of 12 participants) referred to. Participant 4 described his experience regarding ethnic discrimination, as, "when I was in Iran, I was insulted because of being an Afghan and now in Kabul City, I am being discriminated again because of my ethnicity.

Growing up in a different environment in Iran, returnees' understanding and feelings toward the issue of ethnicity varies with "stayees'" perception and definition of ethnicity.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Scholars such as Ghai (1993), Allen and Morsink (1994), Rogge (1994) and Crisp (1999) stated that the different political, social, and cultural differences between the host and origin countries result in many challenges for the returnees who are repatriating to their county of origin after a prolonged life of exile. Most returnees from Iran neither possess a strong sense of ethnic belonging nor are familiar with how to manage the issue of ethnic discrimination in the new environment. For example, participant 5 stated, "Once during a job employment, I was blamed for not having selected a Tajik applicant, because I had selected a very qualified applicant from Pashtun ethnic group instead." Three participants stated that their conception of their ethnicity has resulted in some kind of marginalization from their ethnic community. At times, the returnees were considered as outsiders by the members of their ethnic group rather than being considered as insiders.

Hutchinson and Smith (1996) defined ethnicity as a term that denotes a system of shared beliefs, myths of ancestry and common cultural practices. Regarding ethnic social communication, Gudykunst (2005) explained that as in many current societies and communities, strangers' interpersonal communication and mass communication activities include their co-ethnic or co-national as well as their home cultural experiences. Also, because culture is closely tied to communication, the successful adjustment of the expatriate is dependent on the effective exchange of information. Kim (2001) explained that during the adaptation process, the primary personal ethnic communication gradually changes to primary host personal communication. The data from participants revealed that the total sphere of personal communication of returnees mainly was guided towards ethnic communication, although the participants believed that they needed to communicate with all residents of Kabul City regardless of their ethnic, religious or regional background in order to expedite their adaptation process.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

In summary, the data from participants revealed that they tried to expand their social communication beyond primary ethnic communication. The returnees' need to adaptation and their awareness of improving the cultural and language knowledge, expanding network in the host society directed them to communicate with Afghan people regardless of their ethnicity, language and religious background. However, the social structure of the Kabul City, extreme and well-rooted ethnic belonging and ethnic discrimination was perceived as a disruptive factor for the process of adaptation of returnees. Participants from Hazara ethnic group reported that they had experienced more ethnic discrimination.

Karimi's (2011) research about Hazaras' (Afghan people from Hazara ethnic group) settlement in Kabul City revealed that the Hazaras' have experienced a history filled with oppression and discrimination. Karimi (2001) reported that Hazaras' settlement in Kabul City has happened through a pattern of mainly including slavery, economic refugees, forcefully displaced and returnees from abroad. Currently, more than 2 million Hazaras (Karimi, 2011) live in Kabul City, of which more than 1.5 million of them reside in the western part of Kabul City.

Returnees from the Hazara ethnic group have spent a prolonged life of exile in Iran with little to no experience of living in Afghanistan thus they have insufficient knowledge about their new environment; its economic, social, cultural, political and historical background. For example, participant 6 said, "what ever the Afghans have inherited from their historical background cannot be practicable and acceptable".

Strategies

The second question of this thesis was focused on uncovering the strategies and mechanisms that the participants used in the process of adaptation in Afghanistan society. To address this question, the researcher categorized the emergent themes from the data as using mass

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

media, expanding social interaction and, keeping open mind.

Mass media usage

Mass media is the instrument of dissemination of information: radio, television, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, online websites, and so on broadcast information to the public (Kim, 2001). Several participants (7 out of 12) said that they have utilized the mass media as a means of communication to find out how things work in Afghanistan (lifestyle, social norms, and behavior). When participants were asked to give examples of the media they consume, most mentioned different TV channels because of the news, sitcom shows, and the movies. Among the different Afghan TV channels, Tolo TV and TV1 were the most popular ones among the participants.

Participant 6 explained “I watched Afghan TV more in the first year of my arrival to Kabul City as I needed to improve my overall knowledge about the new environment.” However, three participants believed that the low quality of Afghan media have discouraged them to use Afghan media as communication channels. For example, Participant 8 stated, “ I do not watch Afghan TVs as the programs are in low quality. Instead, I have bought a dish antenna and watch other countries’ channels.” Participant 6 explained that he preferred the uncensored feature of Afghan media and the freedom they have. He stated: “I like Afghan media, as it is not controlled by government but the Iranian media practitioners had no freedom and everything was controlled directly by the government; everything was censored in Iran.”

Presenting the current state of Afghan media, Merzaiee (2011) explained that donor support for Afghan media has led to the growth of radio and television outlets. International donor support for Afghanistan’s media has had two primary goals (Fraenkel, Schoemaker & Himelfarb’s, 2006). The short-term goal has been to “counteract the effects of insurgent

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

communications in order to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people” while the long-term goal has been to “create a free and independent media sector” that will continue to function after donor support has ended (Fraenkel, et al.,2006, p.5). Merzaiee (2011) claimed millions of dollars have been invested in the development of the Afghan media sector and the growth of private media since 2001 is considered one of Afghanistan’s greatest success stories. However, neither of these donor goals is being met.

In order to understand the opinion of Afghan people about Afghan media, Fraenkel et al., (2006) research indicated that Afghan perceptions of media content “are based on their decades of exposure to propaganda” (p.13). In the Afghan experience, most media represent vested interests conveying highly subjective content (Merzaiee, 2011). Afghan media are highly fragmented by tribal, religious, linguistic, and political identities (Merzaiee, 2011).

Fraenkel et al., (2006) reported that most people in Afghanistan believed that Afghan broadcasters have specific agendas defined by their ethnic and national affiliation. For example, “the Pajhwok News Agency is regarded as being anti-Kabul government, Tolo as being influenced by foreign powers (particularly the United States), and the Afghan Voice Agency (AVA) as being supported by the Iranian government” (p. 15).

To summarize the data from participants, individuals mentioned that they seek to learn how to behave in a new environment and it seems like the media was one of the dominant applied mechanisms to help them to fit into Kabul society. Media can be a helpful mechanism of adaptation as far as getting information about news and other nonfictional content; however, it is important to analyze the extent of accuracy to which the media illustrate the reality of the society and culture (Harvey, 2007). The accuracy of what media depict has been a popular topic. For example, Correa’s study (2010) revealed that Latin women were framed differently by two

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

newspapers according to their target audience. On the same lines, it is reasonable to believe that Afghan media practitioners do not necessarily see the reality of Afghan society and its culture in the same way as stayees and also the returnees may encounter.

Social interaction

Another emergent theme, social interaction through interpersonal communication was mentioned as a common strategy to learn about the new environment. For example, Participant 1 said “I am happy that I am working in an academic environment since it helps me to feel very well, feeling as being useful. Also I can interact with many peoples here, professors, students, and the staffs. All can provide me with the information that I need to know about the Kabul environment”. Participant 10 also stated:

I was not so satisfied with my job as provincial manager when I came to Kabul City since I mainly was outdoors in the field. Because of insecure situation of Kabul City, I did not feel comfortable with very mobile situation. But in the meanwhile, the nature of my job helped me to learn about Kabul City and its people and, to fit myself into the unfamiliar society.

Along with social interaction and media usage, many participants referred to keeping an open mind as the most effective approach to help them fit into the new environment. Participant 5 stated, “ I think Afghans are very kind and hospitable people. Many of unpleasant behaviors and problems in here have brought by war. Otherwise we (Afghan) have a great country with rich cultural background”. Another participant narrated his experiences as given below:

I always remind myself that I am in a learning process and keeping an optimistic attitude will help me to learn the new things. In other word, if I complain about everything then

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

the life become harder and tougher. I am an educated person so I should behave in different way than an illiterate person who cannot analyze the social phenomenon very deeply and widely. Although, many times, I have felt disappointment about the future of Afghanistan. The government of Afghanistan is very insufficient and corrupted. Still, under any circumstances, I try to not lose my hope for a peaceful and better future. I have decided to live in here (Afghanistan); therefore I should try to find ways to fit myself into this society (Participant 8).

Chen and Starosta (2008) defined open-mindedness as how open one is to accepting differences. Additionally, Kim (1988) explained, "Those who are more open-minded and receptive toward the host culture and who are stronger and more resilient under stressful circumstances are likely to be better able to manage the uncertainties and challenges of the host environment" (p. 67). Practicing open-mindedness also means having a nonjudgmental attitude, which means putting aside one's prejudices towards others (Chen and Starosta, 2008). Being open-minded and having a non-judgmental attitude helps individuals to deal with cultural differences and adapt to the new environment, relieving the effects of culture shock and aiding in the adaptation process (Chen & Starosta, 2008).

The data revealed differing points of view. Some participants (9 out of 12) seemed to be open to deal with difficulties and to meet people from the host society (Afghanistan), while on the other side of the spectrum, there were participants who reported their discomfort in managing the challenges. The latter category referred to their struggles with understanding and accepting many unfamiliar and even unpleasant issues in Afghanistan and Kabul City. For example, one participant demonstrated her frustration to keep trying to adapt to many inappropriate norms in the new society. She (participant 4) complained, as:

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

I am aware that many years of war have destroyed everything including the culture and social norms but when I see that the Afghans have no intention and attempt to change their attitude, it makes me so disappointed. Then I think all my efforts to adapt to new society will be hopeless. I sometimes feel like I do not want to behave in way that Afghans (people in Kabul City) expected me. I sometimes feel that even if I spend whole of my life in this country, I hardly can adapt to it.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a summary of the entire research. It includes the concluding remarks on research findings, recommendations, areas for future studies, and limitations.

Key Findings

The goal of this thesis was to shed light on the cross-cultural adaptation experiences of young Afghans returning from a prolonged exile life in Iran to Afghanistan and who are currently living in Kabul City. To do this, specific questions were designed at the start of this research to better understand those experiences. The first research question aimed to study and identify the elements that comprised the process the young returnees underwent to adapt to the host environment of Kabul City, including the difficulties and challenges that they encountered. After the interviews and analysis were completed, the findings showed that returnees experienced difficulties during their daily interaction with the Kabul environment.

The data showed that language barriers as well as, insufficient knowledge and understanding of the cultural patterns of Afghan society were the dominant factors in making social interaction difficult between returnees and stayees. The Majority of returnees indicated that they were not very familiar with the existing norms, rituals and standardized behavior of the Kabul society. Some of the participants stated that many Afghan cultural norms and behaviors are based on tribalism and patriarchal attitude. It seemed that returnees were reluctant to accept and practice those cultural patterns. Female participants stated more challenges and even suffering to deal with the very traditional cultural patterns and behavior of Kabul society.

Regarding language as an influential factor in cross-cultural adaptation for returnees, the data revealed that the majority of returnees could speak Dari language very well. However just few returnees (mainly from Pashtu speakers) could speak Pashtu language to some extent. The

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

data disclosed that the returnees spoke Dari language with an Iranian Farsi accent or they used some words from Farsi language when they were talking in Dari. Linguistically, the two languages of Dari and Farsi are the same. Farsi is the language, which is spoken in Iran, and Dari the one used in Afghanistan. The two different countries having their own different social and cultural structure, therefore Dari is spoken in a different way than Farsi.

The data showed that it is not just returnees who have learned and improved their Dari language through acquiring a Dari accent, Dari idioms and vocabulary but also the stayees (those stayees who have been in contact with returnees) have learned some Farsi words and idioms. Some of the stayees, mainly those who are working in media and academic sectors, were more interested in replacing some non-Dari words with Farsi words; there are many words in Dari which are imported directly from English and Arabic languages (Alamyar, 2010).

Among many environmental challenges, ethnic discrimination was what the participants frequently referred to. Regarding the issue of ethnic discrimination, Christia (2010) stated that ethnic competition and tension have been a part of Afghanistan's social structure since it was founded as a state by the Pashtun tribe in 1747.

The majority of returnees explained that they perceived themselves as being an Afghan and then as individuals who belong to a specific ethnic group such as Tajik, Hazara, Pashtun or Uzbek, while the Afghan society recognized and treated the returnees mainly based on their ethnicity rather than as being an Afghan. This strong ethnic based structure of Afghanistan society seemed to be very new and unbelievable for a majority of returnees. Abassi-Shavazi's (2008) research revealed, "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) whereas among Afghans growing up in Iran, the tribalism attitude has lost its strength and even has vanished" (p.20).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Another purpose of this thesis was to study the acculturation strategies that young Afghans returning from Iran to Afghanistan utilized in order to adapt to a new environment. The data indicated that the returnees tried to expand their interpersonal communication as interaction at the interpersonal level with the people in Kabul City as well as the stayees. Work environment and schools were the common institutions for the interpersonal communication between returnees and the residents of Kabul City. Additionally, attending different exhibitions in Kabul City were other places, which provided a ground for the returnees to communicate with the people of Kabul City. Among the media, television was the one most applied to gain knowledge as well as a common entertainment source for many of the participants. However, it should be mentioned that some of the participants expressed their low level of trust in which television programs were shown to Afghan audiences.

The majority of participants used online newspaper more than paper-based newspaper to update themselves on new events about Afghanistan and the world. According to data, accessing online newspaper was much easier than paper-based newspaper. The participants read these online newspapers during their work hours where they had access to Internet, and two of the participants mentioned that they check the news at home as they had access to Internet at home.

In addition to expanding social interaction with stayees and using mass media, keeping an open mind on the surroundings was another strategy applied by returnees to adapt to the new society in Kabul City. The data collected from the interviews showed differing points of view in regard to having an open-minded attitude toward the new issues in the new environment of Kabul City. Some participants seemed to be open to dealing with the difficulties they encountered in the host society (Afghanistan), while others reported their discomfort at managing the challenges. The latter category referred to their struggles to understand and accept many unfamiliar values, manners, and ways of socializing in Kabul City. However, a majority of the participants referred

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

to the impact of time on their extent of adaptation to the new environment.

According to Kim (2001), time is a key element for cross-cultural adaptation and also for intercultural transformation. Kim (2001) defined intercultural transformation as, the process of reaching functional fitness, psychological health, and intercultural identity. Through continuous new cultural learning and self-organizing and reorganizing, “strangers achieve an increasing synchrony between internal responses and external demands of the host environment” (Kim, 2001, p. 190).

Internalizing new cultural elements causes strangers to transfer from “the passive self based on ascription to actively constructed and achieved self-based on learning” (Kim, 2001, p. 191), or what Kim (2001) called transformation from cultural identity to an intercultural identity. Just as cultural identity links individuals to a specific culture, intercultural identity links people to more than one culture and to humanity itself (Gudykunst, 2005).

The data indicated that the returnees had developed partially the intercultural identity during their life in Iran. Holding values and dispositions aligned with Iranian socio-cultural setting differentiates Afghans returning from Iran from their parents, and from Afghans in Afghanistan. However participants clarified that such alignment did not mean that they identified themselves as Iranians. Afghans returning from Iran, like most migrants, experienced living between the two cultures and worlds of their parents’ nation-state of origin (Afghanistan), and the host nation-state (Iran) (Abbasi-Shavazi, et al., 2008). Interestingly many participants viewed the sense of being between two cultures in terms of opportunity, as participant 7 stated “ owning a sense of being a mix of Afghan and Iranian can accord opportunity since provided me with a broader view point and wider understanding of the surrounding.” However, some returnees found this problematic creating more confusion in being able to understand and deal with the different cultural dimensions of Afghan society.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Finally through the narrated experiences of the participants about their new life in Kabul city, it was revealed their definition of self has been undergoing some transformation. The environment of Kabul City has influenced the nature of returnees' self-definition. The returnees frequently talked about their process of learning and attempting to fit into the new society; a process of alteration in their preserved values, manner, way of interacting/ socializing, and talking. This practice of transformation is what Kim (2001) termed as the impact of intercultural contacts and, also was presented in Kim's theory as the nature of cross-cultural adaptation.

However, Kim (2001) clarified the fact that the analysis of transformation of one's identity cannot be limited to a specific set of guidelines, because there are several internal and external factors that facilitate and constrain the process. A multi-faceted approach should take into consideration factors such as societal conditions of the host environment and prejudice and discrimination against members of a particular ethnicity. Mendoza, Halualani and Drzewiecka (2002) also supported the need for analyzing cultural identity at various levels and circumstances. The authors said, "There remains a need to analyze both ends of identity construction, namely, its structural determinations, on the one hand, and its on-going, open-ended re-creation and re-construction, on the other" (p. 313).

The data revealed the ongoing changing nature of identity formation of the returnees after their repatriation to Afghanistan, consistent with Kim's theory of cross-cultural adaptation. As a result, this research is by no means conclusive, but it aimed to expand our insights and knowledge of the experience of crossing cultures, which young Afghan refugees returning from Iran underwent in the Kabul City environment.

In addition to above described findings, the data showed that the majority of participants (9 from 12) had a strong sense of belonging and attachment to Afghanistan. This finding was interesting since, for example, Saito's (2008) research on young Afghans returning from Pakistan

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

and Iran to Afghanistan indicated “second-generation refugees may have returned to Afghanistan for the moment, but they may not necessarily feel that they fit in nor feel content in the place they are expected to stay in the long term. The inability to feel a sense of belonging in Afghanistan will accelerate their social exclusion” (p. 10). Many researchers (Abbasi-Shavazi, 2008) as well as the data from this thesis showed a majority of Afghan refugees living in Iran have little or no life experience in Afghanistan before their repatriation to Afghanistan, reinforcing the assumption that they might not have a sense of belonging to Afghanistan.

Practical Implications of Findings

The findings of this thesis are by no means conclusive, but it aimed to expand our insights and knowledge of the experience of crossing cultures, which young Afghan refugees returning from Iran to Kabul City experienced. The findings of this thesis contribute to two key areas. First, the findings add to the literature on the Afghan refugees living in Iran. The major portion of international funding and assistance, with the accompanying academic or media attention, has been devoted to camp-based refugees in Pakistan, while comparatively little is known about Afghan refugees in other contexts in general, and in Iran in particular (Adelkhah and Olszewska, 2008). Therefore, any research in the context of Afghan refugees in Iran seems essential to fill a knowledge gap.

The removal of the Taliban regime in late 2001 resulted in a new hope for peace and security among many Afghans who had been living out of Afghanistan (Kronenfeld, 2011). This optimism stimulated the largest return of refugees in the recorded history of Afghanistan; more than 6 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2001, mainly from two neighboring countries of Pakistan and Iran (Saito, 2008). This thesis provides more knowledge and insights on the returnees’ life in Afghanistan and on their reintegration process.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Gaining knowledge and information about the returnees' resettlement in Afghanistan is not only useful for the government of Afghanistan but also for the international organizations that are working on issues of Afghan returnees and Afghans displaced in the context of Afghanistan.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This thesis aimed to expand the knowledge on the cross-cultural adaptation of Afghan refugees returning from Iran and living in Kabul City. There are some limitations that need to be addressed. The data for this study was gathered through a qualitative research approach by conducting semi-structured interviews with 12 participants who were recruited by snowball sampling from Kabul City. The researcher had an intention to recruit participants from other cities of Afghanistan such as Herat City. Considering the fact of doing interview online, the low quality of Internet connection in Herat City was an obstacle to gain such a goal. Kabul City, as the capital city of Afghanistan benefits from better facilities including better telecommunication structures.

A sample of this size provided rich data for the thesis; the results cannot be generalized to a broader range of young Afghan refugees returning from Iran to Afghanistan who have undergone a similar experience. As well, because all the individuals interviewed were from Kabul City, it is possible that their experiences do not reflect that of all young Afghan returnees now living in different parts of the country

The data was also dependent on participants' self-reporting and narrating. The accuracy of the information provided can be questioned because participants may not recall events and other past happenings in their entirety. Additionally, Neuman (2004) stated that, "Because memory is imperfect, recollections are often distorted in ways that primary sources are not" (p. 306). Whenever individuals are asked to recollect an event in the past, there is some subjectivity that

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

occurs, including what is selected and omitted, perspective of time, and changing emotions.

For further studies on this topic, it would be interesting to trace differences and similarities between women and men, because the data revealed more cultural difficulties experienced by the women rather than the men. Other elements that can also be taken into account in the future are marital status and whether the individuals came alone or with family and/or friends. Evidently, there are several factors that can be considered in examining cross-cultural experience. Therefore, researchers need to strive to be specific in regard to what they are trying to study, while embracing the multifaceted nature of the subject.

This thesis studied the issue of cross-cultural adaptation among young Afghan refugees returning from Iran to Afghanistan, showing there are many grounds for further research in this context. For example, examining the question of returnees from socioeconomic perspective or investigating the positive or negative influences of the Afghan refugees returning from Iran on Afghanistan society in various ranges, or exploring the role of returnees on the reconstruction process in post-Taliban Afghanistan.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

REFERENCES

- Abbasi-Shavazi, M., Glazebrook, D., Jamshidiha, G., & mahmudian, H. (2008). *Second-generation Afghans in Iran: Integration, identity and return*. Retrieved from Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (Case study series). Available at <http://www.areu.org.af/ContentDetails.aspx?ContentId=2&ParentId>
- Adelkhah, F., & Olszewska, Z. (2007). The Iranian Afghans. *Iranian studies*, 40(2), 137. doi: 10.1080=00210860701269519
- Adler, P. (1982). Beyond cultural identity: reflection on cultural and multicultural man. In L.A. Samovar & R.E. Porter (Wds.), *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* (3rd Ed., pp. 389-408). Belmont, CA :Wadsworth.
- Ahady, A. (1995). The decline of the Pashtuns in Afghanistan. *Asian Survey*, 35(7), 621-634. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/journals/00044687.html>
- Aitken, T. (1973). *The multinational man: The role of managers abroad*. New York: John Wiley
- AI Index (1995). *Afghanistan: International responsibility for human rights disaster*. London: Amnesty International. Retrieved January 20, 2011: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/ASA11/009/1995/en/94d82742-eb44-11dd-8c1f-275b8445d07d/asa110091995en.pdf>
- Alamyar, M. (2010). Language controversy in Afghanistan: The sociolinguistics of Farsi Dari and Pashtu at Kabul University. (Mater's thesis, Purdue University). Available from ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database. (UMI No.1489642).
- Alkozai, J. (2008). Pashtu-language publishing translated from Pashtu. *Afghanistan Research*

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Newsletter. 18, 4-6.

Amuzegar, J.: Iran's third development plan: an appraisal. *Middle East Policy* 12(3), 46-64
(2005)

Anas, M. A., & Sandín, P. S. (2009). Intercultural and cross-cultural communication research:
Some reflections about culture and qualitative methods. *Qualitative Social Research*,
10(1), 1-51. Retrieved from [http://www.qualitative-
research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1251/2738](http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1251/2738)

Argyle, M. (1975). *Bodily Communication*. New York: International University Press.

Balland, D. (2011). *Census ii. In Afghanistan*. In Encyclopedia Iranica. Available online retrieved
February 16, 2011 from: <http://iranicaonline.org/articles/census-ii>

Barfield, T. (2010). *Afghanistan: A Cultural and Political History*. Princeton: Princeton
University Press (From; Ali's thesis)

Berry, J. W. (1990). *Psychology of acculturation: Understanding individuals moving between
cultures*. In R. W. Brislin (Ed.), *Applied cross-cultural psychology* (pp. 232-253).
Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An
International Review*, 46(1), 5-68. Retrieved from <http://canada.metropolis.net/research>

Berry, J. W. (2005). Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures. *International Journal of
Intercultural Relations*, 29(6), 697-712. Retrieved from
[http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/details.xqy?uri=/01471767/v29i0
006/697_alsitc.xml](http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/details.xqy?uri=/01471767/v29i0006/697_alsitc.xml)

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

- Berry , J. W., Dasen, P. R., Saraswathi, T. S., Poortinga, Y. H., Pandey, J., Segall, M. H., & Kagitcibasi, C. (1980). *Handbook of cross-cultural psychology: Social behavior and application*. (2 ed., Vol. 3, pp. 292-300). United States: Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data. Retrieved from http://books.google.ca/books?id=Z0L7dwJKel8C&printsec=copyright&source=gbs_pub_info_r
- Berry, J. W., Kim, U., & Boski, P. (1987). Psychological acculturation of immigrants. In Y. Y. Kim & W. Gudykunst (Eds.), *Cross-cultural adaptation: Current approaches*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Berry , J. W., Phinney , J. S., Sam, D. L., & Vedder, P. (2006). Immigrant youth: Acculturation, identity and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 55(3), 303-332. Retrieved from <http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/search-advanced.xqy?q=Immigrant Youth: Acculturation, Identity, and Adaptation&field=TI&op=and&q=&field=&date-group=all&from-year=2008&to-year>
- Berry, J. W., Sam, D. L. (1996). Acculturation and adaptation. *Handbook of Cross- Cultural Psychology*. Vol 3, *Social Behavior and Applications*. Boston: Allyn & Baccon.
- Berry, J. W., Westin, C , Virta, E., Vedder, P., Rooney, R., & Sang, D. (2006). Design of the study: Selecting societies of settlement and immigrant groups. In J. W. Berry, J. S. Phinney, D. L. Sam & P. Vedder (Eds.), *Immigrant Youth in Cultural Transition: Acculturation, identity, and adaptation across national contexts* (pp. 15-45). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum, Associates.
- Blumenfeld, H; Faroqi-Shah, Y (2009). "Consequences for language, cognition, development, and the brain". *American Speech-Language-Hearing Association* 14(13): 10.
- Breslin, J., & Kelly, S. (2010). *Women's rights in the Middle East and North Africa: progress*

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

amid resistance. Retrieved from <http://www.freedomhouse.org/>

Booth-Butterfield, M. (1991). *Communication, Cognition, and Anxiety*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Buck, R. 1984. *The communication of emotion*. New York: Guilford Press.

Carballo, M. (1994). *Scientific consultation on the social and health impact of migration:*

Priorities for research. Geneva: International Organization for Migration

Choi, J. B., & Thomas, M. (2007). Predictive factors of acculturation attitudes and social support among Asian immigrants in the USA. *International Journal of Social Welfare*, 18, 76-84.

doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2397.2008.00567.x

Coelho, G. (1958). *Changing images of America: A study of Indian students' perceptions*. New York: Free Press.

Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees. (1966, December 16). Retrieved

from <http://www.unhcr.org/3b66c2aa10.html>

Cornish, F., Peltzer, K., & MacLachlan, M. (1999). Returning Strangers: The Children of Malawian Refugees Come 'Home'?, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 12(3):264–83.

Davis, S. C., Leman, P. J., & Barrett, M. (2007). Running head: Ethnic attitude, identification and self-esteem. Children's implicit and explicit ethnic group attitudes, ethnic group identification, and self-esteem. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 31, 514-525. Retrieved from <http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/1701/1/fulltext.pdf>

Emadi, H. (1995). Exporting Iran's Revolution: The Radicalization of the Shiite Movement in Afghanistan. *Middle Eastern Studies*, 31(1), 1-12

Emadi, H. (1997). The Hazaras and their Role in the Process of Political Transformation in

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

- Afghanistan. *Central Asian Survey*, 16(3), 363-87.
- Emadi, H. (2002). *Repression, Resistance, and Women in Afghanistan*. Westport: Praeger Publishers
- Farwel, N. (2001). *Onward through strength: Coping and psychological support among refugees youth returning to Eritrea from Sudan*. 14(1), Doi:10.1093/jrs/14.1.43
<http://jrs.oxfordjournals.org/content/14/1/43.full.pdf>,
- Fisher, G. (1988). *Mindsets*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press
- Frembgen, J. W. (2006). Honors, Shame, and Bodily Mutilation: Cutting off the Nose among Tribal Societies in Pakistan. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland*, 16(3), 243–260
- Gerami, S. (2008). Extralegal practices of afghan refugees in Iran: Exploring feminist transnationalism and immigration theories. *Women and Social Justice*, 3(4), 1-22.
Retrieved from
<http://digitalcommons.salve.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1022&context=jift>
- Geertz, C. (1977). *The interpretation of culture*. New York, NY: The Perseus Books Group.
- Ghods, A. J., Nasrollahzadeh, D., & Kazemeini, M. (2005). Afghan refugees in Iran model renal transplantation program: Ethical considerations. *Transplantation Proceedings*, 37(2), 565-567. doi: 10.1016/j.transproceed.2004.11.084
- Ghubar, M. G. M. (1981). *Afghanistan dar Masir Tarikh* [Afghanistan in the Course of History]. Qum: Payam Muhajer
- Ghuman, P.A.S. (1997) “A Study of identities of Asian origin primary school children”. *Early Child Development and Care*, 132, 65-75
- Gibson, C. C. (2001). *Communities and the environment: Ethnicity, gender, and the state in community-based conservation*. Jersey City: Rutgers University Press.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Gregorian, V. (1969). *The Emergence of Modern Afghanistan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Gudykunst, W. B. (2005). *Theorizing about intercultural communication*. California: Sage Publication, Inc.

Gudykunst, W.B., Ting-Toomey, S. (1988). *Culture and interpersonal communication*. London: Sage.

Gudykunst, W. B., Nishida, T. (1986). Attritional confidence in low- and high- context cultures. *Human Communication Research*, 12, 525-549.

Gudykunst, W.B., and Kim, Y.Y. (1992). *Communicating with strangers: An approach to intercultural communication* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Guest, G., MacQueen, K. M., & Namey, E. E. (2012). *Applied Thematic Analysis*. (pp. 1-18). New York, NY: SAGE Publications, Inc Retrieved from http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/44134_1.pdf

Gumperz, J.J., & Cook-Gumperz, J. (1982). Introduction: Language and the communication of social identity. In J.J. Gumperz (Ed). *Language and social identity* (pp1-21). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*, Garden City, NY: Anchor

Harrell, M. C., & Bradley, M. A. (2009). *Data collection methods: semi-structured interviews and focus groups* .(pp. 1- 50). Retrieved from <http://cogprints.org/6971>

Harvey, B. (2007). Testing the integrative theory of cross-cultural adaptation a student's experience in Italy and Spain. *Advances in Communication Theory & Research*, 1(2), 1-40. retrieved from <http://www.k-state.edu/actr/wp-content/uploads/2010/12/e1-2benharvey.pdf>

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Herring, S. (1996). *Two variant of an electronic message schema*. (2 ed., pp. 81-109).

Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing.

Haslberger, A. (2005). Facets and dimensions of cross-cultural adaptation: refining the tools.

Personnel Review, 34 (1), 85-109.

Hilali, A. Z. (2005). "The Soviet Penetration into Afghanistan and the Marxist Coup". *The*

Journal of Slavic Military Studies 18 (4): 709. doi:[10.1080/13518040500354984](https://doi.org/10.1080/13518040500354984)

Hugo, G., Abbasi-Shavazi, M. J., & Sadeghi, R. (2012). Refugee movement and development –

Afghan refugees in Iran. *Migration and Development*, 1(2), 261–279. doi: doi:

10.1080/21632324.2012.749741

Ibrahimi, N. (2012). Shift and drift in Hazara ethnic consciousness the impact of conflict and

migration. Available from CrossRoad Asia website. Retrieved September 27, 2012 from

http://crossroads-asia.de/fileadmin/user_upload/publications/deliverables/wp05_final.pdf

Jackman, M. R. (1977). Prejudice, tolerance, and attitudes toward ethnic groups. *Social Science*

Research, 6, 145-169. Retrieved from

<http://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/22909/0000474.pdf?sequence=1>

Johnson, B. B. (2004). Education appears as a consistent factor associated with positive

adaptations: higher education is predictive of lower stress. *Risk Analysis*, 24(5), 1279-

1280. Retrieved from [http://www.geo.mtu.edu/rs4hazards/links/Social-](http://www.geo.mtu.edu/rs4hazards/links/Social-KateG/Attachments%20Used/DemographicFactors.pdf)

[KateG/Attachments Used/DemographicFactors.pdf](http://www.geo.mtu.edu/rs4hazards/links/Social-KateG/Attachments%20Used/DemographicFactors.pdf)

Johnson, T. P. (2009). *Snowball Sampling*. *Encyclopedia of Biostatistics: John Wiley and Sons*

Inc. New York, NY.

Jones, S. (2009). *The Islamic republic of Iran: An introduction*. *Contributing to a Well Informed*

Democracy, 9(92), 1-160.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Retrieved from www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/rp09-92.pdf

Karimi, A. (2011). *The west side Story: Urban Communication and Social Exclusion of Hazara people in West Kabul*. (Master Degree, University of Ottawa) Canada. Retrieved from

Ottawa University website: <http://www.biblio.uottawa.ca/html/index.jsp?lang=en>

Kawyani, N. (2006). Khurasan kohan wa faraword mahed paidayesh zaban FarsiDari [Ancient Khorasan and language birth and outturn]. In R, Rasual., Sar guzasht zaban Farsi Dari [History of the Farsi Dari language]. p. 99-140. Sharholmen, Sweden: Afghanistan Cultural Association

Kazmer, M. M., & Xie, B. (2008). Qualitative interviewing in Internet studies playing with the media, playing with the method. *Information, Communication & Society*, 2(11), 63-82. doi: 10.1080/13691180801946333

Kealey, D. J. (1989). A study of cross-cultural effectiveness: Theoretical issues, practical applications. *International Journal of Intercultural Relation*. 13, 387-428

Kelly, G. (1955). *The psychology of personal constructs*. New York: W.W. Norton

Keshavarzian, G. (2005). The transformation of the Afghan immigrant: A case study of the impact of the displacement experience on Afghan women and children living in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan (Master thesis, The Fletcher School).

Kibreab, G. (2002). "When Refugees Come Home: The Relationship between Stayees and Returnees in Post-Conflict Eritrea", *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 20(1): 53–80.

Kincaid, D., Yum, J., Woelfel, J., & Barnett, G. (1983). The cultural convergence of Korean immigrants in Hawaii: An empirical test of a mathematical theory. *Quality and Quantity*, 18, 59-78.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

- Knox, S., & Burkard, A. (2009). Qualitative research interviews. *Psychotherapy Research*, 19(4-5), 1-19. doi: 10.1080/10503300802702105
- Koepke, B. (2011). The situation of Afghans in the Islamic Republic of Iran nine years after the overthrow of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. *Middle East Institute*, Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique., 1-13. Retrieved from http://www.refugeecooperation.org/publications/afghanistan/pdf/03_koepke.pdf
- Kronenfeld, D. A. (2011, January 25). *Can Afghanistan cope with returnees? Can returnees cope in Afghanistan? A look at some new data* (report). Retrieved from Middle East Institute website http://www.refugeecooperation.org/publications/Afghanistan/02_kronenfeld.php
- Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship* (Book chapter summary). Available at http://wikisum.com/w/Kymlicka:_Multicultural_citizenship
- Levy, Robert I., and Douglas Hollan, “Person-Centered Interviewing and Observation in Anthropology,” in H. R. Bernard, ed., *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, Walnut Creek, Calif.: Altamira Press, 1998, pp. 333–364
- Lindgren, H., & Yu, R. (1975). Cross-cultural insight and empathy among Chinese immigrants to the U.S. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 96, 305-310
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods*. (2nd ed.). California: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Lorenzo-Hernandez, J. (1999). “The Nuyorican’s Dilemma: Categorization of Returning Migrants in Puerto Rico”, *International Migration Review*, 33(4): 988–1013.
- Mansell, M. (1981). Transcultural Experience and the expressive response. *Communication education*, 30, 93-108

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

- Mansutti, A. (2007). Migration as a rite of passage: young Afghans building masculinity and adulthood in Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 40(2), 1-21.
- Maley, W. (2009). *The Afghanistan wars*. (2 ed., pp. 1-22). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Margesson, R. *The Library of Congress*, (2007). *Afghan refugee current status and future prospects*. Retrieved from Congressional Research Service website:
<http://www.aren.org.af/ContentDetails.aspx?ContentId=16&ParentId=16>
- McLuhan, M. (1962). *The Gutenberg galaxy: the making of typographic man*. (pp. 1-40). New York: New American Library.
- Miran, M.A. (1969). Major problems of Dari in mastering Pashtu morphology. (Master's thesis, University of Texas, Austin). Retrieved from
http://eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/36/b1/bd.pdf
- Mishra, R.C., (1997). *Cognition and Cognitive development*. (Vol. 2, pp. 143-176). Needam Heights, MA: Viacom Company. In J. W. Berry, P. R. Dasen, & T. S. Sarawathi (Eds), *Hand book of cross-cultural psychology*.
- Mohanty, A. K., & perregaux, C. (1997). Language acquisition and bilingualism. (Vol. 2, pp. 217-250). Needam Heights, MA: Viacom Company. In J. W. Berry, P. R. Dasen, & T. S. Sarawathi (Eds), *Hand book of cross-cultural psychology*.
- Monsutti, A. (2007). Migration as a rite of passage: Young Afghans building masculinity and adulthood in Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 40(2), 1-40. doi: 10.1080/00210860701276183
- Nakanishi, H. (2005). Afghan immigrant and migration in Iran: Who is responsible for empowering them? *Peace-building Studies*,6(2), available from
<http://ww5.peacebuilding.org/>
- Neuman, L. W. (2004). *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

New York, New York: Pearson Education Inc.

Noorzai, R. (2006). *Communication and development in Afghanistan: A history of reforms and resistance* (Master's Thesis). Available at Ohiolink. (ohiou1154640245).

OCM Kabul. (2003). *UNHCR returnee monitoring report, Afghanistan repatriation, January 2002 - March 2003*. Retrieved from UN High Commissioner for Refugees website:
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f1bbde74.html>

Pedersen, Paul (1997). *Culture-centred counselling interventions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Piran, P. (2004). Effects of social interaction between afghan refugees and Iranians on reproductive health attitudes. *Disasters*, 28(3), 283-293.

Phinney, J. (1990). Ethnic identity in adolescent and adult: *A review of research*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, 499-514.

Phinney, J. (1992). The Multi-group Ethnic Identity Measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7(2), 156–176.

Rajaei, B. (2000). The Politics of Refugee Policy in Post Revolutionary Iran, *The Middle East Journal*, 54 (1): 44-6. Retrieved from
http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/details.xqy?uri=/00263141/v54i0001/44_tporpipi.xml. doi: 10.2307/4329431

Razaghi, S. (2010). Civil society in Iran, Transition to which direction? Challenges, opportunities and strategies. Available from University Van Amsterdam website. Retrieved from
<http://www.arsehsevom.net/>

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Redfield, R., Linton, R., & Herskovist, M.J. (1936). Memorandum for the study of acculturation.

American Anthropologist, 38 (1), 149-152. Retrieved from

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1525/aa.1936.38.1.02a00330/abstrac>

Rostami-Povey , E. (2007). Afghan refugees in Iran, Pakistan, the U.K., and the U.S., and life after return: A comparative gender analysis. *Iranian studies*, 40(2), 241-261. doi:

10.1080/00210860701269576

Ryan, G., & Bernard, H. R. (2000). *Data management and analysis methods*. In New York, N.Y.

Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 769–802). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Nakanishi, H. (2005). *Afghan refugees and migrants in Iran: Who is responsible for empowering them?*. Retrieved from <http://www.peacebuilding.org>

Saikal, A. (2004). *Modern Afghanistan: A history of struggle and survival*. London: I.B. Tauris

Saito, M. (2008, December). *Second-generation Afghans in neighboring countries. From Mohajir to hamwatan: Afghans return home*. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Retrieved from <http://www.areu.org.af/ContentDetails.aspx?ContentId=16&ParentId=16>

Saito, M. (2009). *Searching for my homeland: Dilemmas between borders; experiencing of young Afghans returning "home" from Pakistan and Iran*. Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Retrieved from

<http://www.areu.org.af/WebsiteSearch.aspx?SearchText=Saito>

Salehi-Isfahani, D. (2005): Human resources in Iran: potentials and challenges. *Iran Studies*. 38(1), 117–147

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Sam, D. L. (2000). *Acculturation as a developmental pathway*. Washington: Western Washington University. Retrieved from http://www.wvu.edu/culture/Sam_Oppedal.htm

Samii, A.W (2000). "The Nation and its Minorities: Ethnicity, Unity and State Policy in Iran." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, No. 1&2, 128-137.

Samovar, L. A., & Porter, R. E. (2000). Understanding Intercultural Communication: An Introduction and Overview. In Samovar, L. A. and Porter, R. E. (Eds.) *Intercultural Communication: A Reader*, 5-16. New York: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Sayed, V. A. (2008, July). *The muhajirs in the Promised Land*. Retrieved from <http://infochangeindia.org/agenda/migration-a-displacement/the-muhajirs-in-the-promised-land.html>

Schmidt, C. (2004). *The analysis of semi-structured interviews*. In U. Flick, E. von Kardorff & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research* (pp. 253-258). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Searle, W., & Ward, C. (1990). The prediction of psychological and socio-cultural adjustment during cross-cultural transition. *International Journal of Intercultural Relation*, 14, 449-464. Retrieved from http://journals1.scholarsportal.info.proxy.bib.uottawa.ca/details.xqy?uri=/10888683/v04i0004/355_tdnociwhinss.xml

Seelye, H. & Wasilewiski, J. (1981). *Social competency development in multicultural children aged 6-13 (Final report of exploratory research on Hispanic background children submitted to National Institute of Education)*, Contract No. 400-80-0003). LaGrange, IL: International Resource Development.

Septfonds, S. D. (2006). Pashtu. In *The encyclopedia of language and linguistics*. 2(4), 231-236.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Shahrani, E. (2006). Dari ya zaban darbaryan [Dari or language of the royal courts]. In R.

Rasual., *Sar guzasht zaban Farsi Dari* [History of the Farsi Dari language].pp. 189-212.

Sharholmen: Sweden. Afghanistan Cultural Association

Spencer-Oatey, H. (2012). *What is culture? A compilation of quotations* . Retrieved from

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/globalpad/openhouse/interculturalskills>

Sussman , N. (2000). The dynamic nature of cultural identity throughout cultural transitions:

Why home is not so sweet. *International Journal of Intercultural Relation*, 4(4), 355-373.

doi: 10.1207/S15327957PSPR0404_5_

Taft, R. (1977). Coping with unfamiliar cultures. In N.Warren (Ed.), *Studies in Cross-cultural Psychology* (Vol. 1, pp. 121-153). London: Academic Press.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worschel (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (pp. 33-47). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Tober, D. (2007). "My body is broken like my country": identity, nation, and repatriation among afghan refugees in Iran. *Iranian Studies*, 40(2), 263-285. doi:

10.1080/00210860701269584

Tober , D. M., Taghdisi, M. H., & Jalali, M. (2006). Fewer children, better life or as many as god want? Family planning among low income Iranian and Afghan refugee families in

Isfahan, Iran . *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 20(1), 50-71. Retrieved from

<http://www.ucpress.edu/ucpjournals.php>.

Triandis, H. C. (1989). The self and social behavior in differing cultural contexts. *Psychological Review*, 96, 506-520.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

- Varenne, H. (2006). *The culture of culture*. Retrieved from http://varenne.tc.columbia.edu/hv/clt/and/culture_def.html
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1993). Where's the "culture" in cross-cultural transition? : Comparative studies of sojourner adjustment. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 24(2), 221-249. doi: 10.1177/0022022193242006
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1997). Where's the "culture" in cross-cultural transition?: Comparative studies of sojourner adjustment. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46(1), 5-68. Retrieved from <http://canada.metropolis.net/research>
- Ward, C., & Kennedy, A. (1999). The measurement of sociocultural adaptation. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(4), 659-677. doi: 10.1016/S0147-1767(99)00014-0
- Weinbaum, M. G. (2004). *Nation building in Afghanistan: Impediments, lessons, and prospects*. *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Ira*. Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), the Johns Hopkins University.
- Whorf, B. (1952). *Collected paper on metalinguistic*. Washington DC: U.S. Department of State, Foreign Service Institute.
- Wiseman, R. L. (1995). *Intercultural communication theory*. (Vol. XIX, pp. 148-195). California: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Wiseman, R. L., & Koester, J. (1993). *Intercultural communication competence*. Newbury: Sage Publication, Inc.
- Yameen, M.H. (2008). *Tahawol Zaban. Tarekhcha Zaban Pardi Dari. Waqeyatha* [Language change. History of Farsi Dari language. Truths]. Kabul, Afghanistan: Charahi Sedarat. Mewand Publications and Printing Press. Retrieved from <http://hep.glp.net/library;jsessionid=28C2E2E2C1F541AF62E7B9ABE77DEC20>
- Yoshilda, T., Matsumoto, D., Akashi, S., Akiyama, T., Furuiye, A., Ishii, C., & Moriyoshi, N.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

(2009). Contrasting experiences in Japanese returnee adjustment: Those who adjust easily and those who do not. *International Journal of Intercultural Relation*, 33, 265-279.

Wickramasekara, P., Sehgal, J., Mehran, F., Noroozi, L., & Eisazedah, S. (2009). *Afghan households and workers in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Profile and impact*. Retrieved from www.ilo.org/publns

Zgubel, M. H. (2004). *Tarekh Adabyat Afghanistan [History of Afghanistan Literature]*. Kabul, Afghanistan: Charahi Sedarat Mewand Publications retrieved from <http://hep.glp.net/library; jsessionid=28C2E2E2C1F541AF62E7B9ABE77DEC2>

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

APPENDIX A- Afghanistan Map



Retrieved from
<http://www1.american.edu/ted/ICE/helmand.html>

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

APPENDIX B- Recruitment Poster

Call for Participants

University of Ottawa

Research Title: Cross-Cultural Adaptation among Afghan Refugees Returning from Iran to Kabul, Afghanistan.

Researcher: Masuma Moravej

In this research, you will participate in an email interview, following up via an online interview through Skype or other online applications. Interviews will be conducted via phone for those who do not have frequently access to Internet. The interviews will be done by the researcher from the University of Ottawa, Canada. In this research, you will be asked to answer a set of questions about your adaptation experiences after your repatriation from Iran to Afghanistan.

As a participant for this research, you should be between the ages of 18 and 40 years old and a resident of Kabul City. As the researcher, I ask for your permission to record the online or via phone interviews for later use in data analysis. The confidentiality of your participation in this research will be assured, and your name will not be mentioned in any section of this research.

There are no known risks to participate in this research. In term of benefits, the goal of this research is to help to Afghan returnees and also the related Afghan and international organizations such as UNHCR and IOM.

The interviews will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. Participation is based on a volunteer contribution. The selection will be done on a first come, first serve basis.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

APPENDIX C- Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Consent Form

Title of the study: Cross-Cultural Adaptation among Afghan Refugees Returning from Iran to
Kabul, Afghanistan.

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above mentioned research study
conducted by Masuma Moravej supervised by Dr.Peruvemba Jaya S.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study is to uncover how the returnees from Iran have
culturally adapted to Afghan society. This study also tries to understand the strategies that the
returnees have used to adapt to the new society (Afghan society).

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of answering the introductory interview
questions and the questionnaire that I will receive via e-mail with following up through online
talking via Skype. In the case that I do not have frequently access to Internet, I will do the
interview by phone call. The interview will last between 60 to 90 minutes. The researcher will
call to set up a convenient time. The interviews will be recorded for data analysis.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

Risks: In case of experiencing any emotional discomfort during the interview, I will share my discomfort with the researcher. If I do not feel relax and comfortable to continue the interview, I will ask the researcher to postpone the conversation to other proper time.

Benefits: My participation will make feasible this study. Through this study, the Afghan and international organizations that are in charge of Afghan returnees will be informed about returnees experience and also their challenges during their adaptation procedure. This knowledge can be useful for these organizations to improve their policies to help returnees for a better reintegration and adaptation.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only for the purpose of this study and will be shared with the researcher and her supervisor. Anonymity will be protected through ensuring that the interviewee will not be called by his/her name in the interviewer's notes, but by pseudonyms

Conservation of data: The data collected, both hard copy and electronic data will be kept in a secure manner. The recorded interview and other electronic data will be saved securely in an external hard drive and the hard copies will be kept securely in a locked cabinet with the researcher. A copy of the data will be kept in the supervisor's University of Ottawa office for 5 years.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate and if I choose not to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions,

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

without suffering any negative consequences. If I choose to withdraw, all data gathered (both electronic and paper based) until the time of withdrawal will be deleted permanently.

Acceptance: I, (Name of participant), agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Masuma Moravej of the Department of Communication, Faculty of Arts, Ottawa university, which being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Peruvemba Jaya S.

I am also aware that I can get support from the Ministry of Immigration and Reintegration in case of need to any help. I know that this ministry has different departments that provide various supports to returnees.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or her supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5

There are two copies of the consent form, one of which is mine to keep.

Participant's signature: (Signature) Date: (Date)

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

APPENDIX D- Interview Questions

Individual Background

1. Where were you born?
2. Did you spend any time in Afghanistan before you were repatriated? (If yes, please explain when it was and how long you lived in Afghanistan.)
3. How many years in total did you live in Iran? Where did you live while you were there?
4. In what year did you return to Afghanistan?
5. Where have you lived since your return?
6. How long have you been living in Kabul?
7. Which language do you speak most often in your daily life?
8. How fluently can you speak Dari or Pashtu language?

Repatriation Experience

1. Please explain the challenges that you faced when you moved to Kabul?
2. Would you please tell me the main cultural differences that you notice between Iran and Kabul?
3. Please explain the strategies or techniques you used to adjust to your new environment.
4. How well do you think you have adapted to living in Kabul?
5. Please explain what do you miss most about Iran.

Daily Life

1. Do you think returnees from Iran tend to spend time together or have they integrated with Kabul society? (Please explain your idea).

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

2. Would you please tell me how comfortable do you feel when communicating with Afghan people in Kabul who do not have experience of living in Iran?
3. Please tell me how you spend your leisure time.
4. Which TV channels do you watch most often?
5. Do you watch Iranian TV? If yes, how do you get Iranian channels?
6. Please describe me whether you follow news from Iran. If yes, please tell me why you feel that you should be aware about Iran news?

Degree of Adaptation:

1. Please explain how do you define yourself as an Afghan?

Extra questions for female Interviewees: (If you are a female participants please answer the following question.)

Please write about some of the main cultural challenges that make it difficult for you as a female to adapt to the Afghan society?

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

APPENDIX E- ANALYSIS

<p>The difficulty experienced since repatriation to Afghanistan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of job opportunities • Difficulty in finding the proper accommodation • Lack of daily life amenities • Lack of proper public system transportation • Insecurity • Corruption in almost all governmental and even non-governmental sectors • Cultural challenges. • Language difficulties.
<p>The main cultural differences that participants found between Afghanistan and Iran</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language differences (Dari and Farsi are different) • Differences in clothing both for male and females • Varieties of clothing for women in Afghanistan • Different social behaviors (e.g: Some women shake hand with a male colleagues or friends in Afghanistan. No woman can do that in Iran. • The popularity of arranged marriage in Afghanistan. • The popularity of polygamy even among some educated men.

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong sense of ethnic belonging among Afghans • Afghanistan society is more man-dominated society than Iran • Afghans have more freedom to express their ideas and to protest against Afghan government and Afghan governors • The popularity of bribery almost in all levels of governmental and non-governmental offices (paying bribe exists in Iran but it is practiced secretly and, not every where)
<p>The applied strategies or techniques to adjust to new environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being flexible and keeping open mind to learn • Using mass media • Having social interaction with the surroundings • Attending in different events or exhibitions in Kabul City

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

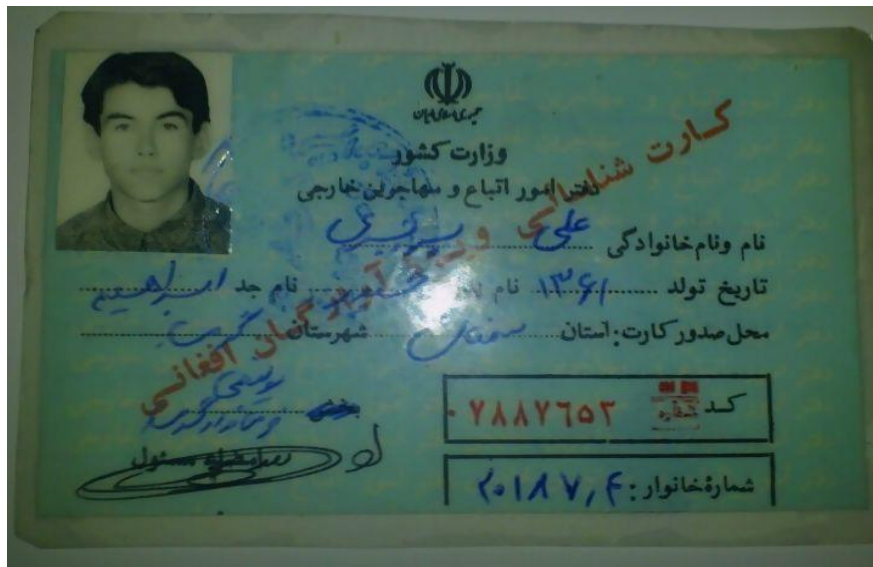
<p>Spending leisure time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spending time with family members• Visiting friends• Reading books• Listening music• Hanging out with friends
<p>Definition of being an Afghan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold an Afghan citizenship• Sense of belonging to Afghanistan

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

APPENDIX- F

Sample of Afghan Refugees ID issued by Iranian Government

Afghan ID card issued years 1980- 2000



Afghan ID card issued years: 2001- 2010

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING
FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN



Afghan ID card issued years: 2012- July , 2013

10

¹⁰ This ID is no more valid since August, 2013 and, All Afghan refugees in Iran are waiting for next Amayesh program (Amayesh8) to receive their new IDs (Source: Tehran-Kart, 2013)
<http://tehran-kart.blogfa.com>

CROSS-CULTURAL ADAPTATION AMONG YOUNG AFGHAN REFUGEES RETURNING FROM IRAN TO AFGHANISTAN

