



Dual Cultural Influences and Career Paths: Second-Generation Iranians in Sweden

Dubbla Kulturella Influenser och Karriärvägar, Andra generationens iranier i Sverige

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Abstract

Nearly four decades after the peak influx of Iranian immigrants to Sweden around 1985-1990, recent academic inquiry has begun to shift its emphasis towards their second generation. These individuals, born to parents who arrived during that period, are now achieving notable positions across various sectors of Swedish society. The significant educational and professional accomplishments of this group, (achieved despite considerable cultural disparities and geographical distances from their parents' country of origin), are noteworthy.

While previous research has primarily concentrated on the adaptation challenges faced by first-generation immigrants in Swedish society, the second generation, particularly concerning their educational and professional achievements, has received less attention. Studies indicate that second-generation Iranian migrants blend Iranian traditions and preferences with Swedish and global traits (Moinian, 2012), have greater proficiency in Swedish than Persian, and often prefer exogamy (Namei, 2012), without especially suffering from identity crises (Ahmadi & Ahmadi, 2012).

Through an intercultural lens, this study examines how the second generation negotiates their identity between two cultures and strategizes their career paths, with education playing a pivotal role. Based on surveys and interviews with six second-generation Iranians born in Sweden, this essay particularly focuses on those whose parents migrated from 1985 to 1990, acknowledging the group's heterogeneity.

The findings of this study, framed within Bourdieu's concept of capital, reveal how the second generation of Iranians in Sweden strategically navigate their educational and career paths. Influenced by the culturally inherited emphasis on education from their families, this navigation exemplifies the embodiment and application of cultural capital within the fields of Swedish society. Additionally, the study shows that these individuals actively engage in both reconstructing their inherited cultural capital and constructing new forms within these societal fields. This process of adapting and creating cultural capital demonstrates a dynamic interaction that creates a pathway for their success, underscoring the fluid and evolving nature of cultural capital, habitus, and field dynamics in new societal contexts.

Keywords: Cultural Capital, Field, Habitus, Identity Formation, Iranian Culture, Second-generation Iranians in Sweden

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1. INTRODUCTION

This essay begins an exploration of the educational and professional pathways of second-generation Iranians in Sweden, aiming to uncover the impact of their dual cultural upbringing on their career strategies and accomplishments.

The focus of this study is on the intercultural dynamics essential in shaping how these young individuals construct their identities and plan their futures. This study is driven by an interest in how second-generation Iranians adapt and transform their inherited cultural capital and habitus within the Swedish socio-cultural environment. Drawing upon Bourdieu's concepts, it investigates the evolving nature of cultural capital and habitus as these individuals transition into Swedish educational and professional fields.

The study also explores how they handle the complexities of belonging to two distinct cultural worlds and what strategies they adopt for success in their educational and professional pursuits.

As a first-generation Iranian immigrant with second-generation children, and having friends and relatives within this demographic, I seek to provide an emic perspective that merges personal insights with academic investigation. This vantage point will hopefully facilitate a deeper comprehension of the intricate ways in which second-generation Iranians in Sweden form their identities and shape their lives, bridging the gap between their Iranian cultural background and the realities of the Swedish societal environment.

2. AIM OF THE STUDY AND STUDY QUESTIONS

This study explores the educational and professional trajectories of second-generation Iranians in Sweden. Employing Bourdieu's concepts of capital, the study aims to comprehend how the cultural capital and habitus acquired within the family, along with the new cultural capital they have accumulated themselves, influence their strategies in the Swedish educational and professional fields.

First-generation Iranian immigrants to Sweden, predominantly from educated classes, often share a secular, Westernized lifestyle and urban culture, fostering a mindset aligning with Swedes (Graham & Khosravi 1997, p.117). They migrated to Sweden primarily due to the Iran-Iraq war and political opposition to the Iranian regime, limiting their ability to return and potentially reducing the direct influence of Iranian culture on their children.

While numerous studies address the challenges faced by first-generation Iranians in host countries, limited research is available on second-generation Iranians. Some studies explore factors influencing the ethnic and national identity of this category. A recurring theme in research highlights the higher educational attainment of second-generation Iranians compared to the native-born majority in Sweden. On the other hand, statistics indicate that 33% of Iranians hold higher education, surpassing the 23% figure for the native-born population (SCB 2020).

The study delves into the cultural identifications and experiences of second-generation Iranians navigating life with a dual cultural grounding in Sweden.

This essay strives to present a holistic view of the cultural capital of second-generation Iranians. It aims to address the following study questions:

- 1- Which cultural capital related to their Iranian background has been transmitted to second-generation Swedish Iranians within their families?
- 2- How do second-generation Swedish Iranians utilize the cultural capital acquired within their families in the Swedish context to navigate their pathway to professional success?

3. PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Previous research on Iranians in Sweden has delved into various facets of the first generation's integration and life in the new country. However, there is a limited number of studies on the second generation. In the following, I have presented nine pieces of research that, in one way or another, are relevant to the current study. The first three specifically focus on second-generation Iranians in Sweden. The next three revolve around second-generation migrants in Sweden in general. Additionally, studies marked no. 6 and 7 explore the impact of social capital among immigrants, while the subsequent study examines the upward mobility of Iranian migrants in Sweden, and the final one investigates the onward mobility of Iranians from Sweden. I will later reference these studies and their findings, primarily in the analysis and discussion sections.

- 1- Ahmadi and Ahmadi's (2012) study explores the identity and experiences of second-generation Iranian immigrants in Sweden by examining their connections to Iranian society, the Iranian diaspora in Sweden, and/or to Swedish society. The study aims to uncover tensions in the identity-building process and compares the Swedish case with that of second-generation Iranians in the United States. Using this comparative perspective, Ahmadi, and Ahmadi attempt to highlight how the social structure of the host societies, as well as the attitudes of the host population, are reflected in the identity-building of second-generation Iranians. Through interviews with 15 participants, the study challenges reported identity crises, revealing a generally harmonious identity construction. The authors argue that the weakness of national identity in Sweden, coupled with the promotion of multicultural ideology, particularly among the younger generation, may have contributed to the prevalence of multicultural and global identities among second-generation Iranians in Sweden.

The findings of the study indicate that "second-generation Iranian immigrants do not suffer especially from any form of identity crises. However, this does not mean that there is no difference between the members of this group and so-called 'typical Swedish children'" (Ahmadi & Ahmadi 2012, p. 217). Patterns of discrimination perception, including "merit discrimination," are identified, with the second generation not interpreting all discrimination as outright racism. Another interesting finding in the study is a notable difference between the interviewees and typical

children of Swedes when it comes to dependency on parents. While the identity formation process does not exhibit tensions or instabilities akin to an identity crisis, the significant distinction lies in the support provided by parents. The narratives from the interviewees reveal ongoing assistance from parents, encompassing not just childhood and adolescence but extending into adulthood, indicating a continued need for support, whether it be financial, emotional, or psychological, irrespective of the interviewees' living arrangements.

The comparison with studies on second-generation Iranians in the United States finally indicates fewer identity tensions in Sweden. According to the authors, in Sweden, the reactive identity is expressed as a multicultural identity, as opposed to the common trend among second-generation Iranians in the United States, where it often manifests itself as an idealized form of pre-Islamic Iranian culture.

- 2- Moinian's (2012) study aims to investigate how five Iranian youngsters in Sweden, aged 12-16 years, articulate their identity as a way of exploring the meaning of being a second-generation Iranian in contemporary Swedish society. The study questions focus on how their Iranian identity is manifested and narrated and how it is perceived as problematic or unproblematic. Moinian also adopts Homi Bhabha's (1994) concept of the 'Third space' to comprehend the dynamics of identity negotiation in children born in Sweden to parents from Iran. The study seeks to demonstrate how these five youngsters, drawing from their own knowledge and daily experiences, construct a 'Third space' that holds specific significance for their identity. Within this space, their intricate, multilingual, multicultural, middle-class identities can be both expressed and acknowledged in a manner not replicated in the broader society.

The youngsters' perspectives highlight a discord between their personal experiences of being born and raised in Sweden and the institutional emphasis on their ethnicity as a categorical and static reference, rather than recognizing it as a dynamic social and cultural process. They also articulate a dynamic process of constructing various identities and self-images, asserting their access to diverse elements of different cultures.

- 3- Namei's (2012) study investigates language maintenance and shift within the Iranian community in Sweden, examining both minority-group and individual levels. The results highlight an increasing trend of exogamy (the social norm of mating or marrying outside one's social group), particularly noticeable among younger generations prioritizing proficiency in the majority language for social and economic success. Second-generation individuals demonstrate a higher degree of socialization in their second language, showcasing greater competence in Swedish compared to Persian.

While Persian remains the primary language for family communication, Swedish is progressively utilized, especially among the younger group. The study's findings align with previous research, confirming a rising trend of exogamy among the younger generation of Iranians in Sweden. Existing socioeconomic data underscores the Iranian community's efforts to maintain their pre-migration living standards in

Western countries, emphasizing the belief that proficiency in the majority language is crucial for social and economic success.

- 4- Aslan et al. (2020) investigate the perceptions and strategies of 21 Swedish-born individuals with non-Western immigrant parents regarding labor market conditions. The labor market challenges faced by young people of migrant descent in Sweden are highlighted, emphasizing the influence of changing labor market dynamics, the problem of discrimination, and socio-economic factors. The study aims to contribute to understanding the social and economic incorporation of immigrants' descendants by exploring their subjective interpretations of and responses to labor market conditions and sheds light on the complex relationship between individual strategies, social structures, and the challenges faced by this specific demographic group in the Swedish labor market.

It delves into the concepts of habitus and cultural capital as introduced by Bourdieu and highlights how individuals from an immigrant background often face challenges due to their limited knowledge of the Swedish labor market. The study focuses on how these individuals consciously transform their habitus to meet the demands of the Swedish job market and identifies three strategies among the informants: selecting jobs in demand, adapting personal habits, and flexibly utilizing their cultural capital. Additionally, it discusses the concept of cultural capital, emphasizing the importance of symbolic resources like acquired skills, knowledge, and qualifications to be able to gain success in the labor market. The study suggests that individuals may strategically use their immigrant background as a resource in specific job sectors while they may face discrimination in others. The study aims to understand how immigrants' descendants navigate the labor market and transform their dispositions to achieve their goals.

- 5- Behtoui's (2019) study explores the complex world of self-identification among young people with a migrant background in Sweden, particularly focusing on individuals aged 17-18. The study employs self-categorization questions, covering national, hyphenated, ethnic, and religious labels, to understand how individuals' characteristics and societal treatment shape self-identity. The central theme underscores the complexity and nuance of identity formation, emphasizing the need to move beyond rigid notions of identity.

The theoretical framework adopts two primary streams in identity research: the psychological notion, characterized by fixed qualities, and the social construction perspective, which recognizes identities as multiple, contradictory, and variable. The study leans towards a sociological conception of identity, highlighting its continual transformation.

The findings indicate that young people's identification is shaped by individual factors like class and parents' origin, as well as social factors including friendship networks and school composition. Notably, those identifying as Swedish or hyphenated exhibit similar characteristics, while those associating with their parents' birth country or religious affiliation show little in common.

External definitions play a pivotal role in internal self-definition, with ethnic statistics potentially oversimplifying the identity of young people with migrant backgrounds. The study argues that identity is relational, influenced by structural positions, power relations, and state categorization. Emphasizing the process of "becoming" rather than fixed "being", the research challenges the idea that ethnic self-labels necessarily align with cultural attitudes or behavior.

Behtoui (2022a, p. 16) notes that "They actively negotiate various forms of identity and belonging; they construct a variety of self-identifications and present themselves in diverse ways in various contexts. They construct and reconstruct forms of identification in their daily lives, in school, the neighborhood, and outside the country. The question of choosing an identity label – 'who I am' – is intimately, as our results indicate, connected with where they are and who the others are. "Thus, the study suggests that "young people's identification is not fixed and bounded but a relatively fluid, situational and dynamic process." (ibid)

Drawing on insights from earlier Swedish studies, which predominantly align with the psychological notion of identity and acculturation, the study adds depth to the understanding of identity dynamics among young migrants in Sweden. It advocates for a more nuanced perspective that considers the intricate interplay of individual and societal factors in the ongoing construction of identity.

- 6- A study conducted by Nygård and Behtoui (2020) explores the impact of social capital on the educational outcomes of children with immigrant backgrounds in Sweden. Utilizing data from three surveys conducted in 2012, 2014, and 2016 among ninth-grade students, the study seeks to address if children of immigrants have better access to social capital than children of non-immigrants, and if so, if access to social capital among children of immigrants vary depending on their parents' region of origin. The study also considers whether the educational attainment among children of immigrants and children of non-immigrants have similar returns from social capital.

The findings of the study indicate that children of immigrants often have equal or better access to social capital compared to children with Swedish-born parents but that access to social capital varies among different immigrant groups. For example, children with Asian backgrounds consistently show better access to social capital, but results for other immigrants, such as those with a Southeast European background, vary. Finally, the study suggests that social capital is positively associated with educational outcomes for all students, regardless of their parents' origins. Despite not being nationally representative, the surveys offer valuable insights, contributing to the understanding of how social connections influence the educational experiences of immigrant children in Sweden. In this way, the findings emphasize the nuanced and varied nature of these dynamics.

- 7- Another study by Behtoui (2022a) centers on Bourdieu's concept of social capital, defined not only as the network of relations but also as the aggregate of the actual or potential resources linked to the possession of these social networks. The study

dives into the impact of social capital among immigrants and their descendants in Sweden. The central argument asserts that akin to individuals in the majority population, it is not the immigrants' social networks *per se* but the resources embedded in them which define the migrants' social capital.

The study elucidates the challenges confronted by newcomers in establishing social networks in a new environment, shedding light on the role of discrimination in both formal and informal contexts (in contract and contact). Among the topics discussed are the heterogeneity among immigrant groups, the significance of resources in immigrant communities, the homophily principle which means that interactions usually occur among actors with similar resources and lifestyles, and the stratifying effects of social capital.

Moreover, the study underscores the dynamic nature of social capital, emphasizing its contextuality. It argues against homogenizing all immigrants and stresses the importance of recognizing the diversity in socio-historical environments, resources, time of arrival, and legal status among different immigrant groups. The concept of bounded solidarity within immigrant communities is explored as a pivotal source of social capital.

The study also discusses counter-stratification, where marginalized groups organize to challenge prevailing power dynamics, or when civil society organizations support people from subordinate groups. Additionally, it highlights the role of mainstream civil society organizations in supporting individuals from marginalized groups.

The study concludes by emphasizing the necessity of studying social capital beyond individual resources, advocating for a multi-level approach. While acknowledging the positive outcomes of social capital, it recognizes the existence of negative social capital and urges a nuanced understanding of the contextual effects of social relationships.

In summary, the study offers a comprehensive review of social capital in the context of immigration, advocating for a detailed and varied understanding of the diverse experiences and challenges encountered by immigrants and their descendants in Sweden.

- 8- Another pertinent study by Behtoui (2022b) delves into the pathways to success for individuals with an Iranian background. It leverages theoretical insights from social stratification theories, specifically emphasizing Bourdieu's concepts of economic, cultural, and social capital, to guide the investigation into how individuals and social groups strive to attain top positions in society.

Using Swedish register data and in-depth interviews, the study explores the positions of individuals with an Iranian background within the fields of economics, politics, and academia. Objective career success indicators, including income level and occupational status within these domains, are central to the study. Additionally, the

research examines the perceptions held by Swedes regarding this specific immigrant group.

The study reveals that "compared with other immigrant groups from the global South, individuals with an Iranian background, to a greater extent, were able to attain higher-ranking positions in the fields of power investigated. These outcomes, as the results show, emerge from the resources that this group brought with them - their cultural and social capital - in intersection with external factors in their new country of residence (Sweden) over a specific time period" (Behtoui 2022b, p. 54). The author argues that "The (hyper-)selectivity of immigrants with an Iranian background regarding their access to educational, cultural, and political capital is a major explanation when it comes to their career success after migration" (Behtoui 2022b, p. 60).

The study also underscores the significant role played by the characteristics and resources of migrant community organizations in the host country in determining the level of social capital available to immigrant families.

Furthermore, successful outcomes are noted to be influenced by the socio-historical context and 'being in the right place at the right time.' This is linked to specific features of Swedish society during the 1980s and 1990s, characterized by its democratic welfare state that treated immigrants generously and provided them with "the opportunity for free education, financial security, universal healthcare, and even quick and easy naturalization" (Kelly 2013, p. 16 in Behtoui 2022b, p. 64). Additionally, there was an increasing demand in the Swedish political landscape for candidates with immigrant backgrounds, and the deregulation and privatization of Swedish welfare services in the 1990s opened new avenues for financial opportunities.

In summary, this study emphasizes the intricate interplay between individual resources, community resources, and socio-historical contexts in explaining the successful outcomes of individuals with an Iranian background in Sweden. Despite their accomplishments in accessing high-ranking positions, the study shows that individuals with an Iranian background are not necessarily acknowledged as part of the majority population and discriminatory practices also persist. The study concludes that "These outcomes, as the results show, emerge from the resources that this group brought with them — their cultural and social capital — in interaction with external factors in their new country of residence (Sweden) over a specific time period." (Bhtoui 2022b, p.54)

- 9- Melissa Kelly's (2012) study explores the experiences of young adults from Iranian migrant backgrounds raised in Sweden, who later relocated to London, UK. Utilizing a two-step mixed methods approach, the study combines population register data and life history interviews with onward migrants in London.

The interviews underscore a recurring theme of parental expectations for academic excellence and the pursuit of high-level careers from an early age. Despite the initial

state support in the 1980s and early 1990s, Iranian migrants faced challenges, especially in securing meaningful employment. This prompted some to choose onward migration in search of better opportunities, with the informants perceiving London as a more conducive environment for achieving these goals than Sweden, ultimately leading to their decision to migrate.

The findings indicate that many of the Swedish Iranians who moved to London "wanted to make the most of their education and secure maximum economic gains. Beyond this, however, were other factors like feeling at ease with one's minority status. While Iranians have fared well in Sweden, relative to other immigrant categories, many nevertheless feel that - compared to their situation in Iran - they have faced not only downward economic mobility but also downward social mobility." (Hosseini-Kaladjahi 1997 in Kelly 2012, p. 245).

The study underscores a dual emphasis on economic considerations and the restoration of dignity and control in life. Onward migration is portrayed as a multifaceted phenomenon, serving purposes beyond mere economic motives. The findings make a valuable contribution to the ongoing discourse on the integration and sense of belonging of migrants.

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section introduces key terms and concepts essential for the study:

Second-generation Iranians

Second-generation Iranians are individuals born in Sweden to at least one Iranian-born parent and in total 45,143 persons had this background in 2022 according to SCB. Despite the term implying homogeneity, this group is diverse, encompassing variations in ethnicity, social, educational, cultural, religious, and gender backgrounds. The study specifically focuses on those born in Sweden with two Iranian parents, whose parents immigrated during 1985-1990, recognizing distinctions from migrants arriving in other periods.

Cultural capital

Broadly, cultural capital encompasses the cultural assets of an individual—such as education, intellect, speech patterns, and attire—that play a role in fostering social mobility within a stratified society. Cultural capital is the set of resources and knowledge one has that can be beneficial, especially in things like finding a job. In this study, the term is employed following Bourdieu's (1990) understanding of it which means signifying the symbols, ideas, and preferences strategically utilized as resources in social interactions. Bourdieu categorized cultural capital into three sources: objective (comprising cultural goods, books, and works of art), embodied (encompassing language, mannerisms, and personal preferences), and institutionalized (including qualifications, education, and credentials).

Habitus

Habitus is how a social group's culture is internalized in individuals during early childhood socialization. It involves ingrained ways of naturally approaching life based on one's background (Bourdieu 1977, 1984). It shapes how people perceive and respond to their social world through habits, skills, and character disposition. The term also encompasses ways of thinking, behaving, and acting based on social and cultural backgrounds and experiences.

Field:

A "Field," as conceptualized by Bourdieu, refers to "a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independently of those of politics and the economy" (Bourdieu, 1998: 41). Fields are where people, using various forms of capital, strive to improve their social positions. They are essential in shaping how individuals act and perceive their social environment, forming the backdrop against which personal and cultural growth occurs.

Social capital:

Social capital, as utilized in this study, extends beyond the mere network of relations between individuals. It incorporates an evaluation of the capital's value—whether economic, cultural, or symbolic—within these networks. This approach is aligned with Bourdieu's understanding, where social capital is not solely defined by the network of relations but also encompasses the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to the possession of these social networks (Bourdieu, 2001, p. 102).

4.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**4.2.1. Creating Two Categories**

Building upon the insights from the Previous Research section, I have crafted two categories, which serve as conceptual frameworks, encapsulating distinct patterns observed in the experiences of first-generation Iranian migrants and their second-generation descendants.

In this context, the term "category" underscores the aim of these constructs to represent and synthesize various individual experiences. Unlike presenting a perfect or universally applicable representation, the purpose is to highlight key aspects and integrate diverse individual experiences within each category. These models are ideal types and may not represent every individual's experience within each group. They serve as general guidelines rather than rigid categories.

After completing a comprehensive analysis of my own study findings, I have enriched and refined these categories.

Category 1: A first-generation Iranian migrant

The first-generation Iranian migrant is characterized by a distinct set of attributes that form a category within the framework of this study. They usually are well educated and despite the linguistic barriers, are determined to improve their living situation. Culturally and intellectually engaged, they reflect a background as a secular, political activist in Iran before coming to Sweden. According to Hosseini-Kaladjahi (1997), a considerable number of them were young intellectuals with a left-leaning political orientation.

In terms of Bourdieu's concepts, this group's habitus—formed by their intellectual and cultural experiences in Iran—faces a transformation when encountering the new fields of Swedish society. This process involves adapting and augmenting their cultural capital to fit into the different social and professional fields in Sweden.

When this group began seeking employment in Sweden in the 1990s, it coincided with one of the most severe financial crises in the country's modern history, marked by a significant decrease in employment opportunities. One of the strategies they chose both to promote their chances for better positions and to postpone the unfavorable conditions in the labor market was education and re-education (Hosseini-Kaladjahi, 2012). This action can be seen as an effort to accumulate new forms of cultural capital to enhance their social mobility in the new society.

Building on the insights discovered in my own study, these additional characteristics emerge: They often expand their family, having a second child born in Sweden when they feel they have achieved stability, and at least at the beginning, they are almost all residing in flats within segregated areas. Although their engagement with the Swedish school system is limited due to unfamiliarity and language constraints, these parents strive to instill the importance of academic success in their children. Their support manifests through efforts to supplement their children's education with knowledge in subjects such as mathematics, arts, and history. Despite facing challenges in navigating the intricacies of the Swedish school system, these parents actively participate in fostering a positive learning environment at home. Regular reading habits and a keen interest in societal and political developments showcase their commitment to staying informed and involved in broader societal issues beyond their immediate environment.

This behavior illustrates two key aspects of Bourdieu's theory: the transmission and adaptation of cultural capital. On one hand, these parents transmit values, knowledge, and dispositions to their children, a process essential for the inheritance of cultural capital across generations. On the other hand, they adapt their cultural capital to the new societal context of Sweden, which includes constructing new forms of cultural capital, such as learning the language or pursuing further education. These dual processes underscore the dynamic nature of cultural capital, demonstrating how it is both preserved within the family and transformed to adapt to new social environments.

Category 2: A second-generation Iranian migrant

The second-generation Iranian migrant in this study is a distinctive category, raised in households that emphasize the importance of academic achievement and higher education. These individuals effectively navigate their identities between two cultures, demonstrating a flexible and adaptive habitus. They do not typically experience significant identity crises, indicative of their successful negotiation between Iranian and Swedish cultural contexts.

They embody a combination of cultural duality, linguistic resilience, and a keen interest in higher education, and are characterized by exogamous tendencies. They adeptly accumulate and utilize cultural capital across different social fields. The favorable features of Swedish society during the 1980s and 90s played a significant role in their harmonious identity formation.

Building on the insights from my study, these second-generation individuals often bear the responsibility for language acquisition due to their parents' limited proficiency in Swedish.

Engaging in regular schools, forming connections with ethnic Swedish peers, developing a book-reading habit, and practicing exogamy is pivotal in enhancing their language skills and establishing their identity within Swedish society. The exogamous tendencies of these individuals illustrate their openness to forming relationships beyond their own ethnic community, reflecting an aspect of their bicultural identity in Sweden.

Habitus and influences from both Iranian and Swedish cultures, facilitate their development of linguistic proficiency and autonomy. Their language learning journey is characterized by a self-driven approach to acquiring proficiency in Swedish, often surpassing that of their parents. This reflects a form of adaptive cultural capital, where they autonomously develop key skills essential for navigating and succeeding in their bicultural context.

These second-generation individuals often tend to distance themselves from Iranian culture, favoring integration into Swedish society. This is reflected in their stronger proficiency in Swedish compared to Persian and a preference for Swedish traditions over Iranian ones. They tend to have closer relationships with ethnic Swedish peers and maintain limited or no contact with the Iranian diaspora, further indicating their inclination towards Swedish cultural norms and viewing Sweden as their primary home country.

Despite facing more challenging circumstances in parental involvement compared to their ethnic Swedish counterparts, they cultivate a robust commitment to their studies, instilled by their upbringing. This commitment includes habits of reading and attentiveness to social and political contexts. Although they have limited connections to the Iranian diaspora and may have relatives in Sweden or other countries, they often take individual responsibility for their careers. Upon entering the workforce, many of them establish connections with Iranians in their respective fields, creating networks that facilitate mutual support, and collaboration. This process exemplifies the dynamic adaptation, and expansion of their social capital within the Swedish societal context, as conceptualized by Bourdieu.

4.2.2. THEORETICAL CONCEPTS: CULTURAL CAPITAL, HABITUS AND FIELD

In analyzing the experiences of second-generation Iranian migrants in Sweden, this study draws upon Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, habitus, and field. Additionally, both in the following sections and in the "Discussions" section, the study addresses the critiques these concepts have received.

Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital encompasses skills, tastes, and credentials that individuals use to gain advantages in society (Bourdieu 1986, p. 243). These concepts have been frequently applied in migration studies. However, recent critiques, like Erel (2010) highlight the role of actor reflexivity, where individuals adapt their strategies based on their experiences. Furthermore, the importance of transnational influences on migrants' cultural capital is increasingly acknowledged (Kelly & Lusi, 2006; Joy et al., 2018; Gu & Lee, 2019), recognizing the dynamic and multifaceted nature of cultural adaptation in migration. This study recognizes the dynamic nature of cultural capital, particularly in the context of migrants who actively reshape and augment their inherited cultural resources.

Bourdieu describes habitus as the ingrained habits and dispositions shaped by one's environment (Bourdieu 1990, p. 53). Critics have argued that this concept can lean towards determinism and fatalism, suggesting a predestined social trajectory based on early socialization. In contrast, this study approaches habitus as a dynamic construct that evolves with new experiences, particularly highlighting the adaptability of second-generation migrants who navigate between Iranian and Swedish cultures.

The concept of field refers to social arenas where struggles for resources and recognition occur (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992, p. 97). Erel criticizes the 'rucksack approach' often associated with this concept, where migrants are seen as merely carrying their cultural resources from one field to another without the ability to actively engage and transform these resources (Erel, 2010). This study diverges from this approach by illustrating how second-generation Iranian migrants in Sweden actively engage with and transform their cultural capital within the Swedish social fields.

Dietz (2018, p. 7) emphasizes the active process of cultural reproduction involving adaptation and 'routinization' in new social contexts. This perspective is crucial in understanding how second-generation migrants do not simply inherit and reproduce cultural practices, but actively engage in modifying and reinterpreting them, showcasing their agency.

While acknowledging the influence of family in shaping cultural capital, this study demonstrates how second-generation migrants actively adapt and transform these inherited resources, aligning with Dietz's perspective on dynamic cultural practices.

The study also explores the flexible and adaptive habitus of second-generation migrants, countering the critique of fatalism by showing how they actively shape their identity and cultural practices in response to their unique bicultural experiences.

In applying Bourdieu's framework alongside these critiques and Dietz's insights, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the dynamic interplay of cultural capital, habitus, and field in the lives of second-generation Iranian migrants. It captures their active engagement in shaping their educational and professional paths, highlighting their agency in navigating the complexities of a multicultural society.

Cultural Capital: Resources and Knowledge

The concept of cultural capital refers to the resources, encompassing education and knowledge, that individuals possess and can utilize. The interest in quality education and the habit of regular reading are examples of cultural capital, where knowledge and education are considered valuable assets for success and social positioning.

In the case of first-generation Iranian migrants, they were generally well-educated, engaged in regular reading, and actively participated in social and political discussions both in society and at home, thereby transmitting this cultural capital to their children.

In addressing my first study question, for the second generation, these identified characteristics function as a form of cultural capital—a valuable set of symbolic resources crucial in their involvement in the educational and professional fields. This cultural capital is embodied, representing acquired ways of thinking, behaving, and acting that significantly contribute to their advancement within these fields in Swedish society.

Cultural Reproduction and Ethnic Identification

Members of a specific ethnic group, carrying a particular cultural legacy, engage in cultural reproduction that is driven by daily practices. As Dietz (2018) explains, “Cultural reproduction, both intra- and intergenerationally, drives—by means of daily praxis—processes of what Giddens (1984) called ‘routinization,’ which in turn structure this praxis.” This process facilitates the management of cultural continuity, encompassing both objectified (institutions, rituals) and subjectified (knowledge of practices and representations) aspects of culture.

The interaction of these cultural aspects, as Dietz points out, leads to the formation of a distinctive habitus: “The permanent confluence and interaction of both aspects of culture...generate a canon of culturally specific practices and representations, a distinctive habitus” (Dietz 2018, p. 7). This approach overcomes the divide between cultural objectivism and subjectivism and also distinguishes between cultural reproduction and ethnic identification processes. Dietz notes, “While the reproduction and/or transformation of inherited culture is carried out by updating and/or modifying ritualized symbolic practices, ethnic identification...implies a discursive—conscious, although later internalized—act of comparing, selecting, and giving meaning to certain cultural practices and representations as contrast markers in intercultural situations.” (ibid)

In the context of first and second-generation migrants, these insights offer a deeper understanding of how inherited cultural practices are preserved, adapted, or transformed across generations. The first generation may focus on maintaining and reproducing their

cultural practices, while the second generation, facing different social dynamics and influences in the host country, often engages in a more dynamic process of selecting, internalizing, and sometimes redefining these practices. This ongoing negotiation and adaptation reflect the fluidity of their cultural and ethnic identities, shaping their unique experiences within a new societal framework.

Cultural capital, in this context, involves ethnic identification, reflecting a conscious choice by second-generation migrants to associate with certain values related to education and knowledge. This choice is influenced by both their Iranian heritage and the high value placed on education in Swedish society. Concurrently, their habitus, as described by Bourdieu (1990, p. 53), involves cultural reproduction, where educational values are often internalized and shape approaches to education, sometimes unconsciously. This dual process indicates that the adoption of educational values by the second generation is a result of both inheriting them from their Iranian background and actively choosing them within the Swedish context. It acknowledges the interplay between the inherited and the individually shaped aspects of cultural practices, illustrating the complex dynamics of cultural identity formation among second-generation migrants.

Considering the study's findings regarding the importance of education and knowledge within the family environments of first-generation Iranian migrants, it becomes pertinent to delve deeper into these aspects. This focus stems from observing how first-generation families prioritize educational values, and how these priorities influence the experiences and choices of their second-generation descendants in Sweden. Therefore, the upcoming section, "The Significance of Education in Iranian Culture" is devoted to examining these educational priorities. It aims to explore how educational values are regarded and how they shape the educational and professional paths of the second generation within the Swedish context and are influenced by first-generation parents.

5. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EDUCATION IN IRANIAN CULTURE

Analyzing the cultural characteristics of Iran, acknowledged as one of the oldest civilizations dating back to 4000 BC and referred to as the first historical people by Hegel, presents a complex challenge. Archaeological findings from (499 B.C.E.), the time of the Achaemenids such as those highlighted by Hallock (1969), provide insights into the systematic and thoughtful education and training of Persian children. Similar discoveries span various periods in Iran's extensive history. While this longstanding tradition is impressive, the focus of this study is limited to the past century, a period marked by the ongoing modernization of the country. This exploration aims to shed light on the reasons behind the significant value placed on education in the culture of contemporary Iranians.

In this section, I aim to provide a concise and illustrative overview of the significance of education and knowledge in Iran through three examples. These examples involve examining historical reasons pertinent to the first-generation Iranian migrants, emphasizing the role of poetry—an integral identity factor for Iranians throughout history—as a revered source of knowledge, and ultimately exploring instances that manifest in the daily lives of Iranians.

5.1. A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND, MODERNIZATION AND EDUCATION

Over the past century, education has emerged as a pivotal force in shaping political and social landscapes in Iran, serving as a significant catalyst for individuals seeking to enhance their social and class standing. The historical examples outlined below aim to elucidate the transformative influence of education, particularly during crucial periods, on the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity in Iran.

Education has been used by both the state and oppositional and innovative forces as an effective tool to bring about societal and individual change. In this way, education has also been a modern power factor on various levels.

During the time of the Qajar dynasty (1789-1925), a realization of Europe's achievements prompted a shift in perspective among Iranian thinkers. According to Menashri (2020), a growing number of them came to view education as a key clandestine source of Western progress, with its adoption being deemed the primary pathway to advancement. In 1811, against the backdrop of this changing viewpoint, the first two Iranian students embarked on a journey to London, marking them among the first Middle Eastern students to pursue education in Europe. This trend continued, with another five students departing in 1815 and additional instances in the subsequent years. Their mission was to return and contribute to the country's modernization, a task they worked hard to accomplish.

As Menashri (2020) highlights, upon their return, individuals who had completed their education in Europe secured prestigious positions although these positions often did not directly align with their fields of study. Regardless of their academic backgrounds, their social status would have guaranteed successful careers; nonetheless, the significance of new education, especially European education, grew in their advancement. Over time, affluent families began to recognize the necessity of educational qualifications in shaping their children's careers. The fascination with Western science and technology, combined with a curiosity about these European "explorers", transformed these graduates into focal points of social attention. Academic credentials were of lesser interest to people; what held greater importance was the exposure of these individuals to the West and its perceived secrets and mysteries.

These returning students soon became high-ranking officials, initiating the modernization process in the country and laying the foundation for Iran's own specialized higher education institutions. Influenced by new ideological and political ideas in Europe, they also formed movements, political groups, parties, newspapers, and journals that significantly impacted the country's destiny on all fronts. The prominent Iranian writer Hedayat who was himself a returning student from France, commented on these returning graduates, characterizing them as "inexperienced youngsters," yet noting that each carried a thesis (*resale*) about the French Revolution under their arms and aspired to assume the roles of Robespierre or Danton (Menashri 2020).

Being educated, especially in Europe, also carried significant status and economic security at that time, but this opportunity was limited to a few children and youth from upper-class families. The common people were still largely illiterate. In summary, it can be said that until

Reza Shah became king (1925), higher education was associated with social status, successful careers, and economic security—something everyone desired but very few had access to.

Reza Shah aimed to modernize the country, and he effectively employed modern education to achieve this goal. According to Mikiya Koyagi (2009), while it's important not to overemphasize the scale of education and state control during this period, the era of Reza Shah marked the fulfillment of a long-standing desire shared by previous generations. This was manifested in the increased state initiative to extend modern education to the Iranian population.

Marashi (2008) contends that during this era, the emerging middle class embraced an education system that celebrated their national identity rooted in pre-Islamic history. Simultaneously, they adopted an anti-Arab and anti-clerical stance, if not outright anti-Islamic. The Iranian press of the time frequently portrayed education in ancient Iran as a tradition that had been dismantled by the Arab invasion and was poised for revival by modern Iranians. Nevertheless, the advent of modern education resulted in the displacement of the clergy from their educational stewardship, thereby diminishing their influence.

Simultaneously, modern education played a crucial role in shaping national identity in a vast country with diverse ethnic groups, each possessing its own language and traditions. Reza Shah successfully established a central authority that could bring together these ethnic groups, thereby strengthening the Iranian national identity. During his reign, the establishment of the University of Tehran marked a pivotal development. Another significant change was the directive to all educational institutions in Iran to admit women, as highlighted in *The New Penguin Dictionary of Modern History 1789-1945* (2001).

Religious forces noticed that this modernization was not in their favor. In the era of Reza Shah, the nationalist government, as outlined by Mikiyaga Koyagi (2009), implemented stringent measures to closely control the educational system. Their objective was to create a uniform framework for cultivating a united citizenry, involving the standardization of curricula, the promotion of Persian as the official language of instruction, the encouragement of adult education, and the issuance of standardized textbooks. The ultimate aim was to instill loyalty among Iranian citizens, fostering a sense of unity through a shared national identity. In this context, education played a pivotal role as a crucial instrument in the broader initiative of nation-building. During Reza Shah's era, the middle class and women were also given the opportunity for education. National identity and citizenship took shape, and the clergy lost their role in education.

The period of modernization, prominently led by Reza Shah's son, the Shah, and his White Revolution initiatives initiated in 1963, sustained considerable momentum. These measures facilitated extensive education for individuals of all ages, including children and adults, men, and women, even in the most remote areas of the nation. The White Revolution played a pivotal role in swiftly modernizing Iran, characterized by significant land reforms, urbanization, and the rise of a substantial middle class. Additionally, the establishment of the

Literacy Corps provided a platform for young men to fulfill their mandatory military service by serving as literacy teachers in villages.

The 1950s-60s, as described by Milani, were "two decades of worshipful emulation of all that was Western" (Milani 2008, p. 813). However, in the 1960s and early 1970s, Iran experienced a significant shift, marked by a return to native roots—a period of introspection and cultural self-assertion. The rapid changes during the Shah's era had diverse consequences across different domains. In the realm of education, there was a surge in aspirations for university-level studies, creating a demand that exceeded the available spots.

As noted by Menashri (2020), the majority of Persians viewed education as the most effective means to secure a promising future for their children. This perception led to a swift and substantial expansion of the school system to meet the escalating demand. However, it also resulted in heightened expectations that proved challenging for the government to fulfill. Navigating university studies was particularly challenging, with intense competition prevailing at the time.

By 1978 only 12 percent of the population studied at the universities. In each of the three last years of the Shah's rule 250,000-300,000 graduates applied for university places, but, even at their peak, in 1978, admissions did not quite reach 30,000. (Iranica Encyclopedia 2011: Vol. VIII, Fasc. 2, p. 216-219)

Families invested significantly in their children's education, hoping they would secure a coveted spot at the university. Consequently, private courses and home tutoring became widespread. For families with the means and whose children didn't gain admission to Iranian universities, sending them abroad became more popular. Again, the number of students leaving Iran for education abroad increased. A notable difference from previous times was that they were no longer heading to French-speaking countries but to England and the USA, and as Milani pointed out, "Gradually English supplanted French as the language of power" (Milani 2008, p. 816). This historical backdrop highlights the paramount importance and value placed on higher education among first-generation Iranian migrants to Sweden between 1985 and 1990. The majority of them belonged to the cohort that successfully navigated the rigorous competition for university admission. For those who failed, migrating to Sweden provided a new opportunity.

5.2. POETRY AND KNOWLEDGE

To continue, poetry is a crucial pillar in Iranian culture and has functioned as a carrier of knowledge throughout Iranian history.

In ancient Iran, the country played a pivotal role as the cradle of science and art, fostering great scientists in fields such as astronomy and medicine. Renowned thinkers, philosophers, and artists, particularly poets like Hafiz, Sa'di, Ferdowsi, Khayyam, and Rumi, flourished in this culturally rich landscape. Their enduring works persist, and their poems are still frequently read and discussed by Iranians today, instilling a sense of pride in the nation for its illustrious history. This profound pride in Iran's cultural heritage, with Persian literature at its core, appears to be widely acknowledged by researchers, including Ahmadi (2005, p. 23-45),

who argues that Iranian national identity has successfully integrated the legacy of the ancient political heritage of kingship, Persian language and literature, and Iranian religions, namely, Zoroastrianism and Sh'ism.

Historically, knowledge in Iranian culture manifested itself through poetry, providing a unique avenue for even illiterate individuals to acquire knowledge by memorizing verses. Traditional Iranian clergy schools, known as *mekhtabs*, typically reserved for elite boys, integrated Quranic learning with readings from classic traditional Persian literature, notably featuring the works of Sa'di. Learning by rote constituted the prevailing pedagogical approach (Milani 2008, p. 814).

Persian poetry, as a rich cultural heritage, encapsulates diverse facets of life, encompassing history, philosophy, religion, mysticism, traditions, life experiences, feelings, and imagination. Beyond its expressive function, poetry safeguards the Persian language, serving as a vital identity marker for Iranian culture. In the context of Islamic restrictions on music, song, and visual arts, poetry emerges as an alternative form of expression. The tradition of reciting poetry aloud endures, and traditional Persian poetry possesses an inherent musical quality, often accompanied by intricate patterns and miniatures in poetry books. Poetry continues to be a vital and inseparable aspect of Iranian culture, ingrained in everyday life, and contributing to the dissemination of knowledge.

In other words, the importance of education in Iranian culture is deeply rooted in history and can be encapsulated in the historical proverb, "Knowledge is power", which is not only widely known but also printed in schoolbooks and associated with various educational occasions. Also "Seek knowledge, from the cradle to the grave" is among the popular proverbs among Iranians.

Within Iranian households, a telling reflection of cultural values emerges — if three books adorn the shelves, one is likely the Quran, while the other two are poetry collections. The pervasive use of poetry in daily language signifies a deep appreciation for knowledge. Individuals incorporating poetry into conversations are esteemed as wise and cultured. Notably, even President Obama quoted an Iranian poet in 2014, signaling a diplomatic gesture aimed at fostering improved relations with the Islamic Republic.

The intricate relationship between poetry and knowledge is underscored by Menashri (2020), who notes the Iranian admiration for classical literature and poetry, emphasizing the role of knowledge. Sa'di, for instance, dedicated a chapter in *Golestan* to "*tarbiyyat*" (training), asserting that human ability is rooted in knowledge. A phrase from Ferdowsi's *Shahname*, "Capable is the one who possesses knowledge," became the Ministry of Education's motto in the 1930s, later modified to "education is worship" following the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Despite these differences, both phrases celebrate the transformative power of learning.

The unique status of poetry in the Iranian culture is also observed by Manoukian (2012) who explores the intersection of history and poetry in Iran, contending that they establish norms for distinguishing right from wrong and truth from falsehood. His work, "City of Knowledge in Twentieth Century Iran: Shiraz, History and Poetry," positions poetry as a potent discourse shaping self-identity and power dynamics. According to Manoukian, Persian poetry functions

as a technology of the self, offering a foundation for various claims and expressions of human existence.

All in all, the high importance of poetry in Iranian culture also serves as evidence of a deep appreciation for knowledge in Iranian culture.

5.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A HIGH PERFORMER

Finally, it is crucial to highlight how Iranians commend those who excel in their studies, offering valuable insights into the significance of a good education within Iranian culture.

Until recent years, in the Iranian educational background, students were graded in all subjects from the first year of primary school, with the highest achievable grade being 20. It's only in recent times that this practice has shifted to grading starting from the 6th grade. Students achieving the highest grades in their classes are bestowed with the title of "The Best Student," or "*Shagerd avval*" in Persian. It is customary for the best student to receive prizes and recognition, often presented by the school principal in ceremonies attended by the entire school.

During the period when grading began from the first year, it was a very common practice for families to publicize their children's academic achievements by placing advertisements with photos in various magazines. Families actively share news of their children's academic accomplishments even today. This collaborative effort between the family and the school aims to showcase the student's achievements. Moreover, schools, municipalities, and regions organize competitions among the best students.

Similar enthusiasm and pride are evident in connection with the University Entrance Exam, *Concour*, the nationwide exam determining admission to premier educational institutions. Intense competition ensues between schools, municipalities, cities, and regions to demonstrate that their students attain top rankings in *Concour*. Furthermore, this excitement extends to various media outlets, with several daily magazines, other publications, and even TV channels showcasing individuals who have achieved the best results in the *Concour*, further highlighting the significance of academic accomplishments in the public sphere.

The competition for excellent grades engages not only the individuals themselves but also various institutions. It remains a constant and pertinent topic in the lives of children and young people, exerting a natural influence on their identity and mentality. This mentality is the legacy that first-generation Iranians have carried with them from Iran.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 DATA SELECTION

The data collection process for this study comprised three distinct methodological stages. Firstly, a semi-structured survey, encompassing a combination of closed and open-ended questions, was distributed to the informants approximately one week before our scheduled meeting. Respondents were given the option to provide their responses either via email or

during the initial face-to-face meeting. Two informants opted for email submissions, while others preferred to address the questions in person.

Thereafter, an in-depth interview conducted via Zoom followed the survey. During this session, detailed discussions took place, and I diligently recorded notes on the insights shared by each informant. Subsequently, these notes were sent to the respective informants for confirmation via email. Notably, two informants took the opportunity to refine their answers for increased accuracy. Additionally, email communication served as a platform for seeking clarification on unclear responses and incorporating two additional questions into the survey based on insights gained from the second interview. The initial two informants were requested to respond to these supplementary questions via email.

Finally, post-interview ongoing email communication played a pivotal role in the validation process. I sought confirmation from each informant regarding the accuracy of the noted discussions and, when necessary, clarified any ambiguities. It is noteworthy that during this phase, two informants chose to modify their responses to ensure greater precision. Given the systematic documentation of findings from each interview and the validation process undertaken in collaboration with the respective interviewees, I believe these measures were effective in mitigating the risk of potential misunderstandings.

6.2 SELECTION OF INFORMANTS

As explained below, I conducted interviews with a diverse group of six second-generation Iranian migrants, all born in Sweden. To ensure a broad and representative sample, the snowball technique was employed to expand beyond my immediate network as I am a first-generation Iranian immigrant myself. The process began with two individuals I personally knew, and through them, I established contact with three others indirectly connected to my network. Additionally, one participant was entirely unknown to me before the interview.

In the informant selection process, I aimed to encompass a wide spectrum of characteristics such as age, gender, profession, city of birth or residence, and family background. The diversity extended to factors like parents' education, occupation, and ethnicity, acknowledging the multiethnic nature of Iran. This consideration is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of second-generation Iranian migrants. The informants consist of three women and three men, aged 23 to 37, residing in three different cities, and employed in disparate fields, workplaces, and positions. Despite the relatively small number of informants, the variation achieved in these demographic factors is substantial, contributing to the richness and depth of the collected data. I have chosen to protect the informants by naming them with letters and numbers.

It should be noted that the selection of informants for this study was not based on their 'success' criteria. However, among the six informants, four hold university degrees, and one is currently a student. Of the four of the degree holders, only two are employed in their field of study. While this group offers a diverse perspective and the sample covers a broad range of experiences, it should be emphasized that it does not represent the entire population of second-generation Iranians in Sweden.

6.3. DISCUSSION OF METHODOLOGY

The utilization of digital meetings for the interviews presented several notable advantages, particularly in terms of flexibility in selecting informants from different cities, increased efficiency, and cost-effectiveness by eliminating the need for travel expenses. This approach proved particularly beneficial when engaging with individuals residing in diverse locations, overcoming potential time constraints associated with in-person meetings.

A key advantage of digital meetings was the ability to conduct interviews in a quasi-face-to-face manner, facilitating the observation of interviewees' emotions and reactions during responses. However, a drawback was the inherent time limitations of virtual sessions, highlighting that genuine face-to-face interactions offer a more personal and immersive experience for both the interviewer and interviewee.

To address the challenge of time constraints, I supplemented digital meetings with email conversations. This hybrid approach allowed for a more focused exploration of specific questions, fostering a deeper understanding of the discussed topics, and providing interviewees with the opportunity to articulate their thoughts in greater detail.

While I believe this combination of methods was the most pragmatic given the constraints, it is important to recognize that, whenever possible, face-to-face meetings would be preferable to digital interactions for a more enriched and personalized exchange.

The findings from each interview were systematically documented and validated by the respective interviewees. I conducted the interviews in Swedish and later translated them into English. While this decision allowed interviewees to express themselves comfortably in their native language, the subsequent translation to English presents a limitation, as nuances and cultural intricacies may be lost in the process. Nevertheless, this approach was chosen to ensure a more authentic and meaningful conversation during the interviews.

A positive aspect of my Iranian background in this study was my familiarity with the cultural contexts and practices. This understanding enabled me to ask detailed and more profound questions. However, a potential negative aspect was the risk of imposing my own interpretations, which might differ from the participants' perspectives. To address this concern, I involved the participants in the process by sending them the interview transcriptions, allowing them to review and suggest revisions, thereby ensuring that their views were accurately represented.

6.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical guidelines that were followed by the study are based on the Science Research Council's Ethical Principles for Humanities and Social Science Research. The principles are i.e., the demand for information, consent, confidentiality, and usage (Swedish Research Council 2002, p. 6). I have carefully applied the four main demands on ethical considerations to avoid facing ethical dilemmas and difficulties and to reach a high-quality study without risking violating the interviewees' privacy or harming them. This means that I made clear to potential respondents that: participation was voluntary; agreement to participate could at any time be revoked without any consequences for the respondent; data would be treated

with confidentiality and would not be made available to anyone outside the study team; and results from the study would be published in such a way that identification of individual respondents would be impossible.

Within the framework of the study, I understand data about the question of the ethnic identity of people belonging to a vulnerable section of the public, namely young people with a minority ethnic background, have been collected. The consideration of ethical principles has thus been crucial throughout the whole working process from the beginning to the end. Concerning the above, I have refrained from specifying age, profession, name, or other information that could reveal the identity of the informants and have only used designations such as F1 and M2.

Finally, in conducting this study in my own community, I am mindful of the ethical responsibilities that extend beyond the study setting. As a member of the same community as the informants, I acknowledge the potential for future encounters with them, their families, and friends. This recognition underscores the importance of continued ethical considerations, ensuring the respect, privacy, and well-being of the participants even beyond the immediate study context.

7. RESULTS

This section starts by accounting for the overarching findings and thereafter continues by analyzing some of the main themes that pertain to the aim and study questions of this study.

Since my interview questions revolved around identifying the influences that have played a role in the educational and professional achievements of second-generation Iranians in Sweden, and whether these influences can be linked to their Iranian culture, many of the questions focused on their attitudes toward education and career, the home environment, both the informant's and the family's perspective on education and work, academic performance, and similar aspects. Therefore, education and career, together with dual cultural identity are the primary focus of this section. However, I found other interesting responses as well, so I will categorize the results into several parts: those related to education, those related to career, experiences of growing up between two cultures, and other findings. I am aware of the risk of generalization in such a compilation, so I will try to specify which responses were unequivocal and which ones had nuances.

About Education and Competence

- The emphasis on education is a shared value inherited from their families.
- Academic excellence is a common trait among all participants.
- Proficiency in Swedish and English is universally perceived as perfect, while Persian fluency varies, generally being good, especially in conversation.
- Families have uniformly prioritized academic achievements, providing encouragement and support, with distinct parental strategies.
- Almost all participants commenced university studies immediately after high school.
- Despite already having a comprehensive education and relevant employment, four out of six individuals see potential for further education.

- Parents displayed minimal involvement in their children's school studies.
- Participants generally believe they faced less favorable conditions than their ethnic Swedish peers in academic achievements, with one exception benefiting from specific support in mathematics and art.

About Career and Success

- The majority state that they possess the following qualities that set them apart from most ethnic Swedes in the workplace. They believe these attributes have positively impacted their work performance and career development: aiming high, being competitive, taking responsibility and initiative, being sociable, being willing to speak up, not afraid of conflict (one exception), having clear and direct communication, daring to take up space, daring to take the first step, being flexible.
- Apart from these qualities, the majority feel they have faced less favorable conditions than ethnic Swedes in their career development. Two informants note a noticeable improvement in this aspect in recent times, thanks to the diversity trend.

About Growing Up with Two Cultures

- All respondents highly value socializing in the Iranian way, such as get-togethers, parties, and invitations. Their least favorite aspects vary.
- What the majority likes least about Swedish culture is the distance between people. What they like most varies greatly.
- Everyone prefers Persian food over any other type of cuisine.
- Everyone celebrates holidays from both cultures but considers the Swedish ones more important.
- The majority identifies as Swedish-Iranian.
- The majority believes that, initially, people view them as non-Swedish from the outside.
- Two mentions that they have experienced racism or discrimination.
- Everyone has or has had Swedish partners. Four of the informants have Swedish partners and two have non-Swedish but Western European partners.
- None ever wished they had Swedish parents.
- Most of their best friends are Swedes (with one exception, whose best friends belong to different ethnicities).

Other Findings

- The habit of reading books has been deeply rooted in their upbringing.
- All families, during or before the interviewee's school years, have moved from immigrant-dense areas to regular residential areas.
- All respondents, except one, have traveled to Iran several times.
- All respondents have several relatives in Sweden or other Western countries but have little or no contact with them.

- They have very little or no involvement in the Iranian diaspora in Sweden.
- The majority has established some form of professional contact with Iranians within the field or workplace.

As noted by Deborah Court (2018), in qualitative research, we go beyond just looking at words. Instead, we use our intelligence and intuition to understand the deeper meanings. Court emphasizes that the goal is to grasp the informants' meanings and to do this effectively, researchers need to step outside their own perspectives (2018, p. 59). In her words, "We utilize the strength of our intelligence and humanity to do this. Why see beyond? Because this research is not about us, though we are the instruments. Finding meaning in the words of data means finding the 'participants' meaning, and to do this we must step out of our own frame of reference" (2018, p. 59).

The qualitative study, as applied in this study, brings forth a nuanced examination of the researcher's involvement in conducting, analyzing, and interpreting the study's outcomes.

The personal connection to the subject matter is underlined by the researcher's status as a first-generation Iranian, with children falling within the second-generation category studied. Close interactions with numerous second-generation Iranians in Sweden, prolonged discussions on migration identity reconstruction with them, and shared discourse with fellow researchers who are also referenced in this essay collectively contribute to the researcher's confidence in approaching the subject with an emic perspective.

Despite this insider's view, the researcher has maintained a diligent commitment to discerning the 'participants' meaning. This involves a conscious effort to transcend preconceived notions, leading to instances where the researcher recognizes the need for a recalibration of initial understandings. This iterative process underscores the researcher's dedication to capturing the authentic perspectives of the 'participants', aligning with the principles emphasized by Court about qualitative data analysis.

Utilizing the stages of thematic analysis elucidated by Court (2018, pp. 63-64), I arrived at conceptual categories that synthesized numerous details into meaningful wholes, in line with the concept described by Glaser and Strauss (as cited in Court 2018, p. 63): "*concepts indicated by the data (and not the data itself)*." These conceptual categories are appropriately termed as *themes* (Court, 2018, p. 63).

These themes are related to my study questions and will show:

- 1- Which cultural capital related to their Iranian background has been transmitted to second-generation Swedish Iranians within their families?
- 2- How do second-generation Swedish Iranians utilize the cultural capital acquired within their families in the Swedish context to navigate their pathway to professional success?

Theme 1: Educational Aspiration Shaped by Family Influence

The primary findings about second-generation Iranian migrants reveal a notable influence from their parents regarding the importance of education. A significant majority of these parents are not only well-educated themselves but also engage in reading and demonstrate an interest in social and political discussions. This cultural capital is actively transmitted to their children, a process consistent with Bourdieu's concept of the transmission of cultural capital. The study group's embodiment of these characteristics aligns with the concept of habitus, reflecting ingrained dispositions, perceptions, and practices shaped by their familial and cultural background.

All informants claim that their school performance has been important for the family, but parents have expressed this importance in different ways. While F2 claims: *"It was very important for me to get good grades in school, mainly because of the family's demands and pressure"*, and F3 explains the following:

"I wanted good grades in school to gain approval primarily from my dad but also from my mom. My school performance was important to my family. I usually had A or B grades, but if I ever had a C, I hesitated to show it until the last second."

Both statements demonstrate awareness of the expectations within the family but with different characteristics and strengths.

M1 asserts the following:

"I haven't felt pressure but rather security and the confidence to invest one hundred percent in education or work, knowing that even if it doesn't go well, I can always fall back and receive support."

In response to the question of the importance of school performance for the family, M3 states, *"My school performance was important for the family. It was a joy for everybody when I got good grades. I received encouragement both when I studied and when I got good results."*

As I previously pointed out, the answers show that families have expressed the importance of good school performance in diverse ways. The words the informants have used demonstrate this variation: demands and pressure, approval, security, confidence, and support, signaling the importance, emphasis, joy, and encouragement.

A common thread among these varied responses regarding academic performance, language learning, and reading books is the awareness among informants that their families highly value it. A fitting term to describe this phenomenon might be "valuation". Each individual has understood, in various ways, the high value attached to good education by their families, even if this has sometimes been expressed differently, as M2 explains:

"My school results were of great importance to my parents. For Dad, it was almost a matter of life and death, while Mom was somewhat more relaxed and believed that there was always room for improvement."

Cultural capital encompasses the cultural assets and knowledge individuals acquire, enabling them to gain social advantage and stand out in society. The families of the informants have, in various ways, signaled the importance of good education and excellent grades. This serves as a clear illustration of how cultural capital, which includes the value assigned to education and academic success, acts as a signal of social position.

Returning to my initial study question, one possible explanation is that the considerable importance parents place on education serves as a cultural capital transmitted to their children. As I have contended in previous sections, this trait holds significant esteem in Iranian culture. I therefore deduce, in alignment with the informants' own statements, that this value has been transmitted to them.

M1 explains this subtle transmission with the following statement:

"I wasn't directly encouraged by the family, but there was an underlying understanding that performing well in school is important. Iranians believe that a good education leads to good jobs; it's a cultural standpoint that one embraces. Parents pass this on to their children, and I was inspired by my parents."

Then he reflects and adds:

"A good education might not just be an inspiration one receives within the family. It is more of a norm; in other words, it's not just about studying but studying according to a certain standard. My older siblings also followed that standard."

This standard indicating 'how we should be' can also manifest in other ways, as when F2 claims that out of her 15 cousins, all are either doctors or dentists, so the expectations for her were clear, and it was a disappointment for her parents when she chose a different path. Today, she is satisfied because she succeeded in her own way. Voluntariness is important for all informants, and the parental strategy that seems to yield the best results is support, rather than pressure and detailed control. This is an example of cultural reproduction and ethnic identification as explained on page 16.

M3 states the following:

"It was very important for me to have good results in school. I liked the challenge and enjoyed getting confirmation. Also, good support from home and my parents made me voluntarily strive for good results."

This is a clear expression of habitus: an attitude that has become ingrained and internalized as part of the individual's cultural disposition and upbringing. At the same time, it shows the significance of validation.

In addressing my second question, I posit that while the informants embody this cultural capital and its transmission occurs through habitus, the process also involves the field, context, and active choice: they do not simply inherit but actively select, restructure, and adapt their cultural capital.

Bourdieu (1984, p. 47) notes, "cultural capital is the means by which one can signal one's social position, and, at the same time, the culture thus signaled functions as the principal component of the educational capital that is the basis of the judgments made in the educational system."

Statements from two of the informants highlight that this process transcends mere habitus and the replication of what they have learned within the family. They also acknowledge the role of the field and context in Swedish society and their own active choice as competitive individuals:

F1 says that she is a competitive person who wants to achieve the set goals but adds, *"It's my personality, but at the same time, the importance of good grades was signaled by both the family and society."* M2 gives an almost identical response when he says:

"It was significant for me to get high grades in school. Much depended on the emphasis my parents placed on it, but it was also important for me personally because I have a strong competitive instinct."

Theme 2: Aiming High and Being Competitive

"The responses indicate that the informants set high aspirations, both in their academic pursuits and career goals, demonstrating a sense of agency in their actions. F3 says the following:

"I want to achieve a lot and be the best. It has been my driving force, and I set new goals all the time. I carry the mindset of aiming for the highest grades all the time, but now I want to try to take it a bit easier."

M2, in turn, says, *"I have a strong drive to be the best and aim to have a good position, a stimulating job, to grow, while at the same time, I want to avoid extremity."*

It requires more evidence to prove that this is a culturally conditioned trait, but F1 seems to see it that way when she says, "Something I like about Iranian culture is that it is more accepted to lift oneself, in a way that is not common in Swedish culture." and "It is important for me to be successful, and I am comfortable feeling myself best or proud, it's something I have from Iranian culture and the family." and "We Iranians have high ambitions and feel that anything is possible."

This finding is consistent with some previous studies. For instance, one of the reasons for Iranians' onward migration, as Kelly (2012, p. 232) points out, is their aspiration for more opportunities: "By breaking free of the Swedish system, and moving to London, it was possible for my participants to develop strategies for success, and to start working towards

high-level goals." Additionally, as Graham (2002) notes in Kelly (2012, p. 231), they perceive the socialist ethic prevalent in Swedish institutions and culture as a limitation since it tends to discourage or prevent individuals from standing out. While these statements echo the observations discussed in the subsection 'The Significance of Being a High Performer' as a cultural trait among Iranians, they also demonstrate agency regarding the context, cultural distinctions, and an individual strategy that incorporates all these parameters.

Theme 3: Some Advantageous Characteristics

All informants claim to possess a set of characteristics that are advantageous in their careers. The fact that each informant, with few exceptions, asserts having these characteristics, and that they are aware of how these characteristics set them apart from their colleagues, mostly of ethnic Swedish background, is thought-provoking and merits further exploration. These characteristics include being highly social, having straightforward and clear communication, and being willing to take the initiative and responsibility.

Five out of six informants note that, unlike ethnic Swedes, they are not afraid of conflicts. But how are these characteristics advantageous to them? According to M2:

"I handle conflicts differently than ethnic Swedes. I am more direct and willing to confront even in conflict situations, while ethnic Swedes are often conflict-avoidant. They want all the information to read at home in solitude and tranquility, and then decide. I dare to make a phone call right away, and it disarms the other party. I believe that in conflict situations, it's also ideas that collide."

Conflict avoidance is identified by Åke Daun (2012) as a characteristic of the Swedish mentality. Except for one informant, all my interviewees express that their approach to conflict differs and is considered beneficial when compared to the Swedish way of handling conflicts.

Theme 4: Identity, Otherness, Discrimination, and the Trend of Diversity

Questions about identity were the only ones that seemed a bit confusing. All informants were born in Sweden and their national identity is Swedish. Ethnic background is something they are aware of. The majority do not identify as Iranians, but rather as Swedish Iranian or Swedish, claiming that they do not feel different from Swedes. However, they all add that they are often perceived as non-Swedish because their appearance differs from ethnic Swedes. This feels frustrating. F2 describes it like this:

"In some situations, I experience no difference between me and ethnic Swedes, especially at work. But in other situations, it can sometimes, deep down, feel like I don't really fit in as an ethnic Swede. It depends on how people treat me from the outside. When I stand on the commuter train or have some errands in a store before I have had a chance to speak, I notice that people treat me as non-Swedish until I start talking, and since my Swedish is perfect, the treatment changes."

M2 claims that her Swedish girlfriend gets annoyed because when they are out in town together, many treat them like tourists and talk to them in English.

What they convey is akin to the sentiment Sara Ahmed (2007) articulates as 'experiencing the inhabitation of a white world as a non-white body.' M3 expresses this as follows: *"A sense of standing out, needing to 'prove' one's Swedishness."*

Despite this, four out of the informants do not feel that they have been discriminated against. But F3, who works in the arts, says:

"I have experienced discrimination, mostly in the form of not feeling welcome many times, being perceived as different, or getting an inferiority complex because I do not have all Swedish reference frames."

But at the same time, she has observed a change:

"Especially in cultural and art circles, I have experienced that whiteness has taken up more space, but I feel that it is starting to turn. Nowadays, there is openness to other cultures. It almost feels advantageous to have a different ethnic background."

This turn has also been observed by M2, who says the following:

"Sometimes my unusual name can lead to me not progressing past the first filtering. On the other hand, the emphasis on 'Diversity' in workplaces today is something that can give me a greater chance to showcase my qualifications. It's gratifying when I go to a job interview and make a positive impression. Being less common can be an advantage in such situations."

My initial expectation before the study was that, given their career and lifestyles, and by the findings of the study by Ahmadi and Ahmadi (2012), my informants would identify as cosmopolitans. However, only one was uncertain, wavering between identifying as a Swedish Iranian or a cosmopolitan. Despite their ability to envision living and working in other countries, my informants unanimously see Sweden as their home and the place they have a sense of belonging and will return to.

Theme 5: Return to class.

The study reveals a very clear pattern that all families had moved out of segregated residential areas as soon as they had stabilized their finances. This enabled most informants to attend regular schools, learn good Swedish, and have ethnically Swedish friends. F2 expresses a comparison between Iranians and Swedes regarding the class issue:

"A difference between Iranians and Swedes is that among Swedes, career is a class issue. Children of wealthy families have more demands on them, but when it comes to Iranian families, it's everyone who demands from the child, regardless!"

The explanation lies probably in the fact that Iranians, being displaced, strive for social mobility and act in ways that align with this aim. As expressed by M1: *"Iranians believe that*

a good education leads to good jobs; it's a cultural standpoint that one embraces. Parents pass this on to their children, and I was inspired by my parents."

The families moving out of segregated areas once they stabilized their finances aligns with Bourdieu's idea of habitus transformation. The move represents a deliberate action (intentional habitus) to change the context and provide better opportunities for their children. The subsequent impact on education, language acquisition, and social interactions corresponds to the embodied form of cultural capital, illustrating how acquired ways of thinking and behaving contribute to individuals' advancement in societal fields such as the educational and professional fields.

Theme 6: Limited access to social capital

Almost all informants claim to have very limited contact with the Iranian diaspora and Iranians, despite having relatives and family friends in Sweden and other countries. They all state that they learned the language on their own, and their parents did not assist in their studies. This is understandable, as the parents were new to Sweden, did not know the language, and were unfamiliar with the school system. They assert that their conditions for both education and employment were worse than Swedes, and the main positive factors that helped them were their will, personal characteristics, working hard, and as two informants expressed it, probably even the pressure and demands of the parents had a positive impact.

F3 expresses this in a different way *"Dad used to say, 'If you want to succeed, you have to do twice as well as ethnic Swedes'."* Regarding finding a job, F2 points out the following:

"Compared to Swedes, I had worse conditions in school because I needed to learn Swedish myself. When it comes to a career, I also had worse conditions compared to my Swedish friends. Their families had strong networks, and some of them even had the opportunity for interviews before completing their studies. I remember several such examples."

It is important to acknowledge that the scope of this study is quite limited and may not fully represent the social capital of Iranian migrants in general. The resources within the Iranian immigrant communities in Sweden vary across different times and locations and cannot be easily quantified through the experiences of a few individuals.

The informants in this study, who initially reported a lack of connections and resources during their school years, have noted that later in their careers, they encountered other Iranians, predominantly from the second generation, in their professional fields. These contacts have sometimes proved beneficial for their career development and in gaining access to new opportunities.

Theme 7: Between two cultures

In the comparison between two cultures, it is primarily the relationship between individuals that all informants emphasize. They prefer the Iranian way of socializing and dislike the

distance between people in Swedish culture. F3 mentions that she has embraced the Iranian warmth and describes herself as follows:

"I am a 'host.' I have decorated my apartment accordingly, to invite guests and accommodate many people. I want to connect people and organize activities. I am good at inviting and including people."

Generally, the respondents' answers show that they possess awareness and sensitivity towards cultural distinctions. For example, M1 claims:

"What I like least about Swedish culture is that it is too shy. Showing oneself and one's successes is not appreciated, and taking space and trying to assert oneself is not something one should do."

And M2 expresses it like this:

"I am very social, and it may be an influence from my cultural background. While ethnic Swedes are often cautious, I dare to take the first step, approach strangers, and be friends with them. I am proactive, dare to lead, and succeed in aligning the group's thoughts."

However, they have learned to handle the differences and even use them to their advantage. F1 describes it like this:

"Growing up with two cultures may give me a broader view of people's differences and make me more comfortable with it, which is an advantage in my professional communication... Compared to ethnic Swedes, I feel that I have a broader perspective on the world because I have grown up with two cultures. Swedes usually have a Swedish perspective." And M2 says: "While my colleagues may stick to 9 to 5, I can consider stepping up and working extra. I appreciate it because it is in that comparison that I feel I contribute more. It feels like a bonus, something extra good."

F1 mentions an interesting aspect she has observed:

"My Iranian culture has indeed influenced my definition of success. Status and title are more important for us Iranians, even more than money. Being a boss is valued higher for us, while Swedes may prefer a higher salary."

This broader motivation beyond mere economic considerations resonates with Kelly's (2012) findings on onward migrants who actively avoided welfare dependency, highlighting their commitment to self-sufficiency, full participation in the host society, and the restoration of dignity and control over life. This also aligns with the satisfaction associated with being a high performer, a concept elucidated in section 5 of the essay.

Theme 8: Flexibility

During this study, attention was drawn to the trait of flexibility, a characteristic asserted by all participants. M1 states the following:

"Fitting in is one of my qualities. It has never been problematic." M3 explains: "I am flexible and adapt quite easily. I believe my Iranian background has made me more flexible because you have had to learn flexibility since childhood. You have stood out and adapted, and the same can be done in the professional environment."

The explanation provided by F2 is insightful:

"I am very flexible. It's my personality, but it has to do with my upbringing. As a child, most of my friends were ethnic Swedes. I learned to behave differently in Swedish environments to fit in, and at home, my parents had their own opinions about things. I definitely think my cultural background has played a role in my flexibility because you have a choice as a person, and you have to fit in."

A comparable scenario is highlighted in Farzaneh Moinian's study (2012): "My informants told me that they felt that they were ascribed one identity by society, another by their parents at home and that they were denied any possibility to negotiate, or even participate in the formulation of their own identity" (Moinian 2012, p 179). However, F2's expression demonstrates an awareness of the need to adapt and restructure their cultural capital to match the contrasting demands of different fields. This adaptation involves a process of validation and agency, where flexibility becomes a key strategy in the negotiation and construction of their social identity within these diverse social spaces.

The degree of flexibility could be intricately linked to the upbringing and considered as cultural capital, or explained by continuous negotiation between two cultures, which means newly constructed cultural capital. It may also signify another manifestation of habitus shaped by a history of instability in Iran. Factors such as the parents' background marked by revolution, regime change, war, and often dramatic escape, along with their determination to establish a new life in Sweden and rapidly integrate into Swedish society, might also contribute to this trait. Regardless of which factor, or a combination of all of them, this is one of the most interesting findings of this study.

Theme 9- Distancing the Iranian Culture

As discussed in section 5, the informants demonstrate a tendency to distance themselves from Iranian culture, leaning towards integration into Swedish society. This is evident in their greater proficiency in Swedish compared to Persian, preference for Swedish traditions over Iranian ones, very limited contact with relatives in Iran or other countries, closer friendships with ethnic Swedish peers, and minimal or no contact with the Iranian diaspora. Additionally, their conception of Sweden as their home country and Swedish as their national identity, along with practices of exogamy, collectively indicate a pattern of distancing from Iranian culture.

While all of them express a preference for living in Sweden, they are open to the idea of working or residing in other countries. However, only one informant considers the possibility of living in Iran, contingent on significant changes and normalization in the country. This

tendency might also explain their strategy to establish successful careers and their determination to integrate and build stable lives in Sweden.

8. DISCUSSION

Before proceeding with the discussion, it is crucial to establish a perspective on two critical notions: "Culture" and "Success".

In the realm of intercultural studies, there are diverse perspectives on the nature of culture (Hall 1976; Hofstede 1980, Bennett 1998; Dietz 2018), each presenting contrasting viewpoints. This study aligns with the perspective that cultures are dynamic, emphasizing their fluid and evolving characteristics. It highlights the importance of recognizing the distinctions between different cultures, such as Swedish and Iranian, and encourages an appreciation for their continuously changing dynamics. Echoing Portera (2021, p.34), "... cultures are neither homogenous, nor static, nor confined to continents or nation-states". Yet, the distinctions between cultures persist, which is why "Intercultural studies is an interdisciplinary field of inquiry dealing with the significance of cultural differences for social relations in contemporary society", as noted by Karlstad University (2023).

Reflecting Kelly (2017, p.106) and Behtoui (2022a, p.55), "Success" in this study is understood as a socially constructed concept that encompasses both observable outcomes like career advancement, income, and occupational status, and the possession of authority or influential positions within specific fields. This view acknowledges that success is not uniform but varies based on societal definitions and individual perspectives. While the term implies notable achievements and recognition within one's field, it also recognizes the subjective elements of personal fulfillment and societal influence.

Based on statistics presented by Behtoui (2022b), "immigrants with an Iranian background living in Sweden have attained top positions in the fields of economics, politics, and academia" (ibid, p. 54). "Their proportion among the high ranking in these three fields is roughly equal to that among the population as a whole" (ibid, pp. 59-60). Among 'high-income earners', the corresponding figure for those with an Iranian background was 88% for having a longer university education, compared to about 65% for native Swedes (ibid, p. 61).

Though this category is not homogenous, Behtoui (ibid, p. 55) notes that "data presented in this study reveal the increased presence of these migrants in spaces of which they have not before been a natural part (i.e. high-ranking positions). Even if slow and uneven, their incorporation into the fields of power still indicates a moment of change." This observation underscores the significant shift in the status of Iranians in Sweden.

This discussion, informed by the understanding of culture, success, and the notable level of education among Iranians in Sweden, and indications about upward mobility of this category attempts to answer to below study questions:

- 1- Which cultural capital related to their Iranian background has been transmitted to second-generation Swedish Iranians within their families?

- 3- How do second-generation Swedish Iranians utilize the cultural capital acquired within their families in the Swedish context to navigate their pathway to professional success?

In this section, I will first analyze the findings of my study, considering recent academic discussions and critiques about Bourdieu's concepts. Following this analysis, I will compare the findings of my study with those of previous research to provide a holistic understanding of the experiences and achievements of second-generation Swedish Iranians.

8.1. BOURDIEU'S CONCEPTS AND RECENT DISCUSSIONS

The prominence of Bourdieu's theories in Migration and Educational Studies, as well as HRM Studies, is notable due to their explicit focus on individual-context relations. As pointed out by Joy et al. (2020, p. 2546), Bourdieu's attention to the intricate dynamics between individuals and their social environments is central to his widespread acceptance in these fields. Erel (2010, p. 642) adds a crucial perspective to these theories, arguing that "research often treats migrants' cultural capital as reified and ethnically bounded, assuming they bring a set of cultural resources from the country of origin to the country of migration that either fit or do not fit." This critique underscores the necessity for a more nuanced understanding of migrants' cultural capital as dynamic and adaptable.

Erel criticizes such 'rucksack approaches', arguing that "migration results in new ways of producing and re-producing (mobilizing, enacting, validating) cultural capital that builds on, rather than simply mirrors, power relations of either the country of origin or the country of migration. Migrants create mechanisms of validation for their cultural capital, negotiating both ethnic majority and migrant institutions and networks. Migration-specific cultural capital (re-)produces intra-migrant differentiations of gender, ethnicity, and class, in the process creating modes of validation alternative to national capital." (ibid)

Building on this, Yu (2020, p. 1279) challenges the deterministic and fatalistic 'rucksack approach' to understanding cultural capital, advocating for an approach that focuses on "the ways of producing and re-producing (mobilizing, enacting, validating) cultural capital." This highlights the active role migrants play in adapting and reshaping their cultural resources.

Gu and Lee (2020, p. 1833) delve into the fluidity and conversion of capital among migrants, noting that "the smooth conversion of different forms of capital requires the resources and capital acquired and accumulated in other places to be locally validated." This insight points to the complexity of cultural capital transformation and the influence of broader socio-economic and political factors on this process.

These scholarly contributions collectively offer a comprehensive view of Bourdieu's concepts in the modern context of migration and education. They underscore the active, dynamic role of migrants in shaping their cultural inheritance, adapting to new societal contexts, and engaging with the complexities of multicultural societies.

Moreover, as highlighted by Gu and Lee (2020, p. 1835), Bourdieu (2002, pp. 27–28) defines habitus as "a system of long-lasting (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or

structures of perception, conception, and action.” While habitus presents certain constraints, it also possesses the potential for transformation, especially when individuals encounter new and unfamiliar fields. Reay (2004, pp. 434–435) supports this view, suggesting that habitus, while reflective of the social position in which it was constructed, contains within it the genesis of new creative responses that can transcend the social conditions of its production.

Based on the analysis of the findings from this study, the success of second-generation Iranian migrants in Sweden can be attributed to a complex interplay of inherited cultural capital, habitus, validation of cultural capital in different fields, restructuring the cultural capital, constructing new cultural capital and characteristics which have been shaped in between two cultures, in the process of adaptation, both consciously and unconsciously. This narrative aligns with the above-mentioned recent discussions, emphasizing the active role these individuals play in shaping their strategies and career paths.

The traits such as flexibility, sociability, aiming high, being competitive, and taking initiative, which the second-generation Iranians have developed, can be seen as a form of self-constructed cultural capital. These traits, as Yu (2020, p. 1279) suggests, represent the "producing and re-producing (mobilizing, enacting, validating) cultural capital" in a new societal context. They are not just inherited but are actively developed and enacted in the Swedish educational, professional, and social fields, contributing significantly to their career advancement and social integration.

Furthermore, their proficiency in Swedish and English, essential for successful communication and integration, reflects a conscious effort to excel within the Swedish educational and professional systems. This proficiency is a critical component of their cultural capital, validating their competence in various fields, as Gu and Lee (2006 (2020) discuss the importance of local validation of capital acquired from different contexts.

Even the preference for Swedish traditions, forming relationships predominantly with ethnic Swedes, and practicing exogamy indicate a deliberate distancing from the Iranian cultural sphere. This aspect highlights a strategic adaptation, where second-generation Iranians actively shape their social capital to align more closely with the mainstream Swedish culture. This behavior aligns with Joy et al. (2020) discussion on migrants differentially responding to the devaluation of their cultural capital in host nations.

Their limited contact with the Iranian diaspora and Iranian relatives further underscores their strategic positioning within the Swedish societal field. This move signifies an active choice to integrate into and align with the dominant cultural and social norms of Sweden, reflecting a nuanced understanding of cultural capital adaptation and habitus evolution in a new cultural context, as discussed by Reay (2004).

The movement from immigrant-dense areas to regular residential areas represents a physical and symbolic transition toward broader societal integration. This spatial mobility can be seen as an aspect of the families’ habitus adaptation, where they actively seek to position themselves within spaces that offer greater opportunities for cultural and social capital validation and accumulation.

In summary, the success of second-generation Iranian migrants in Sweden is a product of a multifaceted strategy that combines inherited cultural values such as significance of higher education, with self-developed cultural capital such as linguistic proficiency, traits such as flexibility, and competencies such as sociability. Their pathway to success is marked by a blend of adapting inherited values, excelling in language skills, socializing predominantly with ethnic Swedes, and strategically distancing from the Iranian diaspora. This comprehensive approach, grounded in the concepts discussed in the recent scholarly literature, illustrates the dynamic nature of cultural capital, habitus, and field in shaping their unique experiences and achievements.

Here I would like to repeat one of the quotes from F2 who explained: *"I am very flexible. It's my personality, but it has to do with my upbringing. As a child, most of my friends were ethnic Swedes. I learned to behave differently in Swedish environments to fit in, and at home, my parents had their own opinions about things. I definitely think my cultural background has played a role in my flexibility because you have a choice as a person, and you have to fit in."*

This quote exemplifies the complex interplay of cultural capital, habitus, and field in the identity formation of second-generation migrants. It highlights the dynamic nature of cultural capital, the adaptability of habitus in response to different social fields, and the active role of individual agency in cultural adaptation, aligning with Bourdieu's concepts and the insights from recent discussions.

Finally, it is pertinent to address the role of transnationalism in this study, especially considering its increasing prominence in recent discussions on migration.

Transnationalism, in the context of migration, is defined as 'the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement' (Schiller et al., 1992, p. 1). However, in the case of Iranian migrants in my study, this aspect of migration is not significantly evident.

First-generation Iranians, particularly those who were opposed to the Iranian regime, found it challenging or undesirable to maintain active connections with Iran. The political situation restricted their ability to visit or engage with Iran for several years. Additionally, international sanctions imposed on Iran have complicated economic interactions, making it difficult for Iranian migrants abroad to conduct business with Iran. The lack of respect for laws, absence of security, and economic instability within the country further discourage the formation of stable transnational ties. Iran's strained international relations have limited the opportunities for normal interactions that typically foster transnational connections. As a result, the usual migrant community networks that provide access to economic and social capital, as observed in studies of 'chain migration' (Robinson & Carey, 2000), and migration-specific social capital (Kelly and Lusi, 2006), have not been a significant factor for Iranian migrants.

On the other hand, certain professions provide various types of services to Iranian migrants in Sweden. A large group whose creation is due to the very generous and unique opportunity for children to learn their 'mother tongue'. This opportunity created several job opportunities for Iranians right from their very first years in Sweden. Some businesses such as restaurants, grocery stores, travel agencies, and similar also cater to the Iranian target

group. Cultural-related activities such as printing, theater activities, and similar can also be mentioned. Over the last 15 years, a new wave of Iranian migrants with different backgrounds has also come to Sweden, primarily for higher studies at universities and colleges, and this has over time changed the demographics within this category of migrants. Considering the limited contact of second-generation Iranians with the Iranian community and better opportunities for them to create careers within the mainstream labor market in Sweden, these community-relevant job opportunities are not particularly relevant to this study.

8.2. DISCUSSION CONCERNING PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The 6 informants indicated that all of them believed their Iranian background influenced their education and career pathway. According to the informants, their cultural capital, primarily an interest in higher education, book reading habits, and interest in social and political discussions had been transmitted to them through their families.

Part of this result, namely the interest in education aligns with previous studies (see for example Ahmadi 2013; Hartman 2009; Behtoui 2022b; Kelly 2012).

Behtoui (2022b, p. 60) attributes educational attainment to social mobility among Iranian immigrants, noting that parents encourage their children to pursue high levels of education in Sweden: "Children grew up with certain expectations of what their educational trajectory would look like. Parents were firmly determined to ensure that the educational goals they had set were achieved."

Some other findings of this study align with those of Behtoui (2022b), including the concept of hyper-selectivity, a term coined by Lee and Zhou (2015). This concept explains dual positive selectivity, suggesting that immigrants are more likely to have graduated from college compared to their non-migrant counterparts in their country of origin, and are also more likely to hold a college degree compared to the population in the host society. This phenomenon often stems from specific privileges, such as class background. Zhou and Lee (2017, p.11) elucidate, "it [hyper-selectivity] results in a large and highly educated middle class, who selectively imports middle-class specific cultural frames, institutions, and mindset from their countries of origin." They further clarify that hyper-selectivity is considered 'middle-class-specific' rather than being exclusively associated with Asian ethnic culture (Zhou and Lee, 2017, pp. 8-9).

Behtoui (2022b, p. 67) concludes that the achievements of Iranians in high-ranking positions "were neither because of some extraordinary characteristics of this group nor because of a unique national 'culture value' that makes them different from other groups of migrants. Rather, these outcomes emerged from the resources (the cultural and social capital) that people in this group brought with them, in interaction with the favorable context in the new country of residence."

Behtoui's study, which encompasses both first and second-generation Iranians, shares similarities with my findings, particularly in the context of 'hyper-selectivity' relevant to the

first-generation migrants in my study. Additionally, identifying the favorable socio-historical context in Sweden and the interactions between Iranian migrants and Swedish society which are crucial factors in their success.

On the other hand, my study indicates that aspects of cultural capital, such as a focus on education, contribute to the achievements of second-generation Iranians. This observation recognizes the role of cultural influence as part of a larger set of interacting factors within the socio-historical context, rather than as an isolated determinant of success. Additionally, my informants report not having access to beneficial social capital. They perceive that, both during their educational years and in the process of securing employment, their conditions were not as favorable as those of ethnic Swedes.

A preconception I had before conducting this study was that I believed Iranian parents were directly involved in their children's school activities or studies and, for example, assisted them with their homework. This turned out to be inaccurate, and the explanation is as follows: Despite being born in Sweden, descendants of immigrants are generally raised by parents with limited knowledge and experience of the Swedish labor market and associated institutions, such as the educational system (Crul et al. 2017).

Aslan et al.'s (2020) study on second-generation migrants highlights three effective strategies for success: strategic job selection, adapting personal habits, and flexibly utilizing cultural capital. Interestingly, during my interviews with informants, they did not explicitly mention difficulties in finding jobs. This omission might be linked to their shared trait of flexibility, which they all recognize as a key contributing factor to their achievements. Their ability to seamlessly navigate the job market appears to align with the flexibility identified in Aslan's study.

Furthermore, Aslan et al. (2020) note that discrimination related to ethnicity, experienced by the offspring of immigrants, may place them in more challenging positions, necessitating heightened levels of initiative, ingenuity, and adaptability.

One of my informants mentioned that despite being the most qualified for the position, he was recently denied a job due to his ethnicity, this is because, since 2023, the Swedish Security Service has tightened security clearances for individuals with connections abroad applying for sensitive positions. Dual citizenship and family ties, especially with countries engaged in security-threatening activities in Sweden, could be a barrier for Iranians to obtain certain positions. While no decision has been reached, an increasing number of employers are hesitant to take risks. This situation may present a challenge for the future job prospects of second-generation Iranians, and in such instances, ingenuity and adaptability may prove ineffective.

Concerning additional traits like clarity and directness in communication, referencing Hall (1976) and his delineation of high-context and low-context cultures, the emphasis on explicit, direct communication and the use of clear, specific language aligns with the characteristics of Low-context cultures, such as Sweden. The informants' embodiment of these traits presents an intriguing contradiction, suggesting potential hybrid identities that incorporate selective elements from both cultures.

Research on segregated areas in Sweden, as highlighted in studies like Crul and Mollenkopf (2012), Behtoui (2015), and Olofsson (2018), underscores the challenges associated with low levels of education, high unemployment, and socio-economic disadvantages in these areas. However, my study unveils a distinct pattern in the experiences of first-generation Iranians, the majority originating from middle-class backgrounds, who actively opted to move out of these demanding environments.

Hage's concept of a "return to class," as elucidated in Behtoui (2022b), denotes a shift in the criteria for belonging to the 'civilized' category in the countries of the global North. Hage argues that, particularly through the social mobility of certain immigrant groups from the global South, such as Asian migrants in Australia, who have ascended to the middle and upper classes, cultural pluralism has emerged among these social strata. This shift has diminished the significance of race as a defining principle for the allocation of the 'hope to be civilized.' Hage contends that this change in the global North reflects a departure from the prior functional role of race in the service of capitalism. This notion sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the dynamics surrounding class, culture, and social mobility within immigrant communities in the context of contemporary global society.

A broader discussion on "return to class" falls outside the scope of this study, but my limited research nonetheless indicates a tendency among both the first and second generations towards upward mobility or a return to class. The decision to relocate from segregated areas was a strategic move aimed at providing better prospects for their families, and the study results confirm the success of this approach.

This strategic approach taken by the informants' parents has a notable advantage: they assert that their Swedish language proficiency is excellent, and most of their close friends are Swedish. This intentional decision allowed the children to engage with Swedish families from an early age, fostering familiarity with the Swedish culture. The findings of this study regarding language preferences, language competence, socializing with ethnic Swedes, and exogamy align with the outcomes of Namei's (2012) study.

Melissa Kelly's studies (2012, 2013, 2016, 2017) further enrich the narrative of return-to-the-class by highlighting the ambition of Iranians from middle-class backgrounds. Kelly's research suggests that this ambition, deeply rooted in the aspiration for upward mobility, has, in some instances, led to additional migration to English-speaking countries like England. This proactive step might be attributed to the ambition of returning to their class of origin (see reference to Kelly at the end of section 3), reflecting a determination to overcome obstacles and create a more favorable environment for their family.

Also, Kelly's findings on how second-generation Iranians in London identify themselves align with the findings of this study. Kelly (2012, pp. 235-236) notes, "... (T)hey identified with their Iranian background, but also saw themselves as Swedish since they had spent the majority of their schooling years in Sweden. Because most had moved to London independently and still had their parents in Sweden, this group seemed to show a stronger tendency to see Sweden as home base." She further observes, "Most of the people in my study were not only highly educated but also ambitious and eager to succeed in whatever they set out to accomplish. They often told me that determination and success were 'Iranian values' and something that

they had been taught by their parents. This was also emphasized by younger Iranians, despite the fact that they spent most of their lives in Sweden.”

Regarding the question of ethnic and national identity, my informants provided similar responses. However, they also highlighted their discomfort with the perceived distance between individuals in Swedish culture. On the positive side, they expressed a preference for the Iranian way of closer relationships, socializing, and gathering. This leads to a question about how they navigate and reconcile this cultural contrast. However, it's important to recognize that these findings may not universally apply to all second-generation Iranians, and considering them as a general pattern warrants broader research.

Nygård and Behtoui's (2020) research suggests that the offspring of immigrants often have equal or superior access to social capital compared to those with Swedish-born parents. They define social capital as “resources embedded in a person’s social network, which become available through interactions with others, and which can be converted to other forms of capital across social space (see also Bourdieu 1986; Lin 2001).” This encompasses norms, values, and information, but also includes cultural and economic capital, help, and emotional support (ibid, p.52).

The narratives of my informants depict a scenario predominantly characterized by individual efforts and a noticeable lack of substantial assistance, whether it be in securing employment, excelling in academic pursuits, or advancing in other career-related areas. They report minimal or no contact with Iranian friends and relatives, and their interaction with the diaspora has been limited. Socialization with Iranian family friends was primarily confined to the period when they lived with their parents. Responses regarding their networks both within Sweden and abroad suggest that, despite the potential of social capital inherent within the Iranian social network, my informants have not fully tapped into this resource. However, a majority of them have recently established some professional connections with other Iranians. It is important to note, though, that including cultural capital, values, and family support as components of social capital paints a different picture of their social resources and networks.

Exploring migration through the lens of social capital, as articulated by Behtoui (2022a) and informed by Zhou's insights (2013), moves beyond a focus solely on immigrant assimilation. Behtoui emphasizes the importance of multilevel processes that involve relationships in various contexts, including the migrant community, the majority group, family, and friends in the country of origin, and co-nationals in third countries. This underscores the need for a broader understanding of social capital in the context of migration processes.

A more extensive research effort is crucial to deepen our understanding of a range of critical subjects, encompassing social capital as well as other pivotal themes. These include exploring identity formation between two cultures, cultivating a hyphenated identity, experiences of discrimination and whiteness, ethnic identity, and various related topics. Particularly important is the consideration of how the Iranian diaspora in Sweden has significantly transformed in recent years, with the second generation playing an increasingly prominent role. As their position in society gains more power, a comprehensive investigation

into all these areas, including social capital, is necessary to enhance our understanding of the experiences and dynamics of second-generation Iranian migrants in Sweden.

9. CONCLUSION

This study has aimed to address these key questions: Which cultural capital related to their Iranian background has been transmitted to second-generation Swedish Iranians within their families? How do second-generation Swedish Iranians utilize the cultural capital acquired within their families in the Swedish context to navigate their pathway to professional success?

Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital, habitus, and field, the findings indicate that the cultural capital transmitted from first-generation Iranian parents, primarily educated, secular, and middle-class individuals from Iranian society who immigrated to Sweden between 1985-1990, plays a pivotal role in shaping the academic and professional trajectories of their Swedish-born children. This study demonstrates how the second generation actively constructs new cultural capital, transforming and mobilizing these inherited resources and adapting them to the educational and professional fields of Swedish society.

Specifically, the findings emphasize the significance of education within Iranian culture which is validated in the Swedish context. The strong commitment to education, reading habits, and interest in social and political subjects, along with linguistic proficiency, an individually constructed cultural capital, and traits related to growing up between two cultures provide the tools and mindset necessary for navigating the academic and professional landscape in Sweden. Traits such as flexibility and sociability, along with high aspirations, are commonly exhibited and valued among the individuals in the study.

In their identity, they predominantly identify as Swedes or Swedish Iranians, viewing Sweden as their home. They adeptly navigate a dual cultural identity; however, the study shows a tendency to distance themselves from Iranian culture.

Despite occasional external perceptions of being non-Swedish, the second generation perceives no substantial differences between themselves and ethnic Swedes. They attribute their career success to their cultural capital, adaptation, and hard work, despite facing fewer educational and professional opportunities compared to ethnic Swedes.

The study aims to contribute to a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics between cultural values, adaptation, identity formation, and the accomplishments of second-generation Iranians in Sweden. By showcasing the dynamic transformation of cultural capital and habitus of the second generation in the educational and professional fields of Swedish society, this study seeks to provide insights into the career paths of second-generation Iranians in Sweden.

In summary, the success of second-generation Iranian migrants in Sweden is a product of a multifaceted strategy that combines inherited cultural values such as the significance of

higher education, with self-developed cultural capital such as linguistic proficiency, and traits such as flexibility, alongside competencies such as sociability.

10. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

In the interview questions, inquiries related to cultural activities such as visiting libraries, exhibitions, and museums, attending theaters and movies, purchasing books, engaging in travels, musical preferences, and home entertainment through TV were omitted. Additionally, aspects like social behavior, clothing style, and communication etiquette in meetings were not covered. Examining these dimensions would serve as a valuable complement to this study concerning Bourdieu's concepts of cultural capital and habitus but also taste. It would provide insights into whether and how families transmitted intellectual or class-related characteristics and refined tastes to their children, and how these aspects evolved or transformed in the new social context.

Such a future study could specifically focus on second-generation Iranians in Sweden and explore the concept of social positioning. By examining their behaviors, whether intentional or subconscious, for social positioning, the study could uncover motivations related to upward social mobility or integration. While this study provides empirical evidence of these occurrences, the ultimate purpose behind them remains undisclosed.

This study focuses on a cohort of second-generation Iranians in Sweden, whose parents immigrated between 1985 and 1990. It posits that the secularity, educational, and class background of this specific group have significantly influenced the success of their offspring. In recent years, another wave of Iranians with diverse backgrounds has migrated to Sweden. A future comparative analysis between the educational and professional outcomes of their children and the studied group could illuminate the potential impact of parental differences, the shift from Multiculturalism to Interculturalism, and other societal changes in Sweden on their integration and career trajectories.

Exploring "flexibility" as a crucial characteristic in shaping the social and professional success of second-generation Iranian migrants, raised between, and influenced by two cultures, would be a compelling avenue of study. Additionally, comparing this characteristic with the second generation of other migrant groups in Sweden could provide valuable insights.

Finally, I am eager to interview my informants again after 10 years. Currently, most of them are in the early stages of their careers, with only one being married and having a child. It would be intriguing to explore whether their high level of ambition persists after establishing families, and if the ambitious attitude, coupled with alleged characteristics distinct from ethnic Swedes, continues to yield benefits in the long term.

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APPENDIX 1 SURVEY AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Intervjufrågor

Allmänna frågor

Kön: Man Kvinna

Ålder: Född i:

Vid ankomst till Sverige:

År: Din mamma var år gammal

År: Din pappa var år gammal

Om du har syskon, hur gamla var dina syskon när de kom till Sverige?
.....

Utbildning:

Din utbildningsnivå och var du studerade:

Dina föräldrars/syskons utbildning:

Mor:

Far:

Syskon:

Arbete:

Ditt nuvarande arbete samt eventuellt tidigare arbete om det är relevant att nämna:

Dina föräldrars/syskons arbete:

Mor:

Far:

Syskon:

Civilstånd: Singel Gift Sambo Särbo.....

Om du har en partner, vänligen ange din partners nationalitet:

Specifika frågor:

Har du nära släktingar eller familjevänner i Sverige? Ungefär hur många?

Har du många iranska släktingar eller familjevänner i andra länder än Iran och Sverige? Har du kontakt med dem?

Umgås dina föräldrar mest med iranier, svenskar eller både-och, eller med andra nationaliteter?

Umgås du själv mycket med iranier? Frågan gäller både nu och under din uppväxt.

Av dina fem närmaste vänner, hur många är iranier och hur många är etniska svenskar?

Har du kontakt med den iranska diasporan i Sverige? På vilket sätt?

Hur många gånger har du rest till Iran?

Firar du iranska högtider? Firar du svenska högtider? Vilka är viktigast för dig?

Vad gillar du mest och minst från iransk kultur?

Vad gillar du mest och minst från svensk kultur?

Föredrar du iransk, svensk, eller internationell musik?

Föredrar du iransk, svensk, eller internationell dans?

Föredrar du iransk, svensk, eller internationell mat?

Föredrar du iransk, svensk, eller internationell film/serier?

Hur bra är din persiska, svenska och engelska?

Har du bott, studerat eller jobbat utomlands? I vilket/vilka länder?

Hur gammal var du när du flyttade hemifrån?

Hur uppfattar du din etnicitet: svensk, iranier, svensk-iranier eller världsmedborgare?

Kan du tänka dig att bo, jobba, studera i ett annat land?

Hur uppfattar du din nationella identitet (som varande medlem i ett samhälle/land)?

Känner du någon skillnad mellan dig själv och etniska svenskar i vardagslivet? I så fall hur?.....

Önskade du någon gång att dina föräldrar var etniska svenskar? I vilken ålder?

2. Utbildning

Har du tagit sabbatsår eller av någon anledning avbrutit dina studier?

Tror du att du kommer att studera i framtiden också?

Hur många språk kan du och vilka?

Var det viktigt för dig att ha bra betyg i skolan? Varför?

Var du duktig i skolan?

Var ditt skolresultat viktigt för din familj? Blev du uppmuntrad av familjen när du hade bra resultat?
.....

Fick du hjälp av familjen eller någon annan med dina läxor?

Hur kom det sig att du valde att studera vidare efter gymnasiet?

Studerade någon i din familj på universitetsnivå när du var barn/ung?

Var det vanligt i din familj att läsa böcker? Läste du själv böcker?

Har du hört att iranier önskar att deras barn ska bli läkare eller ingenjör? Vad tycker du om det?
.....

Tycker du att du har haft bättre/sämre/lika förutsättningar än etniska svenskar för att lyckas med
dina studier?

Tycker du att du har haft bättre/sämre/lika förutsättningar än etniska svenskar för att lyckas med din jobbkarriär?

Har du utsatts för diskriminering?

Diskussionsfrågor att fundera på inför mötet

- 1- Hur definierar du **framgång** i ditt professionella liv, och hur har din kulturella bakgrund format denna utifrån din definition?
- 2- På vilket sätt har din iranska bakgrund spelat en roll i din **karriärutveckling**?
- 3- Tror du att din iranska bakgrund har påverkat ditt **arbetssätt**? Kan du ge exempel på det?
- 4- I dina professionella interaktioner, ser du några influenser från din kulturella bakgrund vad gäller din **kommunikationsstil**?
- 5- Ser du några kulturella influenser i dina **nätverksstrategier**? Kan du dela med dig av en händelse där din kulturella bakgrund spelade en roll i att skapa professionella kontakter?
- 6- Har du observerat några specifika **normer eller förväntningar** som krockade med din iranska kultur? Hur har du hanterat dessa?
- 7- Hur skulle du beskriva din inställning till arbete och din **arbetsmoral**?
- 8- Hur **flexibel** är du att anpassa dig till förväntningarna i din professionella miljö? Tror du att din iranska bakgrund har gjort dig mer eller mindre flexibel?
- 9- Känner du dig mer eller mindre **tävlingsinriktad** än dina arbetskamrater?
- 10- Känner du dig mer eller mindre intresserad än dina kollegor av att ta ett större **ansvar** och uppnå **högre positioner** på din arbetsplats?
- 11- Hur hanterar du **konflikter** på arbetsplatsen och har din kulturella bakgrund påverkat ditt tillvägagångssätt?

APPENDIX 2 LETTER TO INFORMANTS

Hej [xxx]!

Tack för att du tar dig tid att svara på mina frågor!

Jag skriver min C-uppsats inom ämnet interkulturella studier vid Karlstads universitet. Mitt fokus ligger på individer som tillhör andra generationen av iranskt ursprung som är födda i Sverige och vars föräldrar kom till Sverige mellan 1985–1990. Dessa andra generationens iranier i Sverige har vuxit upp mellan två kulturer, vilket utgör en betydande utmaning för var och en av dem. Trots detta tyder mycket på att majoriteten inom denna grupp inte bara har integrerats framgångsrikt i det svenska samhället utan även har lyckats nå positioner i samhället och inom olika yrken.

Min studie syftar till att identifiera framgångsfaktorerna, särskilt med avseende på de kulturella aspekterna, samtidigt som jag vill förstå vilka svårigheter de har stött på. Genom att dela med dig av din personliga erfarenhet till denna studie kommer du att kunna bidra till en ökad förståelse för din generation och dess unika upplevelser.

I denna studie kommer din identitet att hållas helt anonym. Dina svar på frågorna, även vid citat, kommer vidare att användas på ett sätt som gör det omöjligt att identifiera dig. Den insamlade datan kommer endast att användas för denna specifika studie.

Jag bifogar intervjufrågorna så att du hinner förbereda dig inför mötet. Det är frivilligt att svara på frågorna, så det är inga problem om du inte vill svara på någon eller några av frågorna.

Jag kommer vid behov att be dig komplettera eller förtydliga dina svar i efterhand via mejl. Om jag använder något citat från dig kommer jag även att be dig att bekräfta det för att säkerställa att jag har förstått och formulerat det du sade i intervjun på ett korrekt sätt.

Tack på förhand för ditt samarbete!

Khazar Amini

November 2023, Stockholm