



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Home-Making Dynamics Through Socio- Cultural Facets: An Ethnographic Study of Resilience among Iranian Immigrants and Refugees in the Netherlands

Mirzadeh, Mahdis

Citation


Mirzadeh, M. (2024). *Home-Making Dynamics Through Socio- Cultural Facets: An Ethnographic Study of Resilience among Iranian Immigrants and Refugees in the Netherlands*.

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [License to inclusion and publication of a Bachelor or Master Thesis, 2023](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/4038530>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



Investigating Home-Making Dynamics Through Socio- Cultural Facets

An Ethnographic Study of Resilience among
Iranian Immigrants and Refugees in the
Netherlands

Mahdis Mirzadeh

Written in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
MSc in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at Leiden University

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Peter Pels

Acknowledgments

This thesis is dedicated to the brave and generous individuals who opened their lives and hearts to me, whose names I cannot disclose due to ethical considerations. Without their willingness to share their deeply personal stories, this project would not have been possible. Their trust, time, and invaluable contributions have been the bedrock of this research, and for that, I am forever grateful.

Beyond my respondents, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to a few extraordinary individuals who have been instrumental in making this challenging year not only manageable but truly enriching.

To Prof. Dr. Touraj Atabaki, I owe a deep debt of gratitude for his unwavering kindness and support, both during my fieldwork and in the critical stages that followed. His guidance and encouragement were not only invaluable to my personal and academic growth, but his esteemed reputation also opened doors that were crucial to this research. The connections I was able to establish with many interviewees, which formed the backbone of this anthropological study, were largely due to his influence and the respect he commands in the field. His contributions were essential to the successful execution of this research, and I am profoundly thankful for his mentorship.

To my beloved family, I am profoundly grateful. Despite the physical distance, their unwavering emotional and spiritual support has served as a steadfast pillar throughout this journey. My mother's inspiration led me to explore opportunities abroad and venture into new horizons, planting the seed for this academic pursuit. My father nurtured that dream and turned it into reality, believing in me and trusting in my potential since childhood. Their love and faith have made all of this possible.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my esteemed advisor, Prof. Dr. Peter Pels, for his unwavering support throughout this challenging journey. His invaluable guidance, positive energy, and insightful feedback were instrumental in the successful completion of this project. From the very beginning, he encouraged me to think critically beyond the academic sphere. I could not have wished for a more supportive and inspiring supervisor.

Contents

Chapter 1. Overview of the Study	5
1.1 A Historical Overview of Iran's Context and Dutch Immigration Policy	6
1.2 Theoretical Framework: Understanding Iranian Home-Making Dynamics	8
1.2.1 Defining Varied Interpretations: home, Home, and HOME among Iranian Immigrants	8
1.2.2 Language as a Vehicle for Cultural Expression	12
1.2.3 Culinary Traditions as Pivotal Cultural Pillars	14
1.2.4 Parenting Practices: Exploring Intergenerational Dynamics	16
1.2.5 The Home Environment: A Dynamic Cultural Space.....	19
1.3 Research Question and Operationalisation	20
1.4 Communicative Context, Methodology and Ethics.....	22
1.4.1 Communicative Context	22
1.4.2 Methodology	25
1.4.3 Ethical Considerations	29
1.5 Conclusion.....	30
Chapter 2. Iranian Immigrants' Home-Making Pathways: Cultural Retention and Adaptation in the Netherlands	31
2.1 Patterns of Iranian Immigration to the Netherlands	31
2.1.1 Educational Immigrants	31
2.1.2 Refugees	33
2.1.3 Almere's Iranian Immigrants OR UN-Sponsored Refugees	36
2.2 Language Preservation and Integration: Persian Language Maintenance and Dutch Language Acquisition in the Iranian Immigrant Home-Making Process.....	38
2.3 Culinary Traditions and Adaptation: Integrating Iranian Food Practices with the Dutch Food System in the Home-Making Process	44
2.4 Parenting Styles and Integration: Influencing Home-Making Through Iranian Child-Rearing Practices	48
2.5 House as a Roof: Navigating Home Purchase, and Decorating Among Iranian Immigrant Home-Making Process	53
2.6 Boundaries and Opportunities for Iranian Immigrants During Integration	58
2.7 Conclusion.....	59
3. Chapter 3: Conclusion	60
3.1 Summary of findings.....	60
3.1.1 The First Group: Overcoming Barriers to Integration	60
3.1.2 The Second Group: The Impact of Structured Support	60
3.1.3 The Third Group: Comprehensive Support and Strategic Integration.....	61
3.2 Theoretical Implications	62

3.3. Limitations of the Study	63
3.4 Suggestions for Further Research.....	64
3.5 Conclusion.....	64
References	66

Chapter 1. Overview of the Study

A few months after arriving in the Netherlands, I began contemplating potential topics for my fieldwork. With a background in linguistics and a specialization in dialectology from my first master's degree, I noticed that my academic focus had shifted toward the interdisciplinary field between anthropology and linguistics. Initially, I intended to return to Iran to study language and culture in a rural area of the northern region.

One night, life took an unexpected turn for Iranians worldwide, myself included. In the blink of an eye, the morning brought shocking news – a 22-year-old Iranian girl was apprehended by the Islamic Republic of Iran's moral security police in Tehran and severely assaulted, resulting in a fractured skull and coma. The incident sparked widespread unrest across Iran, with people flooding the streets in protest. Citizens from all corners voiced their discontent toward the oppressive regime, which had held sway for 45 years following the Islamic revolution. This time, the outcry was unified. Even those who upheld conservative values found the level of brutality unbearable, a blatant violation of human rights. The atmosphere was particularly challenging for us expatriates. Each day brought further restrictions on communication channels with Iran, intensifying the feeling of unease. We frantically sought updates from Iran, grappling with the uncertainty and tension that filled each passing day like an unending nightmare. Three days later, the tragic news of Mahsa Amini's death dominated headlines, encapsulating the turmoil within Iran—a landscape marked by heightened security threats, arbitrary arrests, and senseless violence.

For me, a recent immigrant, the sudden turn of events left my plans to return to Iran for fieldwork in disarray. It was a challenging time for someone who had only relocated a few months prior, lacking familiarity with information networks outside Iran. Communication with fellow Iranians became scarce, shrouded in fear and uncertainty. Each day brought grim news of executions, arrests of acquaintances back home, and a social media landscape tinted with the scent of tragedy. The haunting image of the executed individuals lingered in my thoughts as we prayed ceaselessly for their souls, losing sleep over their unjust fate. As the sun rose, young lives were snuffed out in our homeland—Khodanur, Kian, Nika, Mehrshad, Mohammad Hosseini, and countless others—innocent lives sacrificed at the altar of freedom. Iranian expatriates faced interrogation and scrutiny upon entering Iranian airports, with even their mobile phones subjected to inspection.

One day, while seated on a park bench near the university, I found myself immersed in the news from Iran. That park bench had become a sanctuary for me post-migration, a place of solace amidst turbulent times. The overwhelming news prompted a moment of reflection, drawing my thoughts to Iranian refugees of 1979. I wondered about their experiences—were they, like me, unprepared for a life away from Iran? How did they cope with the uncertainty, the loss, the longing? Questions flooded my mind about their struggles, their memories, their adaptations to new languages and cultures. If returning to Iran was no longer an option, how would they navigate life without their loved ones, without their past? With a deep breath, I realized a new path lay before me, filled with uncertainties yet brimming with possibilities.

I chose to recount this personal anecdote from an anthropological perspective for two compelling reasons. Firstly, it serves as a vivid illustration of the rapid and unforeseen disruptions that can reshape individual lives and communities. The sudden turmoil in Iran, marked by tragic events and widespread social unrest, not only derailed my initial academic plans but also illuminated the intricate challenges faced by Iranian expatriates navigating new cultural and social landscapes abroad. Secondly, this anecdote underscores my anthropological inquiry into the experiences of Iranian diaspora communities. It highlights my evolving interest in exploring how this community negotiates and reconstructs their identities, traditions, and cultural practices in response to displacement and societal upheaval. By delving into these narratives, I aim to contribute to anthropological understandings of immigration,

diaspora studies, and the dynamics of cultural continuity and adaptation in transnational contexts, including the process of home-making. Lastly, this exploration will provide insights into the changes in their identity as they integrated into Dutch society and how Iranian immigrants form hybrid identities that encompass both their Iranian roots and their new identities in the destination country.

This ethnographic study explored the home-making practices of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, deeply influenced by Iran's political and religious climate. Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Iran had undergone significant socio-political changes, including the imposition of mandatory hijab laws, severe political restrictions, and extensive control over daily life. These conditions drove many Iranians to seek refuge abroad. The tragic death of Mahsa Amini, a consequence of the oppressive regime, highlighted the severe impact of these controls on Iranian society and the resulting waves of immigration.

Understanding the experiences of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands required acknowledging this broader context. While the research did not focus solely on the political background, it recognized that these geopolitical events had profoundly shaped the immigrants' lives. The study investigated how these political and religious factors influenced specific aspects of daily life in the Netherlands, including language, culinary practices, child-rearing, and home environments.

By examining these areas, the study aimed to uncover how Iranian immigrants navigated and reconstructed their identities in their new environment. It explored how they integrated their cultural heritage into their daily lives, managed cultural beliefs, raised children, and adapted their domestic spaces while adjusting to Dutch society. The research also addressed how the broader political and religious context impacted their sense of "home" and belonging in the Netherlands, revealing how they balanced their cultural traditions with the demands of their new surroundings.

1.1 A Historical Overview of Iran's Context and Dutch Immigration Policy

In this section, understanding Iran's contemporary history is essential for contextualizing the events that triggered significant immigration and led to an influx of asylum seekers. Additionally, an overview of Dutch immigration policy will be provided to highlight key aspects of the integration processes within Dutch society, particularly in relation to Iranian immigrants.

Immigration from Iran has seen distinct phases before and after the 1979 Revolution, exhibiting both quantitative and qualitative variations. While early movements involved mostly college students, subsequent waves comprised a mix of forced and voluntary immigrants across modern Persian history. Notably, the largest waves of immigration have occurred since the 1950s. Bozorgmehr and Douglas (2011:11) note that "two waves of economic immigration significantly influenced the immigration patterns leading up to the overthrow of Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1979". After the 1979 Revolution, a notable surge in immigration occurred, characterized by substantial flows of immigrants to neighbouring and Western countries. This movement was driven by the establishment of a Shi'ite theocratic regime, the onset of the Iran-Iraq war, and the violent suppression of political dissidents.

Historically, the immigrants largely comprised exiles and political refugees, including Muslim intellectuals, liberals, leftists, deposed Shah supporters, and members of religious and ethnic minorities. The initial flows of immigrants were primarily comprised of wealthy and educated individuals (Bozorgmehr and Douglas, 2011; McAuliffe, 2016). By the 1970s, a large number of Iranian Marxists joined Khomeini in protesting American imperialism. Therefore, the revolution had a strong left-wing component. After the revolution, later generations of these left-wing intellectuals began to realize that some of their ideas would not be realized under the Khomeini regime. As a result, some of them also

began to leave the country. The deteriorating economic and political conditions in Iran in the early 1990s contributed to a increase in asylum immigration out of Iran. (e.g., Khosravi, 2017).

As noted by Gholami (2014: 66), "recent waves of Iranian immigration to various parts of the world are originating from peripheral areas of Iran, in contrast to previous waves, and are generally characterized by lower socioeconomic status." In accordance with Karim's (2013: 49) argument, "there was a continuation of this pattern of immigration after the economic situation deteriorated in response to the sanctions imposed on Iran by Western countries in 2009, as well as the contested presidential elections in 2009". Over the past half century, Iranians have dispersed across virtually every continent. Different sources estimate that there are between three and six million Iranians living abroad, although there are no reliable and precise statistics available. It is estimated that there are over one million Iranian emigrants currently residing in the United States. Cohen & Yefet stated that "there are small groups of Iranians living in Canada, Europe, and the Persian Gulf" (2019: 4).

In short, since the Iranian revolution and the subsequent Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), there has been a continuous pattern of Iranian immigration. Initially, this immigration was influenced by groups opposing the Mullahs' government, women opposed to the mandatory hijab, and left-wing parties. In the following years, various groups of Iranian society became involved, including university professors, students, investors, industrialists, and other popular groups. Azadi et al. (2010) argue that "this has been attributed to a number of factors, including decades of poor governance, political repression, human rights violations, a bleak economic outlook, corruption, and socio-demographic factors".

With the evolving patterns of immigration from Iran, the Netherlands has experienced significant ongoing immigration, particularly intensifying after World War II and during the decolonization period. Although the Netherlands has always been a destination for immigrants, these historical periods saw marked increases in immigration from various regions, including former colonies and other countries. As Iran experienced waves of emigration driven by historical events and socio-political changes, the Netherlands witnessed its evolution as an immigration destination, accommodating diverse migrant groups over the decades.

Most refugees from Iran and Afghanistan sought refuge in the Netherlands during the tumultuous periods of the 1980s and 1990s (van den Tillaart, Olde Monnikhof, van den Berg, & Warmerdam, 2000). Adding to this narrative, Meeteren et al (2013:114) highlight that "a shift occurred in the 1960s, with a significant influx of labour migrants from the Mediterranean region transforming the Netherlands from a country known for emigration to one increasingly defined by immigration". Subsequent waves of newcomers arrived for various reasons—ranging from family reunification to asylum-seeking in the 1990s, post-independence migrants from Surinam, individuals from new member states of the EU, as well as more recent additions like highly skilled immigrants—all shaping the intricate fabric of Dutch immigration. Despite maintaining a positive immigration balance since the early 1960s, Dutch governments hesitated to label the Netherlands officially as an immigration destination until as late as 1998, marking a significant policy shift.

The Netherlands has undergone profound transitions in its immigration and integration strategies over the past forty years. Ghorashi (2018:78) notes that "initially, the Netherlands was not a preferred choice for Iranian immigrants primarily due to language barriers and the absence of historical ties between the two nations". However, with its progressive asylum policies, the Netherlands became an attractive option for Iranians in the 1990s seeking refuge. By 2013, statistics from the Central Bureau of Statistics showed a community of 35,395 Iranians residing in the Netherlands, excluding those in refugee centers with pending applications or denied asylum seekers living without legal status. The estimated Iranian population of around 40,000 individuals in the Netherlands, with a notable gender imbalance favouring men, also fails to account for undocumented Iranians or refugees awaiting resolution on their asylum claims.

The historical context of both Iran and the Netherlands underscores the value of focusing on the initial wave of Iranian immigrants. This focus is driven by both historical significance and practical considerations. Historically, studying these early waves provides crucial insights into the challenges and experiences of Iranian immigrants when they first arrived in the Netherlands, helping to understand how they adapted to their new environment and built their communities. Practically, concentrating on these early experiences makes the research more feasible and allows for a detailed analysis of their adaptation processes. Over time, we can observe their achievements, their approach to raising the next generation, and their long-term impact on subsequent waves of immigration. This approach is particularly valuable because the first generation of immigrants has established themselves sufficiently to allow for an in-depth exploration of their experiences through the concept of homemaking, which considers past, present, and future perspectives from the newcomer's viewpoint. Thus, my research specifically focuses on Iranians who immigrated between 1970 and 1990. This cohort offers a unique opportunity to study personal identity development, including career choices, Dutch language acquisition, cultural integration with Dutch society, and the establishment of roots in the Netherlands. This focus is especially relevant for understanding the evolving identities of those who have felt increasingly distanced from Iran following the Islamic Revolution.

Building on Ghorashi's (2003) work, my study aims to shed light on how minority groups perceive their belonging in the host country. It's essential to consider various factors that shape this sense of belonging beyond just their political affiliations. Moreover, it might reveal their expectations regarding future ties to their homeland. Such anticipations could differentiate across different migrant generations, showcasing differing sentiments toward a potential return to their place of origin.

1.2 Theoretical Framework: Understanding Iranian Home-Making Dynamics

1.2.1 Defining Varied Interpretations: home, Home, and HOME among Iranian Immigrants

The experience of home-making for Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands is a dynamic and multifaceted process that reflects both personal and cultural negotiations, as well as broader societal influences. Drawing on the theoretical insights of Mary Douglas (1991), Brun and Fabos (2015), and Pels et al. (2022), we can better understand how these immigrants navigate the complex terrain of creating a home in a foreign land, while maintaining their cultural identity and adapting to new surroundings.

Mary Douglas (1991) posits that home transcends its physical structure and is a complex social construct shaped by interactions, memories, and cultural practices. According to Douglas (1991: 2) "home embodies a constellation of ideas and values materialized in a specific location, reflecting daily rhythms and emotional connections within that environment". This nuanced understanding of home as a dynamic and multifaceted concept provides a foundation for examining how Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands interpret and construct their own sense of "home"

Douglas's ideas about home revolve around several key concepts that highlight its complexity and significance. First and foremost, she emphasizes that home is fundamentally about space, but it is not limited to a physical structure. Home can take various forms, including tents, caravans, or even abstract concepts of belonging. What characterizes a home is the sense of control over space, where regularity and familiarity play crucial roles in defining the experience of being at home. Douglas further argues that a home is defined not just by its physical attributes but by the regular patterns of life that occur within it. This includes routines, rituals, and the organization of space over time. The idea of home

involves a structure that provides stability and predictability in daily life, allowing individuals to navigate their existence with a sense of security. In addition to its spatial and structural dimensions, Douglas connects the concept of home to broader cultural and social frameworks. She discusses how homes reflect societal values, norms, and relationships, suggesting that the organization of a home can signify the roles and responsibilities of its inhabitants, as well as their cultural identity. This cultural aspect underscores the idea that home is not merely a private space but also a site of social meaning. Moreover, Douglas acknowledges the emotional and moral significance of home. It is a place where individuals seek comfort, security, and a sense of belonging. While home can be a source of stability, it can also impose constraints and expectations, leading to feelings of nostalgia and resistance. This duality reflects the complex relationship individuals have with their homes. Finally, Douglas refers to the idea of home as an "ethnic domain," suggesting that it embodies structured domesticity and cultural identity. Homes project meanings about life, community, and social organization, serving as a microcosm of larger societal structures. Overall, her exploration of home highlights its multifaceted nature, encompassing physical space, social organization, cultural identity, and emotional significance, reflecting the interplay between individual experiences and broader societal contexts.

This perspective aligns with the insights of Brun and Fabos (2015), who explore how diverse experiences and cultural backgrounds influence individuals' perceptions of home. Brun and Fabos propose a triadic framework to analyse the complexities of home and homemaking in the context of forced immigration and protracted displacement. They distinguish between "home," "Home," and "HOME," each reflecting different layers of meaning and significance related to belonging and place-making. According to Brun and Fabos (2015: 5), the term "home" (lowercase) refers to the everyday practices of homemaking, encompassing the practical aspects of creating and maintaining a living space amidst displacement. "Home" (capitalized) signifies the values, traditions, memories, and emotional attachments individuals have to a particular place or idea of home. "HOME" (all caps) represents the broader political and historical contexts influencing the concept of home, embedded in institutional structures and reflecting the geopolitics of nation and homeland that contribute to situations of prolonged displacement.

Home-making and Home as Physical Space:

Brun and Fabos (2015) expand on the notion of home as a dynamic and evolving construct, suggesting that home-making involves a continuous process of negotiation and adaptation influenced by both individual experiences and broader social contexts. This perspective is consistent with the experiences of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, who actively shape their homes by integrating physical and symbolic elements that reflect their cultural heritage while adapting to their new environment.

In the early years of Iranian immigrants' settlement in the Netherlands, they engaged in various home-making practices to maintain a connection to their cultural roots. They adorned their homes with traditional Iranian motifs, prepared Persian cuisine, and displayed artifacts from their homeland. These practices created a sense of familiarity and comfort, allowing them to construct a personal sanctuary that resonated with their cultural identity amidst the Dutch setting. Mary Douglas (1991) argues that home transcends mere physical space, representing a place imbued with meaning and routine. She contends that "home starts by bringing some space under control" (Douglas, 1991: 3), highlighting how immigrants meticulously organized their living spaces to establish a sense of order and belonging. This perspective is supported by Hannerz's anthropological literature, which highlights how spatial organization and domestic practices are central to maintaining cultural continuity and personal identity in new environments (Hannerz, 1992). He examines how individuals create and negotiate their identities through the spaces they inhabit, particularly in the contexts of immigration and displacement. His work

reinforces the idea that home-making practices are essential for immigrants to assert their cultural identity while adapting to new social settings.

Incorporating these elements helps Iranian immigrants maintain their cultural heritage and adapt their identity to their new surroundings. By reflecting their cultural practices in their homes, they not only express their values but also create a sense of belonging in an unfamiliar place.

Home-making and Home as an Idealized Concept:

Brun and Fabos (2015) emphasize the role of memory in home-making, arguing that the emotional connection to home is deeply rooted in both personal and collective memories, shaping how individuals create their living spaces. This connection between memory and home-making is evident among Iranian immigrants, who often curate their homes with items that evoke nostalgia and maintain ties to their cultural heritage.

Currently, the concept of "Home," with its deep emotional and symbolic connections, plays a crucial role in shaping the experiences of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands. This attachment is often rooted in memories of Iran and a profound connection to the cultural traditions they left behind. For many of my participants, their sense of belonging is sustained by integrating elements of Iranian identity into their Dutch homes. For example, one participant displayed a Persian rug in their living room, while another proudly kept a collection of Iranian poetry books, such as works by Hafez and Rumi, in their office. Traditional items like samovars for tea or miniature Persian paintings also frequently adorned their spaces. These cultural artifacts not only remind them of their homeland but also act as tools for asserting their identity in a foreign setting.

By weaving together elements from their Iranian heritage with their new Dutch environment, these immigrants are able to construct spaces that honour their roots while helping them navigate their place in Dutch society. The longing for a lost or idealized home, rooted in the memories of Iran, also influences choices like incorporating Persian architectural features or using specific colour schemes reminiscent of their homeland. This process of home-making is a way for Iranian immigrants to maintain cultural continuity and adapt to a new life, much like Michel Faber (2001) views home as a repository of memories and emotions that shape one's identity. This idea is strongly supported by my observations of the first-generation Iranian immigrants, whose efforts to create a sense of belonging reflect this connection between home, memory, and identity. Through these deliberate choices, they find a balance between preserving their cultural roots and adapting to a new society, using their homes as a form of cultural expression and identity negotiation.

Home-making and HOME as Societal Context:

Brun and Fabo's (2015) argument about the societal dimensions of home-making highlights how the future of home will be shaped by the interaction between individual aspirations and the broader cultural context. Dutch design is celebrated for its minimalist, functional, and innovative approach, marked by clean lines, simplicity, and practicality. It emphasizes the use of natural materials, light colours, and an uncluttered aesthetic, with a strong commitment to sustainability and eco-friendly practices.

In this framework, one participant in my study exemplifies how they blend traditional Persian decor with modern Dutch design elements to adapt to their new environment while preserving their cultural heritage. For instance, this participant incorporates intricately woven Persian rugs and ornate calligraphy alongside sleek, minimalist Dutch furniture crafted from wood and metal. They also embrace open floor plans and large windows that invite natural light. By juxtaposing vibrant Persian textiles with the neutral tones and clean lines typical of Dutch interiors, they create a living space that

harmonizes their cultural roots with Dutch aesthetics. This approach demonstrates how home-making practices evolve to balance personal and cultural aspirations within a multicultural society, ultimately shaping their sense of belonging and adaptation in their new environment.

Looking to the future, the broader societal and institutional context captured by "HOME" will continue to have significant implications for the home-making practices of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands. Government regulations, social expectations, and cultural narratives surrounding immigration and integration will shape how they construct their homes and navigate the complexities of adapting to a new cultural milieu. Douglas's insights into the social structures that influence home-making practices highlight the importance of understanding how societal norms and policies impact individual experiences of home (Douglas, 1991: 4). As societal attitudes evolve, the future may bring new opportunities for Iranian immigrants to redefine their sense of home, fostering a more inclusive understanding of belonging that honours both their heritage and their experiences in the Netherlands.

Pels et al.'s (2022) concept of "home" as a fluid and dynamic space resonates deeply with the experiences of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands. For these immigrants, home-making is not just about preserving a physical space filled with familiar artifacts from Iran, but rather about navigating the complex interplay between their cultural roots and their new Dutch environment. Iranian immigrants, much like the minoritized groups Pels et al. describe, are engaged in a continuous process of adapting and redefining "home" through personal experiences, memories, and future aspirations.

In the Netherlands, Iranian immigrants blend elements of their heritage, such as Persian rugs, traditional cuisine, and family rituals, with Dutch customs and design elements, creating a hybrid space that reflects their dual identity. This mirrors Pels et al.'s notion of integrating both "roots and routes," as they anchor themselves in their cultural past while also navigating their place within Dutch society. This process challenges rigid, exclusionary definitions of "HOME," as Iranian immigrants assert their belonging not through conformity to dominant narratives, but by creating spaces that reflect their evolving identities and experiences. By framing their home-making in terms of both continuity and adaptation, Iranian immigrants exemplify the fluidity of "home" as proposed by Pels et al., showing that belonging is not static but constantly negotiated and reshaped in response to their personal and collective journeys.

In Peter Pels et al.'s framework, the concept of heritage is deeply interconnected with home and home-making. Both heritage and home are dynamic processes that extend beyond the preservation of material objects and traditions. Just as heritage involves the negotiation and redefinition of cultural narratives, home-making reflects a continuous process of adaptation, especially for minoritized groups like Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands. For these immigrants, home-making is not merely about creating a physical space but about embedding their cultural heritage into everyday practices, such as the use of Persian decor, traditional cuisine, or family rituals. This aligns with Pels et al.'s view of heritage as a relational and evolving concept, where "heritage" is not about the past or tradition but about how people select aspects of a past or tradition to recreate in the present and for the future. Heritage and home-making both involve a negotiation between preserving cultural roots and adapting to new contexts, showing that identity is shaped not only by what is preserved from the past but by how it is lived and reinterpreted in new environments. Iranian immigrants, for instance, craft their sense of "home" by integrating elements of Iranian heritage with Dutch influences, illustrating how home-making becomes a form of heritage in practice. Through this interplay, heritage becomes a lived experience, embedded in the spaces, objects, and practices that shape everyday life, and home-making is elevated to an act of cultural preservation and identity formation.

In conclusion, the concept of home is multifaceted, incorporating physical space, emotional significance, and societal context. By examining the home-making practices of Iranian immigrants through the perspectives of Douglas, Faber, and Brun and Fábos, I aim to understand how individuals navigate their identities and cultural legacy in a new environment. Mary Douglas's idea of home moves

beyond the physical structure, suggesting that it is a space defined by routine, meaning, and familiarity. For Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, the home is not merely a shelter but a place where they recreate elements of their cultural heritage within a foreign environment. This can be seen through the integration of Persian design elements—such as carpets, calligraphy, and symbolic artifacts—into their Dutch homes, aligning with Douglas's notion of controlling space to create comfort and continuity, reflecting cultural values in a new context.

However, Brun and Fabos argue that home-making also involves the interaction between personal space and broader social and cultural influences. Iranian immigrants navigate this dynamic by blending Iranian traditions with Dutch influences, creating a hybrid living environment. For example, they may cook traditional Persian dishes like kebabs and rice, but also adopt Dutch culinary habits by incorporating local bread and vegetables. This process mirrors Brun and Fábos's concept of "home" (lowercase), where everyday practices evolve to adapt to displacement and the new social realities they encounter in the Netherlands.

Pels et al. further complicates this understanding by distinguishing between the personal, evolving concept of "home" and the more rigid, institutionalized concept of "HOME." Iranian immigrants not only shape their personal spaces but also interact with the larger societal structures that define belonging and integration in Dutch society. While they may seek to preserve their Iranian identity at home, they face external pressures to assimilate into Dutch society, such as learning the language, participating in Dutch institutions, and adjusting to societal norms. These interactions reflect the ongoing negotiation between maintaining their cultural heritage and adapting to the expectations of their new environment.

1.2.2 Language as a Vehicle for Cultural Expression

Within the realm of language, immigration, and home-making, the engagement of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands with their inherited language and cultural identity unfolds as a multifaceted narrative. Contact with the home country has been identified as a means of measuring attitude towards the inherited language (Cherciov, 2012), and it has been found to be a strong predictor of first language proficiency among immigrants (Hulsen et al., 2002). Similarly, using the inherited language when visiting the home country has been identified as one of the best motivators for inherited language maintenance.

Despite the limited comprehensive studies on heritage language maintenance and loss among Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, research conducted in the United States provides valuable insights into language dynamics within immigrant populations. For instance, Modarresi (2001) indicates that the Iranian community in the U.S. actively strives to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage through various methods, such as national ceremonies and media. However, the process of Americanization exerts considerable pressure on the second generation, who need robust cultural motivations and support to resist language shift. This finding underscores the challenges faced by Iranian immigrants in maintaining their heritage language, which may also resonate with the experiences of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands. Given the substantial presence of Iranian immigrants in various countries, including the Netherlands, further exploration of their linguistic experiences is warranted. While countries like New Zealand have extensive literature on heritage language topics, including the maintenance of ties with the home country (Hulsen et al., 2002; Bell et al., 2005; Seals & Olsen-Reeder, 2017), research gaps persist, especially concerning smaller immigrant populations like Iranians and the lack of formal support for intergenerational language transmission (Fishman, 1991).

Journeying into the intimate confines of Iranian immigrant households in the Netherlands reveals the profound role of language in cultural transmission and familial bonding. The lyrical tones of Farsi reverberate through the walls, carrying with them the stories, traditions, and values of generations past. "Children learn not just words but the nuances of their heritage through the cadence of their mother

tongue, forging a link to their roots that transcends geographical boundaries” (Douglas, 1991: 16). In this linguistic sanctuary, the echoes of Persian poetry and the rhythms of everyday conversation blend to create a tapestry of identity that binds family members together in a shared narrative of belonging and continuity.

Scholars like Gharibi and Seals (2019: 6) argue that shared language within families can foster a sense of common identity and support healthy relationships, suggesting that when family members speak a common language, it enhances family cohesion and cultural continuity. For example, Piller (2001) highlights how bilingual families in New York City use their heritage language to strengthen family bonds and preserve cultural identity, illustrating the benefits of maintaining a shared language. However, this perspective assumes that heritage language maintenance is always advantageous and does not fully address the complexities of immigration. Grosjean (2010) argues that while maintaining a heritage language can reinforce cultural identity, successful integration often requires proficiency in the dominant language. Grosjean’s research shows that immigrants who achieve fluency in the dominant language, such as Dutch or English, can better navigate social and professional environments, which is essential for effective adaptation and social integration. The balance between preserving a heritage language and acquiring proficiency in the dominant language can impact family dynamics and individual identity in different ways.

Language practices among immigrants are marked by fluidity and adaptability. For Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, this fluidity is evident in their management of Persian, their heritage language, and Dutch, the dominant language of their new country. Immigration often necessitates a balancing act between maintaining Persian and acquiring proficiency in Dutch. While Persian is preserved within the family and community to maintain cultural ties and heritage, Dutch becomes essential for broader social interactions, education, and employment. Iranian immigrants frequently adapt their language use based on social, economic, and educational contexts. For instance, younger generations might become more proficient in Dutch while heritage language use may be more confined to domestic settings or cultural events. This dual-language approach allows Iranian immigrants to retain their cultural identity through Persian while effectively integrating into Dutch society. Understanding these dynamics provides valuable insights into how language practices evolve in response to immigration, impacting both individual identity and community cohesion.

I believe that within the framework of home-making, a common language can act as a fundamental pillar that enhances familial connections and fosters a feeling of inclusion within the family structure. Gharibi and Seals also delve into the dual nature of home language socialization, highlighting “how parents influence children's language use, and vice versa” (ibid: 6). The mutual exchange of language practices within the family environment plays a crucial role in shaping a collective linguistic and cultural environment, which is essential for fostering a sense of connection and cultural heritage preservation. However, for research purposes, it is important to investigate how this dynamic works in practice. Specifically, we should explore what individuals think about single-language versus multilingual education, what strategies they employ, and how these choices affect the position of their children in the host country. Understanding these aspects will provide insights into how language practices impact family dynamics, cultural continuity, and integration within the new cultural context. The importance of retaining connections with the home country is often seen as a key factor in shaping attitudes towards a heritage language. “Immigrant families who uphold ties to their country of origin through language and cultural traditions can strengthen their sense of connection to their roots and cultural heritage, even within a new cultural environment” (ibid:11). However, it is also crucial to consider the role of the language of the host country. Proficiency in the dominant language of the new country is essential for social integration, accessing opportunities, and facilitating communication in daily life. Balancing the maintenance of a heritage language with acquiring fluency in the host country’s language presents a nuanced challenge for immigrant families. Research should explore how families navigate this balance and how their language practices influence both their cultural continuity and their

integration into the broader society. Babae's (2014: 66) work emphasizes “the pivotal role of heritage languages in preserving cultural identity, stressing the profound connection between language, culture, and personal identity.” It underscores that the loss of inherited languages can result in a loss of one's identity, highlighting the deep connection between language and cultural heritage. Furthermore, by upholding inherited languages, immigrant groups can cultivate a sense of belonging and attachment to their roots, even in new and unfamiliar settings. The research also suggests that “a strong appreciation of ethnic identity can support the preservation of heritage languages, pointing to language as a key factor in fostering a sense of belonging within the community” (ibid: 66). It highlights that ethnic identity plays a significant role in language preservation across various ethnic backgrounds, underscoring the intrinsic connection between language, culture, and personal identity.

Aligning with the significance of language persistence, Meybodi (2014) delves into how language persistence practices within second-generation Iranian-Americans contribute to their sense of cultural continuity and belonging, akin to the concept of home-making. The study reveals that “both parents and children of Iranian immigrants demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours towards preserving the Persian language. Through various means such as maintaining transnational ties, regular visits to Iran, active participation in cultural and religious events, offering Persian language instruction, and enforcing language use at home, these families are actively involved in upholding their linguistic and cultural heritage” (ibid: 4). These efforts not only aim to safeguard the Persian language but also establish a link to their ancestral homeland and cultural origins. Through active engagement in these practices, second-generation Iranian Americans in the Northeastern States craft a notion of "home" that surpasses physical boundaries, rooted in shared language and cultural customs. The study highlights how language preservation practices significantly contribute to the home-making process for immigrant families, molding their sense of identity, belonging, and cultural continuity within a new societal framework.

1.2.3 Culinary Traditions as Pivotal Cultural Pillars

Throughout history, food has been intricately tied to the concept of identity, as evident in works from the Enlightenment era, including those of Rousseau¹ and Brillat-Savarin². They controversially contended that one's food preferences could reveal insights into their nature.

The term "foodways" refers to the cultural, social, and economic practices related to the production, distribution, preparation, and consumption of food within a particular group or society. In the context of contemporary diasporic and ethnic groups, the concept of foodways has evolved to reflect the dynamic nature of food cultures in an increasingly globalized world. Traditionally, foodways were defined “as the comprehensive system of how a society conceptualizes and evaluates food, acquires and preserves ingredients, prepares meals, consumes food, and considers nutrition” (Anderson, 1971:161). This definition, often proposed by folklorists, emphasized the shared practices within a society. However, in current discourse, the understanding of foodways has expanded to acknowledge the ways in which people and foods move across borders and influence each other in a globalized context. Foodways are now “seen as more than just static representations of a group's culinary heritage; they are recognized as active components through which cultural identities are constructed and expressed” (Crang, 2000: 247). This contemporary perspective on foodways highlights the fluidity and adaptability of food cultures, especially in the context of immigration and diaspora. Each immigration experience shapes and influences the development of unique "foodscapes," reflecting the interplay between cultural traditions, new influences, and individual creativity .

¹ In his 1761 publication, "Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse" (Julie, or the New Heloise)

² Captured in the frequently cited saying 'tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are' from his 1825 essay, *La Physiologie du Goût* (The Physiology of Taste)

The kitchen, a cherished space in Iranian immigrant homes in the Netherlands, becomes a vibrant tableau where culinary traditions intersect with cultural identity and adaptation. In this space, the alchemy of saffron, rosewater, and sumac transforms humble ingredients into dishes that evoke memories of bustling bazaars and family gatherings in distant lands. Recipes passed down through generations serve as a tangible link to the past, infusing mealtimes with a sense of nostalgia and connection to Iranian heritage. However, this culinary narrative also evolves as Iranian immigrants adapt to their new environment. Dutch ingredients and cooking methods increasingly blend with traditional Iranian dishes, reflecting the integration of new cultural influences. For instance, as mentioned by my participants, a Persian *khoresh* (stew) might be prepared with locally sourced Dutch root vegetables, such as potatoes and carrots, adding a Dutch touch to a classic recipe. Dutch bread, commonly served at every meal, might accompany Iranian stews, integrating into mealtimes while maintaining traditional flavours. This fusion creates a culinary experience that respects both heritage and new cultural contexts. “As parents and children gather around the table to savour the flavours of home, each bite becomes a testament to the resilience, creativity, and love woven into the fabric of culinary traditions (Douglas, 1991:16)”, while also acknowledging the influence of Dutch food culture on their evolving culinary practices. This dual influence highlights the dynamic interplay between maintaining cultural heritage and embracing new cultural elements, resulting in a rich and multifaceted food experience.

In her exploration of ethnic food history in the US, Gabaccia (2009) observed that immigrants typically maintain their traditional foodways, which are closely linked to community, family, and religious practices. This adherence helps preserve their cultural identity and social connections. However, immigrants also engage with the host country’s food culture by incorporating local dishes such as hamburgers, bagels, and donuts into their diets. Gabaccia notes that “ethnic food” often involves introducing one’s culinary traditions to a broader audience, thus integrating them into mainstream culture (ibid: 51). This dual engagement highlights a dynamic food landscape where traditional and host country cuisines intersect. Such interactions reveal the complexity of cultural adaptation and the ongoing negotiation of identity through food. While many immigrant communities, including Iranians, strive to preserve their traditional foodways to maintain cultural heritage and social ties, it’s crucial to recognize that American food culture is diverse and constantly evolving. The interplay between traditional immigrant foods and American culinary practices illustrates how foodways are about both maintaining tradition and adapting to a new cultural environment.

In Gabaccia’s (2009) examination of ethnic food history in the US, she found that while immigrants often strive to maintain their traditional foodways, this does not mean they completely reject the host society’s cuisine. Many immigrants continued to uphold their food traditions because these practices were closely linked to their community, family, and religious life. However, they also began to incorporate elements of the host culture’s food into their diets. For instance, while maintaining traditional dishes, immigrants frequently adopted popular American foods like hamburgers, bagels, and donuts into their everyday meals. Gabaccia points out that “ethnic food” often involves sharing one’s cuisine with a broader audience, which includes adapting and integrating these foods into mainstream culture (ibid: 51). This dual engagement with both traditional and host country foods underscores a complex food landscape where ethnic foods are both preserved and adapted, reflecting the dynamic nature of cultural integration. This observation highlights a broader research opportunity: exploring how immigrants navigate and negotiate their food practices within a new cultural context, and how this process influences their cultural identity and social interactions.

Incorporating the themes of home-making into the discussion of food can provide a rich and nuanced perspective on the significance of culinary traditions in shaping personal and cultural identities within the domestic sphere. Holtzman (2006) explore how the act of preparing and sharing family recipes can serve as a form of home-making, “where the kitchen becomes a space for passing down traditions and memories through food” (ibid:10). This article delves into the intricate interplay between food practices,

memory formation, and identity construction. It explores how food serves not only as sustenance but also as a profound medium for the creation and recollection of memories, intertwined with sensory experiences, cultural heritage, and familial connections. Holtzman underscores “the central role of food in family rituals and traditions, acting as a conduit for the transmission of cultural practices and the fostering of a sense of continuity within the domestic sphere” (ibid: 13). Through the act of preparing and sharing meals, families partake in a ritual of home-making that reinforces shared values and collective identity. Food emerges as a source of solace and familiarity within the home, triggering sensory reminiscences that enhance feelings of belonging and safety. The process of cooking and communal dining fosters an inviting ambiance that contributes to the overall sense of home and comfort. The article also probes into “how food practices establish intergenerational ties, with recipes and culinary customs being passed down from one generation to the next” (ibid: 13). This continuity of food-related traditions creates a shared narrative of home-making that transcends across family lineages.

Sayadabdi and Howland (2021) examine how diasporic Iranians in Aotearoa/New Zealand use foodways to express their cultural identity and sense of belonging. They describe how Iranian immigrants adapt their food practices to navigate their new environment while preserving their heritage. This adaptation involves selecting specific grocery stores and ingredients that connect them to their cultural roots, preparing traditional dishes, and engaging in rituals that reinforce their Iranian identity. “Iranians in the diasporic setting express their national identity through culinary customs by engaging in discourses that distinguish Iranian food from non-Iranian food, choosing specific grocery stores that connect them to their sense of home, consuming culturally significant food items, and performing rituals that highlight their Iranian heritage” (ibid:26). This approach shows how Iranian immigrants blend their traditional food practices with the resources available in New Zealand, balancing their cultural heritage with the realities of their new surroundings. These practices not only help maintain their sense of identity but also provide a way to navigate and adapt to their host country’s food culture, thereby making sense of home in a new context.

In conclusion, the exploration of foodways among Iranian immigrants underscores the paramount role of culinary practices in the construction of home-making. By delving into the connections between food, memory, and cultural identity, this research illuminates how Iranian immigrants utilize food as a means to preserve their heritage, foster familial bonds, and create a sense of belonging in a new cultural landscape. Through an in-depth examination of foodways, this study aims to unveil the intricate ways in which culinary traditions serve as pillars for home-making, anchoring individuals to their roots while navigating the complexities of diasporic experiences. I seek to celebrate the resilience, traditions, and intimate connections woven into Iranian households through the rituals of preparing and sharing meals, offering a reflection on the enduring importance of food in shaping the concept of home among Iranian immigrants.

1.2.4 Parenting Practices: Exploring Intergenerational Dynamics

Parenting is indispensable for the development of children within immigrant families, as it molds their cognitive, socioemotional, and health paths amidst the challenges of immigration. The quality of parenting practices, encompassing warmth, involvement, and support, is especially crucial for children's well-being and successful adaptation to a new environment. Furthermore, parental dedication through time, resources, and emotional support directly influences the early learning and cognitive growth of immigrant children, including Iranian families who have experienced refugee situations and faced adversity under regimes like the Islamic Republic. Early childhood represents a critical, yet often neglected, phase in researching children within immigrant families. Offspring of undocumented parents encounter distinctive hurdles to their growth and well-being that surpass mere socioeconomic risks.

In the realm of parenting, Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands navigate the delicate balance between preserving cultural traditions and embracing new societal norms. Through stories, songs, and rituals passed down from their own upbringing, parents instil in their children a deep appreciation for Iranian heritage and values. For example, while the concept of *taarof*—a form of polite etiquette and respect—is integral to Iranian culture, where indirect communication and social nuances are emphasized, Iranian parents in the Netherlands often find that Dutch society values directness and honesty. They may encourage their children to adopt Dutch norms of straightforward communication and punctuality, which contrast with the more nuanced approach of *taarof*.

Moreover, Iranian parents may embrace aspects of Dutch culture, such as the emphasis on egalitarianism and individual independence, which can differ from traditional Iranian social structures that place a high value on hierarchy and family interdependence. Conversely, they may retain aspects of Iranian culture that they feel are deeply rooted in their identity, such as familial loyalty and respect for elders, even as they adapt to the more egalitarian and straightforward social norms of Dutch society. This blend of preserving Iranian traditions and adapting to Dutch cultural practices reflects the resilience and adaptability of Iranian parenting in a multicultural context. “As parents’ guide their children through the complexities of dual cultural identities, they embody the resilience, adaptability, and unwavering love that define the essence of Iranian parenting in a foreign land (Douglas, 1991:302)”.

Moreover, the aspiration to instil cultural values and traditions in children while simultaneously aiding their integration into the broader society presents a distinctive set of challenges. This scenario resonates deeply with Iranian immigrants who settled in the Netherlands between 1970 and 1990. These immigrants harboured hopes of providing their children with a better future through immigration, all the while facing the inherent sacrifices that came with this decision. The Iranian parents found themselves grappling with the dual responsibilities of preserving their cultural heritage and supporting their children's adaptation to Dutch society. “This intricate balancing act meant not only fostering a sense of identity rooted in Iranian customs but also assisting their children in navigating the norms and expectations of their new home (Parsai et al., 2010: 207)”. Furthermore, the physical distance from their extended family members back in Iran, coupled with the demanding work schedules required to sustain their families in a foreign land, added layers of complexity to their immigrant experience.

Recognizing the intersection of immigration and parenting holds significant importance for practitioners and policymakers seeking to empower and assist immigrant families, particularly those of Dutch and Iranian descent. By understanding this intricate connection, professionals can offer personalized assistance to these families, validating their unique experiences and aiding them in navigating the intricacies of nurturing children in a foreign cultural setting. This tailored support can help immigrant parents, including Dutch and Iranian families, effectively address the challenges and seize the opportunities that arise in the process of raising children in a new country.

According to Yoshikawa & Kalil (2011: 295), “Parenting can be defined as the process of raising and nurturing children, encompassing various aspects such as providing care, guidance, support, and setting boundaries to promote the well-being and development of children”. The aspiration to instill cultural values and traditions in children while simultaneously aiding their integration into the broader society presents a distinctive set of challenges. This scenario resonates deeply with Iranian immigrants who settled in the Netherlands between 1970 and 1990. These immigrants harboured hopes of providing their children with a better future through immigration, all the while facing the inherent sacrifices that came with this decision. The Iranian parents found themselves grappling with the dual responsibilities of preserving their cultural heritage and supporting their children's adaptation to Dutch society. This intricate balancing act meant not only fostering a sense of identity rooted in Iranian customs but also assisting their children in navigating the norms and expectations of their new home. Furthermore, the physical distance from their extended family members back in Iran, coupled with the demanding work

schedules required to sustain their families in a foreign land, added layers of complexity to their immigrant experience.

De Valk et.al (2004:11) mentioned that “immigrants shape their homes and family life in a new environment by adapting their cultural practices, traditions, and values to fit the host country's context while also maintaining elements of their heritage”. This process involves creating a sense of belonging and comfort in their living spaces, incorporating aspects of their cultural identity into their homes, and navigating the challenges of cultural integration within the family unit. It is obvious that immigrants may blend traditional and host country practices in areas such as food, language, celebrations, and child-rearing to create a unique cultural fusion in their homes. By balancing these elements, immigrants strive to establish a harmonious and inclusive environment that reflects their cultural background while embracing the new cultural influences of their host country.

The journey of immigrant parents as they navigate the trials of raising children in a foreign land is closely entwined with the intricate aspects of the immigration journey. These parents frequently encounter a delicate equilibrium between upholding their cultural roots and embracing the standards and anticipations of their adopted nation. “This equilibrium gives rise to several paradoxes, such as the challenge of upholding parental authority while facilitating their children's integration into a new cultural milieu (Parsai et al, 2010: 207)”. Recognizing the intersection of immigration and parenting holds significant importance for practitioners and policymakers seeking to empower and assist immigrant families, particularly those of Dutch and Iranian descent. By understanding this intricate connection, professionals can offer personalized assistance to these families, validating their unique experiences and aiding them in navigating the intricacies of nurturing children in a foreign cultural setting. This tailored support can help immigrant parents, including Dutch and Iranian families, effectively address the challenges and seize the opportunities that arise in the process of raising children in a new country.

In conclusion, parenting within immigrant families, such as Iranian families in the Netherlands, is pivotal in shaping the cognitive, socioemotional, and health development of children amidst the complexities of immigration. Iranian parents face the distinct challenge of balancing the preservation of their cultural heritage with the need to help their children adapt to Dutch societal norms. This balance becomes even more complex when considering the issues that arise as children grow up in a country where their parents may be seen as outsiders and may struggle with language barriers. Children often encounter difficulties when their parents are not fluent in Dutch or unfamiliar with local customs. For example, language barriers can hinder effective communication between parents and teachers, leading to misunderstandings about academic performance and behavioural issues. This lack of communication can affect the child's educational progress and social integration. Additionally, when parents do not know how to navigate Dutch social systems, such as healthcare or social services, they may miss out on essential support and resources that their children need.

The resilience and adaptability of Iranian parents are evident as they strive to support their children's integration while maintaining their cultural identity. However, the challenges of managing cultural differences and language barriers highlight the need for targeted support from practitioners and policymakers. Addressing these issues involves not only providing resources for language acquisition and cultural orientation but also creating systems that bridge the gap between immigrant families and the broader society. By understanding the challenges immigrant families face and providing the right support, we as residents can create a society that both respects cultural traditions and helps people integrate successfully.

1.2.5 The Home Environment: A Dynamic Cultural Space

In the realm of expatriation, Iranian immigrants residing in the Netherlands often grapple with a potent mix of nostalgia and longing for their homeland. This emotional connection to their past dwelling plays a pivotal role in shaping their perceptions and construction of the concept of “home” in their adopted country.

The act of crafting a sense of home-making among Iranian immigrants involves a delicate interplay of tangible and intangible elements. Within their dwellings, they infuse spaces with mementos evoking memories of Iran, while simultaneously upholding cherished cultural practices and principles. Rooted in their cultural heritage and personal narratives, Iranian immigrants may hold an idealized vision of both home and homeland, coloured by a tapestry of reminiscences and traditional norms that influence their quest for belonging in the Netherlands.

Everyday rituals and communal bonds form the cornerstone of Iranian immigrants’ sense of home in Dutch society. Participating in cultural events, fostering community ties, and preserving roots to their heritage all contribute significantly to their feelings of attachment and inclusion in their newfound homeland. The physical home of an Iranian immigrant undergoes a transformation, becoming a sanctuary where Dutch architecture blends with Persian design aesthetics. Persian rugs, ornate calligraphy, and intricate tilework grace the walls, narrating tales of Iranian artistry blended seamlessly with Dutch living spaces. “Each room tells stories of resilience and adaptation, from cozy corners echoing Persian folklore to sunlit gardens hosting familial gatherings, symbolizing the fusion of identities in a foreign land (Douglas,1991:16)”.

I believe that by examining how returnees create and utilize their homes to reconnect with a sense of place and belonging, I can illuminate the significant connection between home-making practices and the immigration journey. We well know that return immigrants participate in both the physical and symbolic building of their homes to establish a feeling of familiarity, identity, and belonging in a new or revisited environment. By engaging in activities like decorating, designing, and naming their living spaces, these returnees not only establish a physical sanctuary but also infuse it with personal and cultural significance that mirrors their dreams, principles, and ties to their native land.

In exploring how returnees cultivate and animate their living quarters to rekindle a sense of place and attachment, I seek to shed light on the intrinsic link between home-making practices and the immigrant passage. Return immigrants ardently partake in the physical and symbolic creation of their homes to establish familiarity, identity, and a sense of belonging in revisited or new surroundings. Engaging in activities such as decoration, design, and nomenclature for their living spaces, returnees carve out not only a physical refuge but also infuse it with personal and cultural meanings reflecting aspirations, values, and ties to their native land. According to Horst (2011: 31), “through the act of decorating, designing, and naming their living spaces, returnees not only create a physical shelter but also imbue it with personal and cultural meanings that reflect their aspirations, values, and connections to their homeland”. Furthermore, the architecture of the home functions as a space where returnees negotiate their relationships with family, kin, and community. This demonstrates how they integrate their familial bonds and memories into the structure and design of their homes. “The act of naming rooms after absent family members, storing objects intended for loved ones, and creating spaces for future visits from children and grandchildren all contribute to the process of home-making that transcends physical construction to encompass emotional and social dimensions (ibid: 33)”.

In the final paragraph of this section, I intend to address how all these dimensions are accessible from both Dutch and Iranian perspectives. The interaction of cultures, languages, and customs is intrinsic to the immigrant experience; otherwise, the practices of home-making and belonging would not occur. It is crucial for my research to explore to what extent Iranian immigrants or refugees strived to learn the Dutch language? When did they begin their language acquisition? What challenges did they

face? How did their interaction and socialization with native Dutch individuals occur? Which parenting models did they adopt and incorporate into their family culture? To what extent have they immersed themselves in Dutch culinary and dietary customs? For example, Iranians typically dine around 11-12 at night, but in Dutch culinary culture, this time is reserved for sleep rather than dining. Additionally, aspects like home decoration and household furnishing choices also depict a significant cultural shift.

1.3 Research Question and Operationalisation

Embarking on my research journey, I aimed to delve into the complex dynamics of home-making among Iranian-Dutch families. My focus encompassed the intricate interplay of culinary traditions, language dynamics, parenting practices, and the physical environment of the home. Initially, my curiosity was sparked by understanding how these elements collectively define the concept of 'home' and shape everyday life within this cultural blend.

In examining the culinary practices of the Iranian-Dutch community, my study tries to reveal how food serves as a vital element in both preserving cultural heritage and adapting to a new environment. Through interviews and observations at Iranian restaurants and cultural events across Amsterdam, Utrecht, and The Hague, I found that traditional Iranian dishes like kebabs and rice play a key role in maintaining cultural continuity and fostering a sense of belonging. At the same time, Iranian families also integrate Dutch culinary elements into their daily lives. For example, they may serve Dutch bread alongside traditional Iranian stews or incorporate local vegetables into Persian recipes. This dual approach highlights how Iranian-Dutch households navigate the intersection of their cultural heritage with local Dutch food practices, creating a rich and dynamic food culture that reflects both their origins and their new surroundings.

Language emerged as a pivotal dimension in my research, highlighting its multifaceted role in shaping familial interactions and preserving cultural heritage within Iranian-Dutch households. Beyond facilitating communication, language serves as a conduit for the transmission of cultural values and traditions from one generation to the next. My investigation delved into the dynamics of multilingual environments within these families, examining how proficiency in both Persian and Dutch languages influences daily interactions and identity formation among children. By exploring how language is used to maintain cultural continuity while adapting to the Dutch societal context, I aimed to uncover the nuanced ways in which Iranian-Dutch families navigate language dynamics as part of their broader home-making process. This operationalization seeks to elucidate the interplay between language, cultural adaptation, and identity formation, providing insights into how linguistic practices contribute to the maintenance of cultural heritage in diasporic settings.

The exploration of parenting practices within the Iranian-Dutch community provided insights into how caregivers balance traditional Iranian cultural expectations with the contemporary realities of raising children in the Netherlands. This includes navigating both Iranian cultural values and the norms and expectations of Dutch society, particularly as influenced by local schools and the experiences of their children growing up in a new cultural context. Through an examination of a spectrum of child-rearing approaches—from traditional Iranian strict methods to more contemporary strategies—I uncovered a range of adaptive techniques used to maintain cultural roots while adapting to evolving societal norms. This research highlighted the significance of concepts like *taarof*, a form of polite etiquette and respect deeply embedded in Iranian culture, which influences interactions within the family. By teaching children the importance of humility and social harmony through *taarof*, parents play a crucial role in transmitting cultural values across generations within Iranian-Dutch households. These insights underscored the dynamic nature of cultural adaptation and identity formation in familial contexts, contributing to a nuanced exploration of parenting practices in the diasporic setting.

Furthermore, my study of housing delved into the intricate ways in which physical spaces within Iranian-Dutch homes embody and reflect cultural values, social dynamics, and familial relationships. Beyond mere architecture and design, homes serve as tangible expressions of identity, where Iranian symbols, decorations, and spatial organization play pivotal roles. By examining the layout and design choices made by Iranian-Dutch families, I explored how these elements contribute to the enactment and negotiation of cultural traditions on a daily basis. These homes are dynamic environments where cultural practices are not only preserved but also adapted to fit within the Dutch societal context, illustrating the ongoing evolution of identity and belonging in diasporic settings. This operationalization aims to illuminate the significance of physical spaces in the home-making process, showcasing how they serve as poignant reflections of cultural continuity and adaptation among Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands.

In synthesizing these dimensions, my aim has been to construct a comprehensive framework for evaluating the home-making process within Iranian-Dutch households. Integrating insights from culinary traditions, language practices, parenting dynamics, and housing arrangements, I sought to illuminate the intricate web of influences shaping domestic life and fostering cultural continuity. The primary research question guiding this study was, "How did Iranian immigrants who arrived in the Netherlands during the 1970s to 1990s establish a 'home' while integrating Dutch and Iranian cultural patterns?" To address this question, I developed specific sub-questions tailored to each dimension.

Understanding how these individuals have built their lives in the Netherlands over the past few decades is central to my investigation. I was particularly interested in exploring how they manage their home life, the challenges they face, and the ease with which they adapt. Their initial perceptions of the Netherlands upon arrival, including their concerns and sources of happiness, provide critical insights into their integration experiences. Additionally, I aimed to examine how issues of citizenship recognition and the denial of rights impact their sense of belonging and identity within Dutch society. These inquiries aim to uncover the nuanced realities of Iranian immigrants' experiences and the complex interplay of cultural integration and identity formation in a new cultural context.

And my sub-questions are:

1- "*How do Iranian households in the Dutch diaspora navigate the emotional and cultural dimensions of 'home,' blending Iranian traditions with Dutch societal influences in both their daily practices and social relationships*"

As we all know, it is quite logical that they require a roof around the house. There is a difference between a house and a home. I am referring to something very concrete when I spoke of housing, which is: how did they obtain a roof over their head? Who was responsible for this? Who could they contact to obtain a roof over their head? How did housing help them make a home, and in what ways did it possibly not help them? It is crucial as it costs money, and as an immigrant or refugee they are unlikely to be able to bring enough money to purchase a house. Therefore, they were dependent on landlords and renters and all the other structures of Dutch society, legal structures, and stuff like that. I wanted to study immigration from a country like Iran, which has several issues, and the experiences of individuals seeking asylum as political refugees. In other words, housing for Iranian immigrants, especially for a generation like the one I aimed to study, often included their placement in asylum centres. Upon arriving at the asylum centre, how did they go about establishing a home for their family? Did they display mementos and souvenirs from their time in Iran, and if so, where did they obtain them? On the other hand, did they bring anything with them, or were they required to leave everything behind and purchase new items in the Netherlands?

2- "*What role do food and culinary practices play in maintaining cultural identity within Iranian households in a new cultural setting?*"

Food is related to both what is available as well as what people like to eat. It is already a matter of how do people survive? It is critical to know what memory food is that they carry with them. In this sub-question, I was seeking to understand how they look at food in the formation of a "home" in the Netherlands. When they immigrated to the Netherlands, did they take into consideration this factor that was being lost or was disappearing? If so, why should it be preserved? On the other hand, what were the tastes that were meaningful to them, and were these tastes available in the Netherlands? If so, how and through whom?

3- *" How does language use, including the maintenance of Persian language skills alongside English and Dutch, contribute to the sense of cultural identity within Iranian households?"*

Language is of course equally significant, but both sides should also be considered. Persian as well as Dutch are both involved. Moreover, it is also related to not being able to speak Dutch when they arrived, how they learn Dutch, and how their perception of people changes once they have learned Dutch. Whether or not they still use it with children. Regarding this sub-question, I wanted to understand how well they had been able to teach Persian to their Dutch colleagues and friends. In what language did they still speak at home? How did they teach Persian to their children, and what was their process of adaptation in the new environment (i.e., making a "home" in the Netherlands) in terms of language changes?

4- *" How do Iranian parents navigate the process of transmitting cultural values, traditions, and heritage to their children while living in a foreign country?"*

The subject of children is particularly interesting because when you ask people about what they did when they were raising their children, they describe the future they want for themselves. As a result, this is also a very broad and complex aspect of making a home. In other words, it is both what you bring with you as well as what you must accomplish. It is critical to recognize where they are today and what kind of future they envision for themselves, as well as what is not possible. As a final sub-question, I examined how having a family influenced the decision to build a home. In order for them not to have to worry about their children's future as immigrants, what facilities were provided by the Dutch government? Did they succeed in providing their children with educational and employment opportunities as they had envisioned?

By addressing these sub-questions through rigorous data collection and analysis, my aim was to provide a nuanced understanding of how Iranian immigrants navigate the integration of Dutch and Iranian cultural patterns within their homes in the Netherlands, fostering a sense of home and belonging. Through exploration of culinary traditions, language practices, parenting dynamics, and housing arrangements, I sought to illuminate the strategies and adaptations Iranian-Dutch families employ to maintain their cultural identity while integrating into Dutch society. In this study, I aimed to capture the complexities of cultural continuity and adaptation, offering insights into how these families create and sustain a meaningful sense of home in a new cultural context.

1.4 Communicative Context, Methodology and Ethics

1.4.1 Communicative Context

My fieldwork duration was 3 months and during the period of my fieldwork, the Mahsa Amini movement was unfolding in Iran and globally, witnessing a surge in daily arrests. Before discussing each research method in detail, I aim to provide an insight into the challenging circumstances that

surrounded my fieldwork, significantly influencing the overall scope of my study. The oppressive actions of the Islamic regime, including public killings of young individuals, heightened fear and anger among Iranians worldwide. It was not surprising that many Iranian expatriates in the Netherlands regarded me, a young woman there for only six months, with suspicion, possibly as a spy for the regime. To overcome this initial hurdle and gain their trust for participation in their events or ceremonies, I sought help from my supervisor to provide an official recommendation letter affirming my student status and professional intentions. This tactic proved instrumental in navigating the skepticism, as it aligned with the Iranians' respect for formality and professionalism, particularly among the older, educated generation.

For those who remained unconvinced, I integrated myself into second-generation Iranian gatherings to establish connections leading me to my primary focus group: first-generation Iranian immigrants. This approach proved effective because I am as young as their grandchildren, a significant factor in Persian culture where there is a saying: "An earring is much more valuable than an ear". This expression highlights the special bond between grandparents and their grandchildren, emphasizing the greater value placed on grandchildren over children. By leveraging this cultural norm, I was able to bridge the generational gap and establish a strong connection within my focus group, building rapport effortlessly.

Furthermore, I enlisted gatekeepers to help me access new social circles. Because I lacked personal endorsements or prior connections within the community, I utilized established networks to present myself as a dedicated young researcher committed to their cause, reassuring them of my sincere intentions and minimal disruption. These carefully thought-out strategies collectively aided me in navigating the complex social environment and ultimately led to acceptance within the Iranian immigrant community for my research endeavours.

In this study, I explored how the Iranian community who immigrated to the Netherlands from 1970 to 1990 recreates their idea of home by blending their cultural heritage. My primary focus group was the first generation of immigrants. I studied a variety of places, from participants' homes and workplaces to Iranian restaurants, supermarkets, as well as Christian and national ceremonies in different cities across the Netherlands.

My fieldwork provided the opportunity to engage in traditional ceremonies such as *Chaharshanbeh Suri*³, *Yalda*⁴, and *Nowruz*⁵, which took place in various Dutch cities like Amsterdam, Delft, and The Hague. Through meticulous scrutiny during these cultural gatherings, an intentional observation of the participants' dress code adherence unfolded. I sought to distinguish if the attire maintained traditional Iranian styles or intertwined with Dutch fashion norms. In parallel, I probed the usage of the Persian language across generations within the Iranian community, focusing on the adoption of Dutch dialects by the second generation. This linguistic exploration illuminated the evolving language dynamics while assessing the level of participation and involvement of the second generation in these cherished ceremonies. The participatory nature of these explorations unveiled the profound ancestral connection

³ Chaharshanbeh Suri (Persian: چهارشنبه‌سوری, romanized: *Āhāršanbe suri*), is an Iranian festival of the fire dance celebrated on the eve of the last Wednesday of the year, originating from ancient Zoroastrian traditions. It is the first festivity of Nowruz, the Iranian New Year.

⁴ Yalda Night (Persian: شب یلدا *shab-e yalda*) or Chelle Night (also Chellah Night, Persian: شب چله *shab-e chelle*) is an ancient festival celebrated in Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Iraqi Kurdistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Dagestan, and Turkey, marking the winter solstice. This festival typically falls on the night of December 20/21 (±1) in the Gregorian calendar and aligns with the night between the last day of the ninth month (Azar) and the first day of the tenth month (Dey) in the Iranian solar calendar.

⁵ Nowruz or Navroz (Persian: نوروز [no: 'ru:z]) is the Iranian or Persian New Year. Historically observed by Persians and other Iranian peoples, it is now celebrated by many ethnicities worldwide. The festival is based on the Northern Hemisphere spring equinox, marking the first day of the new year on the Solar Hijri calendar. It usually falls between 19 March and 22 March on the Gregorian calendar.

and intrinsic significance that the first-generation attendees attributed to these cultural rituals, emphasizing their value as invaluable heritage roots necessitating safeguarding and continuation.

Turning towards the intimate realm of participant households and offices, I unearthed the silent expanse of cultural intimacy that transcended mere spoken words. Through interviews conducted in participants' homes and offices, insights emerged regarding their deep-rooted connection to Iranian culture that transcended verbal expressions. Integration into their home decor practices unfolded a narrativization of cultural preservation. Did Persian rugs, Faravahar motifs, or other traditional elements embellish their living spaces? These observations also extended to customs like removing shoes at the entrance, aligning with religious Iranian traditions that bar shoe entry into the dwelling. My curiosity deepened with explorations into their libraries - did Persian poetic treasures such as the *Divān* of Hāfez⁶ or the *Shahnameh*⁷ find a revered place amidst their literary collections? Additionally, the quest to locate Dutch symbols interwoven within their home or office settings added a layered dimension to unravelling the interplay of cultural fusion within their personal spaces.

Venturing beyond private domains, I tried to delve into the intricate and rich tapestry of Iranian culinary heritage. By engaging with both restaurant patrons and Iranian supermarkets, a nuanced understanding was cultivated regarding the delicate fusion between Iranian gastronomy and Dutch palates. I studied interactions with customers and owners of Iranian restaurants, highlighting the adaptation of Iranian cuisine to Dutch tastes. Discussions with Dutch customers shed light on their views of Iranian gastronomy. I also looked into the sourcing of Persian ingredients and the revival of heritage motivations in culinary practices, showcasing the traditions of culinary allegiance and heritage preservation within the Iranian culinary scene. I visited Iranian supermarkets in cities like Utrecht, The Hague, and Amsterdam, and demonstrated the availability of Persian food and the continuation of culinary customs amid diasporic influences. Through informal and structured interviews with key stakeholders in the culinary world, I gained insights into the intricate nuances of Iranian cuisine and the strategies used to cater to the discerning Dutch palate. These conversations explored how Dutch patrons receive Iranian dishes, the sourcing of traditional Persian ingredients, and the historical evolution of culinary practices within the Iranian community. I went beyond financial aspects, discussing the intrinsic value of preserving culinary heritage and considering whether food is seen as a legacy worth protecting. My visits to Iranian supermarkets revealed a diverse array of Persian food products, showcasing the community's effort to maintain cultural ties through culinary traditions.

Additionally, participation in Iranian Christian ceremonies in Alkmaar shed light on the profound impact of religious practices on the maintenance of Iranian identity, highlighting the intricate interplay between faith traditions and cultural belonging within the Iranian community.

⁶ The *Divān of Hafez* (Persian: دیوان حافظ) is a collection of poems written by the Iranian poet Hafez. Most of these poems are in Persian, but there are some macaronic language poems (in Persian and Arabic) and a completely Arabic ghazal. The most important part of this *Divān* is the ghazals. Poems in other forms such as qet'e, qasida, mathnawi, and ruba'i are also included in the *Divān*. There is no evidence that Hafez's lost poems might have constituted the majority of his poetic output, and in addition, Hafez was very famous during his lifetime. Therefore, he cannot have been a prolific poet

⁷ The *Shahnameh* (Persian: شاهنامه, romanized: *Šāhnāme*, lit. 'The Book of Kings'), also transliterated *Shahnama*, is a long epic poem written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi. It is the national epic of Greater Iran, consisting of around 50,000 distichs or couplets, making it one of the world's longest epic poems and the longest by a single author. The *Shahnameh* narrates the mythical and, to some extent, historical past of the Persian Empire from the creation of the world until the Muslim conquest in the seventh century. It is celebrated in Iran, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and regions influenced by Persian culture, such as Armenia, Dagestan, Georgia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

1.4.2 Methodology

In the course of my research, I employed a range of anthropological methodologies, including informal conversations, participant observation, photography, digital ethnography, semi-structured interviews, and life stories. Throughout my fieldwork, some of the individuals I interacted with illustrated their journeys as refugees and shared their aspirations for a post-Iran future through drawings. While drawing was not initially a planned methodology, it emerged organically during my fieldwork.

This section aims to detail the methods employed during my research, providing insights into the rationale behind their selection, initial expectations, actual outcomes, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of each chosen methodology. It delves into how these methods were applied in different contexts along my research path and explores the effectiveness of each in capturing the unique narratives and perspectives encountered.

1.4.2.1. Informal Interviews

Using informal conversations as an ethnographic method yielded mixed results in my research. On the positive side, casual discussions during Nowruz gatherings and at restaurants provided valuable insights into the home-making practices of Iranian-Dutch individuals. These spontaneous interactions not only revealed unique perspectives but also helped build trust, leading to more candid responses from participants.

However, the method was not uniformly effective for my thesis. In politically charged environments, such as discussions involving political topics, conversations often failed to generate relevant data. Participants were frequently reluctant to move away from political discussions, which limited the effectiveness of the informal conversation method. This experience underscores the impact of context and subjectivity on the usefulness of such methods and highlights the necessity of choosing the right settings to ensure the effectiveness of informal ethnographic interactions.

1.4.2.2 Participant Observation

Bryman (2012: 273) stated, “participant observation is one of the most widely used methods of research in the human sciences.” Indeed, participant observation was one of the primary methods I employed during my fieldwork. During these observations, I carefully listened to people and asked as many questions as possible, noting everything I saw. This research method was used to examine the relationships among Iranians and their interactions with Dutch people, including in mosques, churches, restaurants, and Iranian associations and ceremonies. This approach allowed me easier access to participants for interviews and other research procedures. Additionally, it enabled me to observe and interact with them, as well as evaluate their behaviour and attitudes over several decades.

Observation proved to be a highly useful method for my work. It allowed me to differentiate between what people said and what happened in their homes or workplaces, enabling me to ask questions about both. One interviewee mentioned he did not have any emotional ties to Iran, yet a large painting of the Faravahar symbol hung in his house. When I asked about this contradiction, he replied “*I never thought about it until now. It might interest you to know that during the last 40 years, I took this with me every time I moved houses. I've thrown away a lot over the years, but not this painting*”. For another example, I conducted an informal interview with one of my participants during the Yalda ceremonies. He remarked: “*I do not believe in Iranian culture. I just participate to have fun and I don't think we could call Yalda night a heritage that needs to be preserved*”. However, during the ceremony, I observed that he wore a red cloth in the traditional manner of many Iranians on that night. He also emphasized that without Hafez-khani (reading Hafez's poetry), it would not feel like a proper Yalda celebration. All of his attitudes were different from his words. Observing the behaviour of different generations, their

children, and how they spoke and acted helped validate and ensure the accuracy of the information I received.

Participant observation like any other anthropological research methodology, offered both advantages and disadvantages in my fieldwork. One significant advantage was the depth of understanding it provided. By immersing myself in the daily lives and routines of my subjects, I gained nuanced insights into behaviours, social interactions, and cultural practices that might have been overlooked through other methods. This approach allowed me to collect rich, detailed data and observe non-verbal cues and informal conversations, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the Iranian community and their interactions with Dutch society. For instance, I participated in the restaurant and observed both Dutch and Iranian customers, noting the common language they used, the foods that Dutch people ordered, and their everyday interactions. This helped me capture subtle cultural nuances and contradictions in their expressed beliefs and actions. By closely observing these interactions, I was able to understand how cultural influences manifest in daily life and how individuals navigate their dual identities in a multicultural setting.

However, participant observation also presented some challenges for me. It was time-consuming and required a long-term commitment, as building trust and rapport with participants often took months. For example, it took considerable time to gain the trust of one participant who eventually told me I was like her daughter. Additionally, I had to be aware of potential observer bias; my presence might have influenced the behaviour of those I was studying, potentially skewing the results. Maintaining objectivity was also challenging, especially as I became deeply embedded in the community. Despite these challenges, participant observation proved invaluable in achieving an in-depth and authentic understanding of the social dynamics and cultural practices of the Iranian community in the Netherlands.

1.4.2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

In employing this method, each interview commenced with an open-ended question, allowing the interviewee to shape the discussion according to their preferences. Nonetheless, I maintained the ability to influence its direction, utilizing predefined sub-questions for structuring purposes. Throughout this process, new insights frequently surfaced, necessitating adjustments to my research approach to address both initial and overarching inquiries effectively. I sought permission to record interviews to facilitate thorough data analysis. If recording was not possible, I requested consent to take detailed notes instead.

My research highlighted several advantages to this approach, particularly the ability to construct questions that steer interviewees toward specific topics of interest, fostering a sense of comfort and encouraging open and honest responses. However, it was important to acknowledge that interviewees occasionally strayed from the intended focus if prompted incorrectly, redirecting discussions towards aspects of their experiences they deemed more pertinent. This occasionally compromised the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the responses received.

Semi-structured interviews emerged as both beneficial and challenging in my research endeavours. The method's flexibility proved advantageous, allowing me to adapt questions in response to evolving conversations and explore unforeseen topics that enriched my understanding. For example, I was able to delve deeply into aspects of cultural identity and personal anecdotes, enhancing the depth of my research beyond initial expectations. Nevertheless, the absence of a rigid structure posed challenges, occasionally leading to difficulties in systematically comparing responses. In some instances, conversations drifted off-topic, necessitating careful guidance to maintain focus. Moreover, the open-ended nature of these interviews demanded adeptness in active listening and spontaneous question formulation, skills that required consistent honing.

Despite these challenges, the semi-structured format significantly enriched my insights into the Iranian community's intricate interactions and cultural dynamics. I conducted 25 Semi-Structured Interviews with a diverse group of participants. These interviews offered valuable insights into how people maintained a sense of home while embracing their heritage and adjusting to Dutch society. This shed light on the intricacies and adjustments involved in their cultural identities and social engagements.

Lastly, I must admit that at the beginning of my career, I used to transcribe even informal conversations, which was extremely time-consuming. Following the advice of my supervisor, I started limiting myself to taking notes during informal conversations on the spot. Additionally, during this fieldwork, I utilized ethnographic diaries to jot down my thoughts and opinions after each interview. This practice was particularly beneficial because I often had to travel to other cities for interviews, and the train rides back and forth provided ideal opportunities for me to immediately capture my reflections after each interview.

1.4.2.4 Life Stories

Atkinson (2002) discussed the life story interview as a qualitative research method aimed at capturing individuals' narratives of their lives. My experience as an Iranian student conducting research on this topic revealed the dual nature of the life stories method within the context of political challenges. I intended to utilize this method to gain a deeper understanding of participants' lives. For example, when discussing the racism faced by participants in the Netherlands, one of them stated: *"I've never experienced racism in the Netherlands"* which starkly contrasts with other reports. It seemed plausible that she may have encountered some form of racism due to her hair and eye colour. However, this method allowed me to delve into her past before moving to the Netherlands. Through this exploration, I discovered that she had experienced unkind attitudes and behaviour from Iranian people in Iran simply because her skin colour was darker than the typical Iranian complexion. This context helped me understand why she might not perceive Dutch people as racist while viewing Iranians differently. As a whole I believe the research felt particularly personal when I could record and share the life stories of my participants, with their consent. Recording their own words describing anecdotes and insights provided the richest and most comprehensive data, especially considering homemaking as a process that intertwines the past, present, and future of an individual. This approach proved particularly valuable in addressing all levels of research questions.

Using this methodology, I initially collected data and discovered comprehensive insights beyond what was initially requested. However, I could not overlook the emotional toll of listening to individuals' stories filled with hardships and fluctuations. Memories of an elderly man's cries or his trembling hands from fear and panic during our interviews still resonate with me. Gaining trust and obtaining consent to delve into someone's life story required significant time and effort. Furthermore, I observed that asking for a biography might lead individuals to impose a coherent narrative on their lives, which contrasts starkly with the disordered sequences forced immigration often entails.

Controlling the direction of interviews proved more challenging than anticipated, as participants' narratives often diverged unexpectedly. Adapting to diverse interview conditions, such as conducting interviews away from participants' homes or around their other commitments, necessitated flexibility in my approach. In these instances, I adjusted my focus to capture essential aspects of their life stories while ensuring key life stages were adequately represented.

Overall, these challenges underscored the dynamic and interactive nature of life story interviews, requiring me to be adaptable, patient, and sensitive to capture the intricate nuances and complexities of individuals' lived experiences effectively.

1.4.2.5 Digital Ethnography

In my research, digital ethnography proved invaluable for exploring the cultural dynamics, social interactions, and integration within the Iranian diaspora community in the Netherlands. One of the significant advantages was the ability to analyse a wealth of digital data from social media platforms like Facebook, Iranian Immigrant Telegram groups, Twitter, and digital archives. This approach provided me with a comprehensive view of how cultural practices and identities are negotiated and expressed in online spaces. As an example, if an individual asserted a complete affiliation with Iranian culture, I could cross-reference their statements with their historical content on platforms like Facebook or other social media channels.

I also encountered significant challenges with this method. It was not widely adopted among the first generation of Iranian immigrants, who were my primary focus group. Consequently, accessing comprehensive data from this demographic proved difficult. The fast-paced nature of digital platforms also required careful attention to capturing and interpreting data accurately amidst constant updates and changes. Navigating ethical considerations posed challenges. Ensuring participant privacy and obtaining informed consent for digital data collection were paramount.

However, there were notable advantages. The method's flexibility was particularly beneficial, allowing me to manage my research alongside my coursework. Additionally, it helped overcome geographical barriers, making my work more manageable despite the distance constraints. Moreover, digital ethnography allowed me to observe real-time interactions and trends, capturing nuanced aspects of cultural adaptation and community formation among Iranians living abroad.

Despite these challenges, digital ethnography expanded the methodological toolkit of my research, enabling innovative approaches to understanding how Iranians in the Netherlands navigate cultural identity and community ties in digital spaces. This method offered profound insights into the complexities of cultural adaptation and social integration in a digitally mediated world.

1.4.2.6 Photography

In my ethnographic research, I sought permission from my target group to take photographs of impersonal memorabilia such as carpets, paintings, and symbols that they possessed from their cultural context. This approach allowed me to inquire about the significance of these items in their homes or workplaces, probing into their emotions and beliefs associated with these artifacts. Fortunately, most participants found it feasible and were willing to share these personal items and their stories with me.

However, employing photography in my work also posed significant challenges. Firstly, people generally felt uneasy about being photographed, especially when unsure of how the images will be utilized. This discomfort could be exacerbated in sensitive contexts, such as identifying individuals as opponents of political regimes, like the Mullah's regime in Iran. Therefore, I approached this method cautiously to ensure participants' comfort and safety, balancing the potential benefits of visual documentation with ethical considerations and the need for informed consent.

In conclusion, while photography in ethnography can provide valuable visual data and deepen understanding of material culture and personal narratives, it did not prove feasible for me, particularly given the political situation surrounding me where people were hesitant to provide any documentation. I also did not find photography useful during my work, except for gatherings and similar events. In the limited time available, I struggled to build the necessary trust to photograph people's homes or work environments. Moreover, out of respect for individuals' privacy concerns, I did not pursue this avenue extensively.

1.4.2.7 Drawing

In my research, while drawing was not initially one of my methods, I came to appreciate its potential when a psychologist I interviewed, whose office served as our meeting place, used a marker to sketch out his migration journey on his desk. Inspired by this, I incorporated drawing into my fieldwork by inviting participants to visually depict their paths to immigration and their future aspirations before coming to the Netherlands. Through the use of colours, lines, and other visual elements, participants vividly conveyed the challenges and excitement of their migration experiences.

However, this method had its limitations as it was not generally applicable. Some elderly participants, who constituted a significant segment of my study population and held steadfast viewpoints, viewed drawing as impractical or even frivolous, considering it incompatible with their cultural values of dignity and respect. In such instances, I chose to prioritize cultural sensitivity and respect, opting not to push the method further if it caused discomfort or misunderstanding. This decision sometimes meant refraining from challenging incorrect perceptions or statements to maintain harmony and honour cultural norms.

Overall, integrating drawing as a research methodology enriched my study by offering unique insights into participants' migration narratives and emotional journeys. It underscored the complexity of cultural adaptation and the diverse ways individuals conceptualize and articulate their experiences of migration and settlement in a new country like the Netherlands.

1.4.3 Ethical Considerations

According to the AAA code of ethics, I was responsible for not harming participants. Considering the security situation in Iran, the politicization of discussions, and the reasons for Iranian immigration overseas over the past 40 years, which were generally religious or political in nature, I found it difficult to enter Iranian society as a newcomer. The words exchanged during the interview might have been interpreted as political or even as spying. therefore I needed to employ specific techniques.

Before beginning any conversation, even informal ones, I introduced myself as a student conducting research. I requested an official recommendation letter from my supervisor confirming that I was conducting research for my thesis and had no connection to the Iranian ruling regime. I even printed copies of the letter for situations where having a tangible letter would provide comfort (such as in restaurants and supermarkets where I spent entire days observing). This approach helped gain the trust of some participants. Interestingly, once I entered their community, they began introducing me to their friends and expressed a desire to be interviewed. Some even thanked me for conducting research on this focus group.

I also enlisted the help of a friend who had been in the Netherlands for over a decade and had developed a close relationship with Iranians in the Netherlands. This friend acted as a gatekeeper to help gain the trust of interviewees. Additionally, I ensured the protection of their data by storing it under lock and key, such as on a separate thumb drive with a strong password. My objective was to assure interviewees that any information they provided during the interview, as well as their name, surname, and other personal information, would be kept confidential and stored securely by myself and my supervisor. The data would only be used to complete my thesis project and would not be shared with security or political organizations.

Additionally, I took precautions when taking photographs of individuals, residences, and locations, always seeking permission to ensure participants felt at ease. Photography played a secondary role, but when relevant, I sought consent before incorporating visual contributions into my work. This was

particularly important when using text messages and photographs from Iranian community groups accessed through gatekeepers. Anonymity was consistently discussed, and although some participants were willing to be identified, I chose to ensure anonymity for all to maintain privacy. Anonymizing specific locations, such as restaurants, supermarkets, and churches, was crucial to protect participants' identities. I modified and substituted all names in my final documentation and personal notes to ensure confidentiality.

Furthermore, I informed participants and obtained their consent, taking into account the issues described above and the difficulties and uncertainties inherent in the research process. My goal was to ensure that people were comfortable discussing sensitive topics, and I sought their consent to record or photograph them, especially if significant changes were made to the research process or its results. I was honest and open about my work, ensuring that both participants and I were confident and satisfied with the research process and results. Interviewees had the option of withdrawing from or re-entering the project at any time, allowing reflection on their stories between interviews and determining how to shape subsequent interviews. I assumed that the mature adults I was interviewing would choose to disclose or withhold experiences based on their comfort levels.

Sharing research results with participants posed no concerns, as most spoke English and expressed interest in the results. They often requested me to share them. During my three-months anthropological fieldwork for my Master's thesis, my primary concern was potential consequences for myself rather than direct harm to participants. It was concerning to contemplate making my thesis, my first ethnographic work, publicly accessible on the Internet, as it could adversely affect my future academic pursuits and relationships within the community I hoped to revisit.

The point that I would like to mention here is that I was mentally disturbed, but in my haste to complete 25 interviews, I tried to push through, which was my greatest mistake. Immediately after finishing my fieldwork, the horrible words and memories shared by refugees, and their fears during the shelter period replayed in my mind like a movie, disrupting my normal life. My experience taught me the importance of seeking a therapist's assistance when working on sensitive or painful issues to maintain a positive attitude after completing fieldwork.

1.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have outlined my primary research goal, research question, and sub-questions. I have highlighted the significance of this study and elucidated my approach towards achieving it. Furthermore, I have addressed the ethical considerations integral to conducting this research.

Chapter 2. Iranian Immigrants' Home-Making Pathways: Cultural Retention and Adaptation in the Netherlands

The journey of Iranian immigrants to the Netherlands from the 1970s to the 1990s presents a rich tapestry of cultural adaptation and identity formation. This chapter delves into the intricate processes by which these immigrants have established a sense of 'home' in a foreign land, blending Iranian traditions with Dutch cultural practices. As these individuals navigated the challenges of resettlement, they engaged in a dynamic interplay between maintaining their cultural heritage and integrating into the new social environment. The chapter explores the diverse strategies employed by Iranian families in preserving their cultural identity, from food and language to parenting and community engagement, highlighting how these elements collectively contribute to their unique experience of home-making in the Dutch context. Through a detailed examination of these aspects, this chapter aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the complexities and nuances involved in the integration journey of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands.

2.1 Patterns of Iranian Immigration to the Netherlands

Before diving into the main section of my thesis, which explores how Iranian immigrants create a sense of home through culinary traditions, language, housing, and parenting, it is important to first introduce the various groups of Iranian immigrants who moved to the Netherlands between 1970 and 1990. These distinct groups followed different immigration paths, had unique goals, and exhibited varied integration patterns. Additionally, their specific challenges and resources significantly influenced their ability to integrate into Dutch society, ultimately shaping their individual processes of creating a home. Factors such as socio-economic status, political affiliations, and religious backgrounds played pivotal roles in determining how these immigrants navigated their new environment, raised their children, acquired language proficiency, and secured housing.

In this introductory section, I will highlight three key groups of Iranian immigrants, emphasizing their unique contexts and experiences. Among these groups, I will introduce what I refer to as 'Almere's Iranian immigrants,' who have not previously been recognized as a distinct category by scholars. This group experienced a markedly different journey towards integration and homemaking in the Netherlands, setting them apart from typical refugee populations. It is my honour to differentiate these immigrants from the broader refugee category and to explore their unique paths, reflecting on how their shared experiences shaped their sense of belonging and identity in their new homeland. By shedding light on Almere's Iranian immigrants, I aim to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the Iranian immigrant experience in the Netherlands.

During my fieldwork and research, I identified three distinct types of Iranian immigrants who arrived in the Netherlands with a variety of motivations that significantly influenced their experiences. The first group consists of educational immigrants, who came to pursue academic opportunities. The second group includes political refugees, fleeing their homeland due to political turmoil. Lastly, I categorically identify a group I refer to as Almere's Iranian immigrants. In the following sections, I will provide a detailed discussion of each of these groups.

2.1.1 Educational Immigrants

From the 1970s to the 1990s, a notable group of Iranian immigrants moved to the Netherlands primarily for educational purposes. These individuals were drawn by the promise of advanced educational opportunities that were perceived to be more comprehensive and prestigious than those

available in Iran. The Iranian educational system at the time, especially for the elite, prioritized rigorous academic preparation, encouraging families with sufficient resources to send their children abroad. This was motivated by a belief that Western institutions offered superior facilities, cutting-edge research, and a more expansive academic perspective. Consequently, many Iranian families invested heavily in sending their children to study in the Netherlands, pursuing disciplines ranging from engineering and medicine to social sciences and the humanities. This broad educational pursuit was seen as a way to equip themselves with the skills and knowledge necessary for nation-building upon their return to Iran.

This wave of educational immigrants largely consisted of affluent individuals from top-tier financial backgrounds. They were part of a broader trend among wealthy Iranian families who sought the best possible education for their children amidst the instability and uncertainty at home. One such individual, Akbar, recounted: *“It was actually prestigious, and my family’s aim was to move to the Netherlands so I could study fashion here; it wasn’t my primary aim.”* These families were characterized by their strong educational aspirations and the intent to acquire knowledge that would later benefit Iran. As Farnaz, who studied her bachelor’s degree in economics in the Netherlands, replied to my question about why she decided to move to the Netherlands for higher education: *“I didn’t have any interest in the Netherlands at all. I had to study in Dutch, which made things difficult for me. I was somewhat familiar with English and French from school, but I had no knowledge of Dutch. Honestly, back then it wasn’t like it is now, where we have choices. My family decided that I would immigrate, decided which country I would go to, and even decided who I would marry.”*

This group of Iranian immigrants had a clear goal: to complete their studies in the Netherlands and then return to Iran. They chose the Netherlands voluntarily, without any external pressures such as political or other forms of coercion, and most were enrolled in technical and engineering programs, particularly at institutions like Delft University of Technology (TU Delft). For them, the time spent in the Netherlands was viewed as a temporary yet transformative experience, intended to harness educational and professional opportunities before returning to Iran with new skills, knowledge, and perspectives. This pursuit was driven by a sense of patriotic duty and a desire to contribute to Iran’s modernization and global integration, with many envisioning themselves as future leaders and innovators.

In the Netherlands, these educational immigrants lived comfortably, supported by regular financial assistance from their families in Iran. This financial security allowed them to focus on their studies without the burden of financial stress, a luxury not afforded to many other international students who often had to work alongside their studies. They could afford private accommodation, better resources, and frequent travel back to Iran. Maintaining connections with Iran was relatively easy for these students, as they faced no major barriers in obtaining familiar food supplies or visiting family. As Mahin, the spouse of one of the former Iranian students in the Netherlands, noted, *“While my husband didn’t have time to return to Iran, I went back to visit my family and friends, relax, and bring Persian food ingredients every six months, or whenever our other friends visited and brought us what we needed. We formed a close-knit community and supported each other as much as possible.”*

Despite their comfortable lifestyle, many of these Iranian students faced challenges in adjusting to Dutch society, including language barriers, cultural differences, and occasional discrimination. The Iranian community in the Netherlands, although not initially large, consisted of individuals who had migrated earlier and were eager to help newcomers. This network facilitated a self-perpetuating chain of support, where existing community members would introduce new arrivals to others, creating a sense of belonging and resilience among the students. Through these introductions and connections, students found vital resources, such as language practice, cultural events, and social gatherings, which helped mitigate the challenges of adjustment. In the final chapter, I will discuss these opportunities and forms of discrimination that Iranian students experienced. Over time, many of these students developed a

bicultural identity, blending elements of Dutch and Iranian social practices in their daily lives, supported by the growing and interconnected sense of community.

By the end of their studies, many of these Iranian students had not only gained advanced degrees but also developed a global outlook and established international networks. These experiences positioned them as potential bridge-builders between Iran and the international community. As Mahin said: *“I’m 75 years old and believe that my best friends are Dutch. They are better than my parents”*. However, the political changes following the Iranian Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic regime prompted some of these students to reconsider their plans to return. Despite these shifts, the overarching aim remained: to use their Dutch education for the benefit of Iran, contributing to its intellectual and economic revitalization, even if from abroad. Mahin explains it this way: *“Many of our friends returned to Iran immediately after completing their studies, even though the mullahs had come to power. However, Saeed (my husband) and I were very hesitant because at that time. I had a daughter and was pregnant with another child on the way. We decided to stay in the Netherlands at least until our children finished their primary education, and then return. As you can see, we ended up staying in the Netherlands, and our children grew up and did not have a desire to return to Iran”*.

These Iranian educational immigrants initially formed a unique group within the larger diaspora. While they adapted to life in the Netherlands, they maintained strong connections to their Iranian roots, which was evident in how they practiced their culture, used their language, and remained connected through social networks. They actively participated in Iranian cultural and religious events and built close-knit communities. Maintaining their cultural heritage was important to them, not just for nostalgia but as part of their plans to eventually return to Iran.

However, following the revolution in Iran and the changing political landscape, the sentiments and plans of these immigrants shifted significantly. As one of my participants noted, the once-organized gatherings began to fragment. Different political factions, such as leftists and supporters of the Shah, started to vie for influence, each group attempting to shape community activities according to their ideologies. This led to a division into smaller factions that aligned more closely with specific political beliefs.

Consequently, the way these individuals dealt with their heritage changed as well. With no singular path to return to Iran and increasing political discord influencing their social gatherings, some found themselves navigating their cultural identity in a more fragmented manner. While the desire to maintain a connection to Iranian social practices persisted, the varying beliefs about their homeland's future led to a re-evaluation of their identity and practices in the diaspora. This evolving dynamic illustrates how external political and religious changes in Iran significantly impacted the community's approach to their heritage while living abroad.

2.1.2 Refugees

Since the late 1970s, the Netherlands has been a significant destination for Iranian immigrants. Unlike the educational immigrants, these individuals were predominantly political refugees and asylum seekers. This wave began shortly before the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and continued in its aftermath, escalating during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). The political instability and repressive regime in Iran compelled many to seek asylum abroad, with the Netherlands becoming a significant destination due to its liberal asylum policies and humanitarian approach. This group of Iranian immigrants represents a different facet of the Iranian diaspora. Many were intellectuals, activists, and professionals who opposed the Islamic regime or were caught in the crossfire of the Iran-Iraq war.

Upon arrival in the Netherlands, they were placed in asylum centres, often in overcrowded and under-resourced facilities, where they had to navigate the complex asylum process. The asylum process

itself was fraught with difficulties. Refugees had to endure a lengthy and rigorous procedure to prove the legitimacy of their claims, often exacerbated by overcrowded and under-resourced conditions in the asylum centres. This uncertainty and stress contributed to considerable psychological distress among the refugees. Despite the sense of relief at having escaped immediate danger, the prolonged wait and the complex asylum process created additional layers of difficulty, impacting their emotional well-being and personal growth. Based on the data gathered from interviews, the process of obtaining an asylum residence permit varied greatly in duration for different individuals. For some, it took as little as two years, while for others, the journey was much longer and fraught with challenges. One participant, who said that she liked being called *Dokhi*⁸, witnessed the execution of her brother and father by the Islamic regime in Iran. She shared a particularly harrowing experience with me during her life story. She recounted how she narrowly escaped the Iranian security forces, known as *SEPAH*, and sought refuge in the Netherlands. She said, *"I spent eleven long years in the asylum process, enduring rigorous scrutiny to prove the legitimacy of my asylum claim. During this time, I struggled with severe psychological distress, haunted by recurring dreams of my lost family members. I often pleaded with my remaining brother to help me leave the asylum centre, as the environment felt like a prolonged imprisonment."* Despite eventually receiving her asylum residence permit, she expressed deep frustration, feeling that the Dutch government had squandered her youth and passion for education. Her story underscores the profound impact of the asylum process on the lives and mental well-being of refugees, highlighting the critical need for timely and compassionate handling of asylum cases.

Once granted refugee status and residence permits, many of these refugees in the Netherlands, specially who escaped Iran after the Islamic republic, faced a paradoxical challenge: despite being well-educated, they found themselves overqualified for the available job market. Many held advanced degrees, including doctorates, which made it difficult for them to secure employment that matched their qualifications. This led to frustration and a sense of wasted potential as they struggled to find roles that utilized their expertise. One of my other participants, who is now a university professor and intellectual in the Netherlands, mentioned, *"When I came to the Netherlands, I had a doctoral degree in physics. However, because I didn't know Dutch, I couldn't find a job in my field. During this time, and because I had a wife to support, I was forced to apply for any work I could find. I applied to be a driver for a company. The first time, I filled out the application honestly and mentioned that I had a doctoral degree from an Iranian university, but they rejected me for being overqualified. The second time, I applied for the same position but stated that I had a diploma degree instead. During the interview, the interviewer recognized me and asked why I wasn't honest?"*. He emphasized that the interviewer understood his need and desire to integrate, learn Dutch, and earn a salary, but he was still rejected due to company regulations. Despite these professional challenges, Iranian refugees demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability. A considerable number of my respondents pursued further education in Dutch institutions, learning the language and acquiring new skills to enhance their employability. This commitment to self-improvement underscored their determination to rebuild their lives and contribute positively to Dutch society.

The differences between the Iranian political refugees and those who immigrated to the Netherlands for educational purposes during the same period are significant. Unlike the educational immigrants, who chose the Netherlands for personal and professional growth and maintained strong ties with Iran, the political refugees had no such option. They were forced to leave their homeland due to political repression and conflict, with no control over their destination. Many of these refugees had originally aimed for countries like the United States or Sweden but were compelled to stay in the Netherlands due to circumstances beyond their control. Their forced immigration was marked by traumatic experiences,

⁸ In Persian, *Dokhi* translates to "daughter" and carries a friendly, affectionate connotation. Using this term was an honour for me, as it was offered by a participant who is of my mother's generation. This choice reflects a respectful and culturally relevant way of addressing her, emphasizing our connection rather than merely serving as a means of anonymization. I am fully aware of the ethical considerations surrounding participant anonymity and have taken care to ensure that all identifying details are managed appropriately to maintain confidentiality.

as many fled under dire circumstances, leaving behind their homes, careers, and loved ones. This group left Iran permanently and, in many cases, could not bring any of their belongings or resources with them. Their immigration was driven by necessity and survival, contrasting sharply with the educational immigrants, who pursued opportunities and advancement by choice.

The social integration of Iranian refugees in the Netherlands was significantly supported by the well-established Iranian diaspora, which had been present in the country even before the major influx of refugees between 1970 and 1990. This supportive community played a crucial role in helping newcomers navigate their new environment by offering essential advice, resources, and a profound sense of belonging. As many of them mentioned, through cultural events, religious gatherings, and community centres, the diaspora actively contributed to preserving Iranian heritage while fostering a collective identity among the refugees. Some of the older immigrants gave the newcomers carpets, handicrafts, flags, and books of Persian poetry, allowing them to have symbols of their homeland in their homes. This dual focus on maintaining cultural traditions and adapting to Dutch society enabled refugees to build a bridge between their Iranian roots and their new Dutch context. The earlier group of Iranian immigrants, who had arrived for educational purposes, played a foundational role in this process by creating and strengthening support networks, which were instrumental in assisting new arrivals with their integration efforts.

During our interview, I had the opportunity to review a timeline drawing created by Masoud, a respected municipal employee in the Netherlands. The drawing vividly illustrated his immigration journey. Masoud's timeline was not just a series of events, but a visual representation of his emotional experiences—a dark, heavy line marked his time before seeking asylum, gradually brightening and transforming into a more colourful and structured path as he adapted to life in the Netherlands. Intrigued by the details in his illustration, I asked why he had chosen to depict his story in this particular way. Masoud explained, *“I went through a dark period before the revolution, which led me to seek asylum”*. He pointed to the thick, shadowy part of the drawing, symbolizing this difficult time. *“The four years I spent as an asylum seeker felt like a rebirth—a new beginning, much like a newborn child emerging into the world”*. The line brightened at this point, curving upward, representing hope and growth. *“I had to find new friends, learn Dutch, prove myself to the immigration authorities, and navigate the challenges of starting anew. It was like being born again in the Dutch refugee camp; I barely recognized myself when I left.”*

As Masoud traced the steady, even lines that followed, he continued, *“But after that, everything fell into place; life became routine and fulfilling”*. His drawing reflected this stability with neat, parallel lines, indicating the structure and order he had built in his new life. *“I achieved more here than I ever thought possible in my homeland, gaining both respect and stability”*.

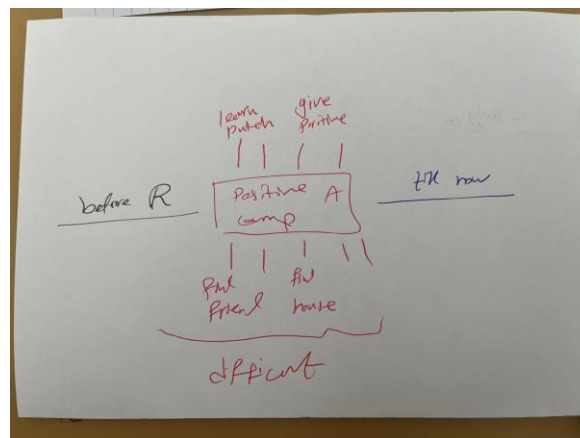


Figure 1: Masoud's Timeline Drawing

From an anthropological perspective, Masoud's narrative highlights the transformative journey of identity reconstruction often faced by immigrants. His metaphor of rebirth encapsulates the profound dislocation and subsequent reformation of self that many refugees experience. This process involves not just adapting to a new cultural environment, but also integrating new social norms and expectations, which can significantly alter one's sense of identity and belonging. Masoud's story, and his choice to illustrate it, underscores the symbolic and emotional dimensions of immigration, where the journey is not just a physical relocation but a deep personal transformation. Above you can see his timeline drawing.

Another participant drew her journey as follows: *“My path to settling in the Netherlands through asylum was extremely difficult. I endured many painful days, and along the way, I witnessed the tragic deaths of several friends—some drowned while attempting to cross rivers, and others lost their lives during the treacherous journey to safety. These memories are hard to revisit. Life in the refugee camp was a mix of challenges; we faced discrimination at times, including harsh treatment from staff. But once I received my positive asylum response and residence permit, I secured a job and a home, and have been working ever since.”* When I asked her why she used colour for each part and why she drew امروز (meaning “present”) in black, she explained, *“Because I’m living in the present. The future will show me what colour it will be compared to other times.”*

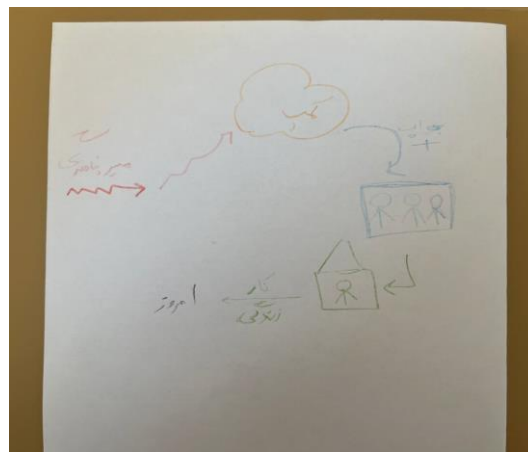


Figure 2: Maryam's Timeline Drawing

This depiction highlights the emotional and psychological complexities of the asylum experience. The use of colour to differentiate periods in her journey reflects an attempt to process and narrate her experiences. The choice of black for the present may symbolize the uncertainty and emotional weight she associates with her current situation. Her comment about the future suggests a forward-looking perspective, acknowledging that while the present is fraught with its own challenges, the future holds the potential for change and resolution.

2.1.3 Almere's Iranian Immigrants OR UN-Sponsored Refugees

Since the late 1970s, a distinct group of Iranian refugees, whom I refer to as "Almere's Iranian immigrants" in my project, sought asylum in the Netherlands under UN-sponsored programs. This group of Iranian immigrants directly moved to Almere with the support of the UN refugee program, and because of this, I referred to them as the Almere Iranian refugees. This group primarily consisted of members of the Bahá'í religious community, who faced severe persecution in Iran following the 1979 Revolution. The Bahá'ís were systematically deprived of fundamental rights, including the right to education, employment, and participation in commerce, making their everyday lives increasingly untenable. This severe repression led many to flee their homeland in search of safety and religious freedom. Shahla, a member of this group, shared, *“In 1985, when we had to flee Iran, all Bahá'is were*

being systematically killed. We were introduced to the UN by the Bahá'í organization. We first fled to Turkey and stayed there for 4-5 weeks. Then, the UN staff purchased tickets for us and brought us directly to the Netherlands. Even at the airport, Dutch officials came to welcome us ”

Almere's Iranian refugees were granted residence permits upon arrival in the Netherlands, along with work permits, which facilitated a smoother transition compared to other refugee groups. Unlike the second group, who often arrived under more challenging circumstances via sea or other perilous routes, the Almere's Iranian refugees arrived by plane, reflecting a more formal, legal, and dignified entry process. This facilitated their initial settlement and allowed them to begin rebuilding their lives more promptly. Additionally, the Dutch government provided them with a one-year free language course, which was instrumental in their rapid adaptation and integration into Dutch society. Moreover, unlike many other refugees who had to endure lengthy stays in asylum centres, Almere's Iranian refugees did not have to go through such a process. This exemption from asylum centre conditions spared them from the psychological and emotional challenges often associated with prolonged asylum procedures, further aiding their integration and well-being. This comprehensive support system, including legal status and language education, greatly aided their ability to navigate the new environment and find employment, contributing to a relatively smoother and more dignified integration experience.

Almere's Iranian refugees are a unique example of how religious persecution can shape a community's resilience. As members of the Bahá'í faith, they followed principles of unity, equality, and peace. Their persecution in Iran strengthened their sense of community and mutual support. In the Netherlands, they were able to practice their faith openly, setting up Bahá'í centres and attending religious gatherings. These activities provided spiritual support and helped maintain their sense of community and solidarity. According to Shaha and her husband Vahid, even after all these years, they have maintained their community by holding ceremonies and staying in close contact with each other.

Unlike the second group, Almere's Iranian refugees swiftly adapted to their new lives in the Netherlands. They were placed directly into private homes, which provided them with stability, personal dignity, and the ability to decorate their living spaces as they wished, enhancing their sense of comfort and belonging. The one-year language course offered by the Dutch government was crucial in their integration, helping them communicate effectively in Dutch and engage more fully with Dutch society. Their educational backgrounds and commitment to self-improvement further facilitated their successful adaptation, enabling many to either re-enter their professions or pursue additional education to meet Dutch standards. This combination of stable housing, language support, and professional adaptability made their transition to Dutch society smoother compared to other refugee groups.

Almere's Iranian refugees, like other refugees, had to confront the harsh reality of permanently leaving their homeland. This means that, even though they benefited from supportive measures in the Netherlands—such as private housing all in Almere, language courses, and professional opportunities—they were forced to accept that they would never return to Iran. This permanent separation from their homeland represents a significant emotional and psychological burden, as it involves not only leaving behind their physical homes but also severing ties with their culture, community, and personal history, culinary tradition and etc. All the members of this group I interviewed stressed that the sense of loss and the difficulties of establishing a new life in a foreign country highlight the broader and often painful experience of exile that many refugees face.

2.2 Language Preservation and Integration: Persian Language Maintenance and Dutch Language Acquisition in the Iranian Immigrant Home-Making Process

The concept of home-making, as explored in the literature, intertwines with language practices in immigrant communities. Douglas (1991) emphasizes that “children learn not just words but the nuances of their heritage through the cadence of their mother tongue, forging a link to their roots that transcends geographical boundaries.” This view underscores the role of language in creating a sense of home and identity, crucial for maintaining cultural continuity among immigrant families. Language skills are not just tools for communication; they are forms of capital that can open doors to employment, education, and social networks. In the context of the Netherlands, fluency in Dutch is often essential for navigating the job market, accessing higher education, and participating fully in social and civic life. However, this is not a straightforward dichotomy of adapting to Dutch society while maintaining Iranian cultural practices. The linguistic and cultural experiences of Iranian immigrants are shaped by many factors that vary based on individual circumstances, such as where they live and their personal histories. For example, Iranian immigrants in cities like Delft may experience a different form of integration than those in Almere, where local social structures and opportunities can diverge.

Furthermore, within the Iranian community, different backgrounds also play a crucial role. For instance, those who are critics of the Iranian regime may experience their Iranian identity differently from Bahá’í Iranians, just as someone who has been in an immigration detention centre might relate to language acquisition and cultural adaptation differently than someone who hasn’t. Persian proficiency, therefore, not only strengthens cultural ties within the Iranian community but also interacts with Dutch language acquisition in varied ways, depending on specific situations. This complexity creates a range of hybrid identities, rather than a simple opposition between “home” in Iran and “home” in the Netherlands. This disparity can influence how immigrants prioritize language learning, often focusing on Dutch to enhance their integration and economic prospects.

To address the topic of language acquisition and inherited language preservation among Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, it is crucial to first examine Dutch language acquisition and then explore the efforts towards maintaining the Persian language among my participants. The three distinct groups of Iranians—educational immigrants, typical refugees, and Almere’s Iranian refugees—each approached the learning of Dutch in unique ways.

The first group of Iranian immigrants, who had originally come to the Netherlands for educational purposes, initially did not prioritize learning Dutch because they viewed their stay as temporary. Many of them, like Farah, were sent by their families to pursue higher education in Europe before the Islamic Revolution, as Iran’s political environment was relatively stable. Farah explained, *“At the time, we didn’t see the need to learn Dutch. It wasn’t considered a widely useful language for us.”* However, the situation changed dramatically after the Islamic Revolution. Families who had the means to send their children abroad for education often belonged to a more affluent segment of Iranian society. But with the revolution, many of these families found themselves politically or economically vulnerable, forcing them to leave Iran and join their children in the Netherlands. As Farah recounted, *“After the revolution, our families no longer had financial support from home. We were cut off, and suddenly, the prospect of an extended or even permanent stay in the Netherlands became real.”* This change made acquiring the Dutch language a necessity, despite the considerable stress it brought. *“The language classes provided by the Delft municipality were overcrowded and had long waiting lists, so we had to enrol in university courses, which were quite expensive,”* Farah added. The shift from a temporary stay to permanent resettlement required not only learning the language but also navigating the financial and logistical challenges of being cut off from family support in Iran.

Considering the issue from an anthropological standpoint, this group's experience highlights the complex interplay between political upheaval and the language acquisition process. The initial reluctance to learn Dutch reflects a transitional mindset, where the immigrants viewed their stay as temporary and did not see the practical value in investing in a new language. This is consistent with the findings of Hulsen et al. (2002), which indicate that language learning motivations among immigrants are often influenced by their perceived length of stay and the perceived utility of the language.

The decision to learn Dutch, motivated by the need to integrate and find stability in a new environment, highlights the significant influence of socio-political factors on language learning strategies. The pressure to adapt to a new linguistic and cultural landscape, coupled with the lack of financial support, exacerbated the challenges faced by these refugees. This situation highlights the importance of access to affordable language education and support services, as emphasized by Fishman (1991), who argued that institutional support is vital for the effective integration of immigrants. Moreover, the stress and tension experienced by the Iranian educational refugees in learning Dutch can be understood within the broader context of identity and cultural preservation. As noted by Gharibi and Seals (2019), the preservation of one's inherited language and cultural identity often conflicts with the practical need to adopt the host country's language. This tension reflects a deeper struggle over cultural belonging and identity, where learning a new language becomes both a practical necessity and a symbolic gesture of adapting to and accepting a new socio-cultural reality.

The second group, categorized as refugees, can be further subdivided based on their time of arrival: those who came to the Netherlands following the Islamic Revolution and those who arrived during the Iran-Iraq war. The former group, consisting largely of well-educated individuals, adapted quickly to the new environment, often beginning their Dutch language acquisition while still in refugee camps. Masoud, a member of this group, recalled, *"The financial support we received was minimal, and I couldn't afford to buy Dutch books. So, I volunteered at the camp in exchange for practicing Dutch with the staff. It was a time-consuming and exhausting way to learn, but I owe my language skills to a kind camp supervisor who always spoke Dutch with me and even brought outdated newspapers for me to read."* This group demonstrated a strong motivation to learn Dutch and integrate into Dutch society, as Masoud further noted, *"I learned Dutch in less than a year because I practiced day and night, driven by a desire to distance myself from everything Iranian, including the language. I was angry at those responsible for my situation and was determined to succeed."*

This subgroup's experience illustrates the concept of language as both a tool for survival and a means of psychological distancing from a traumatic past. Their rapid acquisition of Dutch reflects a pragmatic approach to integration, fuelled by the necessity to navigate and succeed in a new socio-cultural context. This aligns with the literature on forced immigration and identity, which suggests that language acquisition among refugees can serve as both a practical adaptation strategy and a coping mechanism for dealing with displacement and loss (Fishman, 1991).

Conversely, the subgroup that arrived during the Iran-Iraq war exhibited a different pattern. Among these individuals, some, even after more than 30 years in the Netherlands, have not achieved fluency in Dutch. Parisa, a member of this group, explained her situation: *"I didn't see the need to fully learn Dutch. I can manage daily shopping, and my neighbours aren't very sociable, so I don't need to converse with them."* Parisa's experience reveals a more complex linguistic reality. She continues to rely on social benefits, has never held a job in the Netherlands, and has not fully integrated into Dutch social circles. However, instead of isolating herself, she has built her social life within Iranian and Turkish communities, being of Turkish descent and fluent in Turkish.

This case highlights the multilingual nature of her everyday life. Her linguistic choices are not just between Dutch and Persian but also include Turkish, illustrating that "home" and "away" cannot be reduced to just two linguistic options. The reality for many immigrants is more nuanced, involving multiple languages depending on personal history, community ties, and daily social interactions.

Parisa's situation demonstrates that integration and identity in the diaspora are shaped by a dynamic and fluid interplay of languages, reflecting the multilingual realities of many immigrant communities.

This divergence in language acquisition and integration highlights the role of socio-economic status, community networks, and personal attitudes in shaping the language-learning experiences of refugees. For the latter subgroup, the lack of economic necessity and the presence of familiar cultural and linguistic communities can reduce the perceived need to learn Dutch. However, Parisa's case illustrates that integration is not limited to assimilating into Dutch society alone. Instead, she chose to integrate within Turkish-speaking communities, where she found a sense of belonging and support.

This phenomenon illustrates how the strength of ethnic community networks can influence both language maintenance and integration. It also highlights the importance of considering broader socio-cultural and economic contexts when examining refugees' language acquisition and integration experiences (Gharibi & Seals, 2019). This example challenges the traditional binary view of integration as either full assimilation into the host country or isolation. Instead, it shows that refugees often navigate multiple linguistic and cultural spaces. Parisa's integration into the Turkish-speaking community, rather than relying solely on Dutch, underscores the fluid nature of language use and adaptation, revealing how community networks can shape varied paths to integration that diverge from mainstream expectations.

In examining the experiences of the third group of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, it becomes evident that their Dutch language acquisition process was notably different. This group, comprising individuals who arrived under unique circumstances, completed their language education within their first year in the country. Benefitting from financial support provided by the United Nations, they were relieved from the immediate need to work, which allowed them to focus entirely on language learning. Shahla, one of the group members, remarked, *"We picked up Dutch swiftly and without much difficulty."*

Viewed through an anthropological lens, this group's experience aligns with the role of institutional support in language acquisition and cultural integration. The provision of resources, such as financial aid and access to education, plays a critical role in how immigrant groups navigate new linguistic landscapes. This scenario illustrates how structural support can facilitate smoother transitions and integration processes, enabling individuals to engage more deeply with the host society. Furthermore, the rapid language acquisition experienced by this group not only reflects their personal adaptability and resilience but also highlights the importance of systemic support in the home-making process. The ability to learn and use the local language effectively is crucial in forming a sense of belonging and identity within a new cultural environment. This experience mirrors the broader literature on the role of language in cultural continuity and identity formation, as discussed by Fishman (1991). Their studies emphasize that language serves as a foundational pillar in the preservation of cultural heritage and the establishment of a "home" in a new country, which can help mitigate feelings of displacement and cultural dislocation.

Overall, it seems that all my participants were satisfied with the Dutch language education system available to immigrants and refugees. Language cafes, municipal classes, and volunteers in public libraries all provided and continue to provide opportunities for those interested in learning Dutch.

In examining the preservation of the Persian language among Iranian immigrants, two primary strategies emerged among the participants. For those married to non-Iranian partners, who typically communicated in Dutch or another shared language at home, the transmission of Persian to their children was minimal. The children in these families often acquired only a basic understanding of Persian, limited to a few words. Sia, whose ex-wife was Dutch, shared his feelings of regret: *"Reflecting now, I wish I had made more of an effort to teach my children Persian. They don't speak it at all, and I feel like a part of our heritage is lost."* When questioned about why he did not emphasize Persian language education for his children, Sia explained, *"While I recognize the importance of language, at*

the time, it felt more practical to use the common language my wife and I shared. She was not interested in learning Persian, and it became too burdensome to constantly translate for her. It was really tiring to speak Persian with the kids and then have to translate everything for their mother."

This situation highlights the broader anthropological complexity of language transmission within mixed-language households. The choice of a dominant household language often stems from pragmatic considerations like ease of communication, access to resources, or social integration. However, this decision is not strictly tied to whether a family is multilingual or monolingual, as even single-language households may prioritize the dominant societal language over the inherited language. For example, some of the Iranian immigrant families I interviewed, especially those married to a Dutch partner, have chosen to speak only Dutch in their homes, sometimes regretting the diminished transmission of their native language. This complexity aligns with Fishman's (1991) broader observation about how societal pressures and intermarriage can impact the continuity of an inherited language, though it also points to a more fluid, situation-dependent approach to language choices that goes beyond a simple home-and-away dichotomy.

In contrast, families where both partners spoke Persian typically maintained the language at home, enabling their children to achieve conversational proficiency. However, these children often lacked literacy skills in Persian, largely due to the unavailability of formal Persian language instruction in the Netherlands. This gap in literacy indicates that while oral transmission of the language occurred, it was not fully comprehensive, limiting the depth of cultural heritage transmission. Speaking Persian at home serves as a vital link to the cultural and emotional roots of Iranian immigrants, providing a sense of emotional safety and a comforting reminder of their heritage. This linguistic practice creates a familiar environment that reinforces cultural identity and offers a refuge from the unfamiliar aspects of life in the Netherlands. It also fosters a sense of continuity and belonging, allowing individuals to retain a tangible connection to their past and their homeland. Rajab, who is married to a Dutch woman, shared his experience: *"I always felt like a visitor, without roots even in my own home. Since my wife didn't speak Persian, I couldn't express my thoughts in my native language at home. However, we eventually found a solution because of our love for each other. We started speaking both languages at home, which helped us both improve our language skills. Now, after 40 years, I can proudly say that my wife is well-versed in both the Persian language and customs."* This practice can evoke nostalgia for Iran, serving as a daily reminder of their origins, history, and the nuances of their native culture that are often not fully understood or appreciated in their new environment. The familiar sounds, idioms, and expressions of Persian can provide comfort and a sense of home, helping individuals navigate the complexities and emotional challenges of adapting to a new country while honouring their cultural identity.

This phenomenon underscores the necessity of both fluency and literacy for preserving an inherited language, as both are crucial for fully transmitting cultural knowledge and identity. The scarcity of Persian language teachers and educational resources in the Netherlands exacerbates this challenge, leaving parents with limited means to teach reading and writing skills. This situation highlights the difficulties smaller immigrant communities face in maintaining their inherited languages when institutional support is lacking.

From an anthropological perspective, language serves not just as a communication tool but as a fundamental element of cultural identity and continuity. For Iranian immigrants, language choices reflect deeper socio-political and cultural dynamics shaped by their experiences in both Iran and the Netherlands. Political upheavals, such as the Islamic Revolution and subsequent repression, have profoundly influenced how Iranian immigrants manage their linguistic and cultural identities in their new environment. While maintaining Persian is vital for preserving cultural heritage, the need to integrate into Dutch society often leads to a greater use of Dutch, sometimes at the expense of the native language. This dynamic reflects broader socio-political pressures and is not solely a matter of individual choice. Anthropology sheds light on these complex interactions, examining how historical and political

contexts impact language use and cultural preservation among Iranian immigrants, moving beyond simplistic political arguments to explore the nuanced ways language shapes identity amid displacement and integration.

Based on my observations and data from interviews, the second generation of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands has shown a notable interest in reconnecting with their cultural roots, particularly their mother tongue. However, it is important to recognize that these younger generations, much like their peers in other multicultural contexts, are also influenced by a range of cultural preferences and linguistic practices. While many seek to engage with Persian, they may also integrate elements from Dutch and other cultural influences into their identities, reflecting a complex and multifaceted approach to cultural integration that goes beyond a simple dichotomy of Dutch and Persian. According to family reports, many of these young individuals are now eager to explore and embrace their heritage. For instance, Sia shared that his daughter has been diligently learning Persian for the past two years. *"She sends me texts in Persian and asks me to correct them,"* he noted, adding that she had recently visited Iran for the first time and brought back a copy of the Shahnameh, a classic Persian literary work. This renewed interest in Persian culture and language among the second generation highlights a desire to understand their identity and heritage, which is a common phenomenon in diasporic communities.

In contrast, another participant, a university professor, expressed a different perspective on language transmission. He did not prioritize teaching Persian to his children, despite having a Persian-speaking spouse. *"I don't see it the same way,"* he explained. *"People can learn various languages, and they should make choices based on the prevalence and utility of those languages. What practical use is Persian for my children? They are already proficient in Dutch, French, and Italian. My wife and I didn't emphasize Persian because it was only useful within our family context."* This view underscores a pragmatic approach to language learning, prioritizing languages with broader global utility over those tied specifically to cultural heritage.

This divergence in attitudes toward language preservation reflects broader themes of cultural adaptation and identity formation within immigrant communities. The literature on heritage language preservation, works by Fishman (1991), suggests that heritage languages serve as key vehicles for maintaining cultural continuity and identity. However, practical considerations, such as the perceived utility of a language and the social integration into the host country, often influence the degree to which a heritage language is maintained or transmitted.

Moreover, the interest shown by the second generation in learning Persian reflects a broader trend among children of immigrants to reconnect with their cultural heritage. This phenomenon can be understood through Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus,' as articulated in his work from 1991, which emphasizes how cultural patterns and practices are internalized through socialization rather than being treated as mere assets. For these young individuals, learning Persian is not just about acquiring a language as a form of capital, but about embodying and practicing cultural norms and values that are integral to their identity. This embodied learning helps them navigate their cultural roots and fosters a sense of belonging within their community, illustrating how cultural practices are deeply embedded in personal and collective identity formation.

Additionally, this trend can be understood through the lens of intergenerational dynamics, which explore how language shapes and negotiates cultural identities across generations within immigrant families. Older generations often act as custodians of cultural and linguistic traditions, preserving and passing down their knowledge. In contrast, younger generations may initially feel disconnected from these traditions but often experience a resurgence of interest in their heritage. This dynamic is evident in my interviews with second-generation Iranian immigrants, who display a renewed interest in learning their inherited language and exploring cultural practices. Many interviewees, for example, expressed a profound interest in the Shahnameh—not merely as a literary artifact but as a way to reconnect with their deeper cultural legacy. This phenomenon underscores the complexities of identity and belonging

in the diaspora and illustrates how personal experiences and family histories influence the pursuit of cultural heritage.

The discussions indicated that although many participants acknowledged the importance of language as a component of their cultural heritage, they frequently did not prioritize it in their daily lives. Several factors may contribute to this phenomenon, including the limited global presence of Persian speakers, feelings of resentment towards Iran due to political or social reasons, or a conscious choice not to return to Iran. For example, Mary, who moved to the Netherlands with her husband while he was a student, expressed a preference for Dutch over Persian. She stated, "*Dutch seems more prestigious than Persian, and I have no interest in teaching my children Persian.*" This sentiment highlights a pragmatic approach to language use, influenced by perceived social status and the utility of the language in their current environment.

From an anthropological perspective, this trend aligns with the concept of "language shift," where immigrant communities gradually adopt the dominant language of the host country, often at the expense of their inherited language. According to the literature, such as the works by Fishman (1991), the loss of heritage languages can result from factors like limited community support, lack of institutional resources, and the pressure to assimilate into the dominant culture. In this context, language choice is not merely a practical decision but also a reflection of broader cultural dynamics and identity negotiations. And the perception of Dutch as more prestigious than Persian can be linked to the socio-economic advantages associated with proficiency in the host country's language. This aligns with Bourdieu's concept of "linguistic capital" (1991), which views language skills as a form of capital that can enhance social mobility and integration. Linguistic capital pertains to the value of language proficiency in accessing social and economic opportunities. In contrast, "cultural capital" includes a broader range of cultural knowledge and competencies, such as understanding cultural artifacts and traditions. Both forms of capital are important in understanding how Iranian immigrants navigate their identities and integrate into Dutch society. Linguistic capital relates specifically to the practical benefits of mastering Dutch, while cultural capital involves the retention and appreciation of heritage knowledge, such as familiarity with the Shahnameh. Both concepts illustrate how language and cultural understanding contribute to the complex process of adapting to a new environment while maintaining cultural roots. Additionally, the decision not to transmit Persian to the next generation may be influenced by a desire to avoid the complexities and potential stigmas associated with maintaining a minority language, as noted in studies of language maintenance and shift.

Moreover, I think this phenomenon also touches on the emotional and psychological dimensions of language use, where personal experiences and attitudes towards the home country can affect language preservation efforts. For some, the act of not teaching Persian might be a way of distancing themselves from negative associations or painful histories linked to their country of origin, highlighting the intricate ways in which language, identity, and emotions intersect in the diaspora.

The interplay between language practices and home-making in immigrant communities, as articulated by Douglas, Pels, and Bruns, reveals a nuanced understanding of identity formation amidst cultural transitions. Douglas's assertion that language serves as a conduit for heritage underscores the importance of linguistic capital in shaping the immigrant experience, particularly for Iranian families in the Netherlands. This perspective aligns with Pels's exploration of how language not only facilitates communication but also acts as a marker of belonging, influencing social integration and community cohesion. Meanwhile, Brun and Fabos highlights the dynamic nature of cultural identity, suggesting that the experiences of Iranian immigrants are not monolithic but rather shaped by individual histories and socio-political contexts. For instance, the varying experiences of educational immigrants versus refugees illustrate how differing motivations and circumstances impact language acquisition and cultural adaptation. This complexity fosters hybrid identities that reflect both the challenges and

opportunities of navigating life between two cultures, ultimately shaping how these families construct their sense of home in a new environment.

2.3 Culinary Traditions and Adaptation: Integrating Iranian Food Practices with the Dutch Food System in the Home-Making Process

Mary Douglas's (1990) concept of home-making indeed underscores the profound link between domestic spaces and cultural practices, with food being a central element in this dynamic. Douglas posits that home-making involves more than just arranging physical space; it encompasses how cultural practices, such as food preparation and consumption, are integral to shaping and expressing identity. Similarly, this concept extends to the use of language within the home. Just as culinary traditions are woven into the fabric of daily life, language choice is a critical aspect of how cultural identity is maintained and negotiated in a new country. The decision about which language to use at home and which language to prioritize for future opportunities reflects broader strategies of cultural preservation and adaptation.

For second and third-generation Iranian immigrants, these choices are particularly significant. The language spoken at home influences children's cultural connection and their integration into the broader society. Discussing language practices explicitly and understanding their impact on future opportunities is essential for comprehending how these Iranian families navigate their cultural identities and integrate into their new environment.

Food is crucial in this process, serving as a primary medium through which cultural values and traditions are expressed and reinforced within the home. In anthropological terms, "foodways" refer to the cultural, social, and economic practices related to the production, distribution, preparation, and consumption of food within a specific group. Preparing and sharing meals thus become forms of cultural expression, transforming the home into a reflection of both individual and communal identity. Traditionally, foodways were defined as "the comprehensive system of how a society conceptualizes and evaluates food, acquires and preserves ingredients, prepares meals, consumes food, and considers nutrition" (Anderson, 1971:161). In today's globalized world, the concept of foodways among diasporic and ethnic groups highlights the evolving nature of culinary traditions. Foodways are no longer static; they are dynamic elements through which cultural identities are actively shaped and communicated. This perspective recognizes that food practices and cultural influences flow across borders, continuously evolving as they interact with new environments and communities. Douglas's framework illustrates how food practices are integral to creating a meaningful and cohesive home environment, helping individuals navigate their new surroundings while maintaining their cultural heritage and emphasizing the dynamic interplay between food, identity, and the sense of belonging in the home-making process.

Regarding culinary tradition, nearly all Iranian immigrant groups shared similar views. They regarded food and its aromas as synonymous with family warmth and a symbol of the Iranian mother. For them, food transcends mere sustenance, embodying a rich cultural heritage and a profound sense of belonging. Farah, one of the interviewees, poignantly captures this sentiment: "*Even now, when I make ghormeh sabzi (a traditional Iranian dish), I am reminded of my mother's house where we used to pick herbs in the yard.*" This anecdote highlights how culinary practices serve as a bridge to past memories and a means of maintaining a connection to one's roots. For the Iranian immigrants interviewed, the kitchen becomes a sacred space where cultural identity is both preserved and transformed. Cooking traditional dishes with ingredients like saffron, rosewater, and sumac is not merely a culinary activity but a ritual that reaffirms cultural continuity. Recipes handed down through generations act as tangible links to the homeland, infusing meals with a sense of nostalgia and a deep connection to Iranian heritage.

Moreover, among my participants, food often serves as a bridge for forming new friendships within the diaspora. My observations reveal that a common practice for making connections involved cooking traditional dishes and sharing them with neighbors. This practice not only introduced the local community to Iranian cuisine but also facilitated social interaction. One interviewee recounted, "*When we first moved here, my husband and I cooked dishes like kebab and faloodeh and shared them with our Dutch neighbors. This was our way of introducing a piece of our culture and breaking the ice. Over time, these initial gestures led to genuine friendships within the neighborhood. The Dutch neighbors appreciated the effort and the food, and as a result, we found ourselves becoming more integrated into the local community.*" This approach highlights that food is more than just sustenance; it becomes a tool for socialization and relationship-building. By offering homemade meals, these individuals not only shared their culinary traditions but also established meaningful connections, enhancing their sense of belonging and fostering a supportive network in their new environment.

In this context, when comparing the three Iranian immigrant groups in the Netherlands, it is noted that only the educational immigrants had the opportunity to return to Iran, whereas regular refugees and Almere's Iranian refugees did not have this chance. During this period, accessing specific ingredients was also challenging for them. Mary highlighted this by saying, "*I never had trouble obtaining ingredients. I would go to Iran and bring back rice, dried herbs, rose water, and saffron to the Netherlands. I even brought these items for other friends.*" This practice illustrates how food plays a crucial role in preserving cultural connections and fostering a sense of community within the diaspora.

The significance of these culinary practices extends beyond the home. One of the owners of Iranian restaurants in Amsterdam responded to my question about the purpose behind opening an Iranian restaurant. Was it solely for income, or was there another objective? He said, "*After immigrating, you want to survive. You use whatever resources you have. Cooking seemed easy to me because I was a cook in Iran too. Honestly, at first, there weren't many Iranians here to sustain a business. It wasn't like now, with so many Iranians in the Netherlands. Most of my customers were Dutch people who loved international cuisine. I initially cooked only two days a week, and slowly the restaurant grew. During the rest of the time, I worked in another restaurant.*" This response mirrors those of Iranian grocery store owners. None of the interviewees considered preserving heritage as their primary goal; they all saw it as a job that was easier for them. The experiences of my interlocutors reflect a pragmatic approach to adapting to their new environment rather than a deliberate effort to preserve tradition or heritage. Many of them mentioned that they used their existing skills and knowledge of Iranian cooking primarily as a means of survival and adaptation in their new surroundings. This perspective challenges the traditional view that immigrants maintain their foodways solely to preserve cultural identity. Instead, it suggests that the adaptation of Iranian cooking practices was often driven by practical needs and the desire to sustain their community and family life in a new context. This approach highlights a broader trend where immigration and survival strategies take precedence over the preservation of ethnic or national traditions.

However, the adaptation to a new cultural environment also necessitates changes. The juxtaposition of Iranian and Dutch food cultures reveals contrasting culinary philosophies. When I asked my interviewees about Dutch dining culture, most said that the Netherlands has a weaker culinary culture compared to Iran, with only a few simple dishes, while Iranian cuisine is rich with delicious foods. Iranian dishes are often elaborate and time-consuming, Dutch meals are typically simpler and less time-intensive. Farnaz had an interesting take on this: "*We Iranians spend five hours cooking and eat in ten minutes. The Dutch make a simple sandwich in ten minutes and eat and talk for an hour.*" I, too, as an Iranian, have experienced this. Most Iranian dishes are time-consuming, taking three to five hours to prepare, and in Iranian social practices, talking during meals is considered impolite, so Iranians don't converse while eating. It seems that Iranians who have immigrated to the Netherlands have reached a reasonable balance by combining Iranian food and Dutch serving culture. According to Saeed, "*My family and I, especially on weekends when we have more time, usually make Iranian food, often kebabs,*

and discuss our weekly matters while eating." I asked him if, considering his wife is Dutch, she had learned to cook Iranian dishes or if he cooked them himself. He said, *"My wife knows some Iranian cooking. For example, she makes a delicious zereshk polo (barberry rice), but because Iranian stews are time-consuming, we usually make them once a month and focus more on kebabs, which are easier for men to prepare."* This observation not only highlights different culinary practices but also reveals deeper cultural values, such as the importance of communal dining and the pace of life. Additionally, it underscores the gendered roles in cooking, which are integral to understanding the broader cultural dynamics. This aspect warrants further research to fully grasp how gender influences culinary practices and contributes to cultural identity within these communities. Shahla highlighted another notable contrast between Iranian and Dutch social gatherings, reflecting broader cultural differences in hospitality. She observed, *"When Dutch people say 'come for coffee,' it usually means just that—they offer coffee and that's often the extent of it. Rarely do they provide additional refreshments."* In contrast, Shahla pointed out that Iranian gatherings are characterized by a more elaborate approach: *"In Persian culture, when we invite people for coffee, we not only serve the coffee but also provide a spread of food, including desserts and sweets."* This difference illustrates a broader cultural trend where Iranian hospitality involves extensive preparation and a variety of offerings to ensure guests feel welcomed and valued. Iranians typically prepare an array of dishes to accompany their beverages, reflecting their emphasis on generous and multifaceted hospitality compared to the more minimalist approach observed in Dutch social settings.

On the other hand, Sia viewed Iranian food as unhealthy and opted for a healthier lifestyle after immigrating. She noted, *"I bike for miles every day and week. If I were to eat unhealthy Iranian food, it wouldn't work out."* While I discussed this perspective with other interviewees, few disagreed. However, unlike Sia, they felt that food, particularly the aroma of Iranian dishes, evokes a strong sense of family and home. Farnaz shared, *"My grandson, despite being born in the Netherlands and having an Italian mother, knows only one Persian word: tahchin, which is a traditional Iranian dish. He always asks me to make it whenever he visits."* While he has never been to Iran, his request for this dish might stem from its unique taste compared to his usual home cooking and his enjoyment of having a dish that connects him to his grandmother's cooking. This preference suggests a connection to the dish that could be influenced by his familiarity with it and the experience of having it prepared by his grandmother, rather than solely by a deep sense of cultural heritage.

In the diaspora, food serves as both a site of adaptation and a bridge between Iranian immigrants and their new environment, reflecting their everyday experiences and strategies for navigating cultural identity. Iranian immigrants do not necessarily perform a conscious assertion of their Iranian identity through food, but rather, as mentioned by restaurant and grocery store owners during the interviews, they often cook and serve familiar dishes like *kebabs* or *faloodeh* as a way to sustain their livelihood and meet customer demand. Interestingly, many Dutch customers, even those without direct ties to Iranians, frequently visit these restaurants to enjoy these dishes, illustrating how culinary practices transcend ethnic boundaries and foster cultural exchange. Rather than simply challenging or confirming stereotypes, the culinary landscape highlights the dynamic ways in which Iranian immigrants engage with both their heritage and the tastes of their broader community, demonstrating the fluid and evolving nature of cultural practices in the diaspora.

Furthermore, the process of preparing and sharing traditional meals plays a crucial role in home-making, though this experience is not solely about preserving a fixed cultural identity. Holtzman (2006) explains that the kitchen becomes a space for transmitting traditions and memories, with food serving as a conduit for cultural heritage. However, the reality is more dynamic than this simple transmission. While the sensory experience of cooking and eating traditional dishes may trigger memories and create a sense of belonging, it can also open the door to culinary adaptation and experimentation. In many cases, my Iranian interviewees in the Netherlands find themselves negotiating new forms of cooking, influenced by the local availability of ingredients and the diverse culinary landscape. During my

interviews, restaurant and grocery store owners mentioned how Iranian ingredients often come from Turkish-Dutch or Arab-Dutch suppliers, allowing for new culinary experiments that mix different Middle Eastern flavors and traditions. Some even admitted to modifying recipes to appeal to local tastes or to make use of what's available in Dutch markets. These adaptations demonstrate how food, rather than being a static symbol of cultural identity, is continuously evolving.

Although Farahnaz's story about her grandson knowing the word *tahchin* illustrates how food can serve as a cultural touchstone, it's crucial to recognize that this is only part of the story. The experience of Iranian immigrants in the diaspora is not just about transmitting traditional practices but also about adapting and experimenting with them. Many interviewees spoke about trying new combinations, inspired by Dutch ingredients or other immigrant cuisines, which challenge the stereotype that immigrant culinary practices are merely about preserving the past. I should avoid presenting a one-dimensional view of food as solely a means of preserving tradition. Instead, it is essential to recognize that cultural identity, as expressed through food practices, is fluid and adaptive. These practices evolve in response to the diverse and complex experiences of life in a new country, often blending elements from both the heritage and host cultures.

In my observations of Iranian restaurants in the Netherlands, I was struck by the minimalistic approach to decor and the noticeable absence of traditional Iranian design elements, such as bright, open spaces or intricate cultural motifs that are so prevalent in restaurants back home. Many establishments were dark, cramped, and prioritized functionality over creating a culturally immersive environment. This contrasted sharply with what I was used to in Iran, where spacious, well-lit venues are key to attracting customers. Only a few restaurants featured decor with Iranian symbols like the *Farvahar* or traditional brickwork designs. However, through conversations with restaurant owners, I learned that their primary goal was not to preserve Iranian heritage through their restaurant design. Instead, they explained that several factors influenced their aesthetic choices. Some owners mentioned that the local Dutch clientele prefer a more modern, minimalistic style, which better aligns with Dutch tastes. Others pointed out that the high cost of recreating a traditional Iranian space in the Netherlands made it impractical. Additionally, many felt that adapting to the local restaurant scene, rather than emphasizing cultural representation, was essential for business success in their new context. In this sense, the design choices reflect a pragmatic response to the realities of running a business in a different cultural and economic environment, rather than an intentional effort to preserve or showcase Iranian heritage.

Aside from the food itself, my interviewees often mentioned Dutch eating habits, which they sometimes found interesting and sometimes strange. For example, Dutch people prefer not to waste food, make only what they need, and finish it in one meal. They talk at the table with family and friends during meals. The Dutch eat lunch at around 12-1 PM and have dinner at 6-7 PM, while Iranians eat lunch at 2-3 PM and dinner at 10-11 PM. Even in the workplace, Dutch people prefer lighter meals like bread and cheese rather than heavy Iranian food, which is often oily and reduces work productivity after eating. Yar said, *"They eat light food to maintain focus at work and have their heavy meal at dinner. We've also learned this over time, and it's become a cultural norm for us."* In adapting to Dutch work culture, Iranian immigrants balance their traditional "home food practices" by incorporating elements from both cultures. Some might bring Iranian street snacks, like *falafel* or *kuku sabzi*, to enjoy during lunch breaks at Dutch firms. Others may adopt Dutch ingredients or meals, blending Iranian and Dutch food practices, such as incorporating Dutch bread or cheese into their workday lunch. This fusion of culinary habits demonstrates the fluidity of cultural identity within the diasporic experience.

Indeed, using an appropriate theoretical framework, such as the one proposed by Brun and Fabos (2015), could clarify the situation. The theory emphasizes that the value of Persian is limited in the Netherlands, while Dutch is crucial for integration. This situation highlights a typical aspect of adapting to a new environment, where the language of the host country becomes essential for effective communication and societal participation. Additionally, a significant observation is the variation in how

Iranian immigrants approach food and language. While nearly everyone regarded food as a vital symbol of our culture and heritage, this sentiment was not as widely extended to the Persian language. Many believed in the importance of preserving their culinary traditions, but fewer made a concerted effort to teach their children Persian.

This discrepancy highlights a broader theme in diaspora communities, where food often becomes a primary means of maintaining cultural identity, even as language preservation may take a back seat. However, while immigrants frequently emphasize the importance of traditional food, the way they prepare and experience these dishes is not always static. Many adapt or experiment with ingredients and techniques from other cultures, whether out of necessity or preference. This experimentation reflects the dynamic nature of cultural adaptation, where food evolves to incorporate influences from various sources—not just stereotypically 'Dutch,' but also Turkish-Dutch, North African-Dutch, or other hybrid culinary practices. For example, some of my participants in the Netherlands blend local Dutch ingredients with traditional Persian recipes, creating hybrid dishes like saffron-infused stamppot or a Persian twist on Dutch meatballs. To gain a more nuanced understanding of how foodways transform, observing cooking practices or speaking to restaurant owners about how their menus have changed could offer important insights. An Iranian restaurant owner, for instance, said, *“I introduce Dutch or Mediterranean flavors into a traditional kebab dish, reflecting the fluid and evolving nature of culinary practices in the Dutch diaspora. I named this kebab the special head chef kebab.”*

Mary Douglas's concept of home-making emphasizes the intricate relationship between domestic spaces and cultural practices, particularly through the lens of food and language. Douglas argues that home-making transcends mere physical arrangement; it is deeply intertwined with cultural identity, as food preparation and consumption serve as vital expressions of that identity. This perspective resonates with the views of Brun and Fabos, who explore how immigrant families navigate their cultural identities in new environments, highlighting the role of foodways as dynamic elements that evolve while maintaining connections to heritage. Similarly, Pels emphasizes the significance of language in shaping cultural identity, noting that the choice of language within the home reflects broader strategies of cultural preservation and adaptation. For second and third-generation Iranian immigrants, these choices are particularly poignant, as the language spoken at home and the culinary traditions practiced become essential in fostering a sense of belonging and cultural continuity. The act of preparing traditional dishes not only reinforces familial bonds but also serves as a bridge to the past, creating a sacred space where cultural identity is preserved and transformed. As these families share their culinary heritage with neighbors, they facilitate social connections that enhance their integration into the broader community, illustrating how food and language collectively shape the home-making process and the negotiation of cultural identity in a diasporic context.

2.4 Parenting Styles and Integration: Influencing Home-Making Through Iranian Child-Rearing Practices

Parenting among Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands plays a pivotal role in preserving cultural values and navigating the challenges of raising children in a different societal context, often serving as a primary motivation for enduring the difficulties of immigration. For all the participants who are parents, the decision to immigrate is deeply intertwined with the desire to provide their children with better opportunities, a safer environment, and a chance for a brighter future. This commitment to their children's well-being underscores the sacrifices and hardships they are willing to endure in a foreign land. This significance is recognized even by those who did not have children at the time of their immigration, highlighting the central role children play in the immigrant experience.

Raising children in a foreign cultural context involves navigating complex cultural dynamics, a challenge well-explained by Brun and Fabos's tripartite conception of home-making. Iranian parents in

the Netherlands encounter significant differences in social norms, educational systems, and societal expectations compared to their homeland. According to Brun and Fabos, home-making encompasses not only the physical act of creating a living space but also the adaptation of cultural practices and values within a new environment. For Iranian parents, this means reconciling traditional cultural values with the realities of Dutch society, integrating aspects of Dutch educational and social norms while striving to preserve their cultural identity. This balancing act highlights the dynamic process of home-making, where Iranian parents actively negotiate and reshape their practices to bridge their heritage with their new societal context.

In Iranian social practices, respect and manners are deeply ingrained, particularly in interactions with elders, and are governed by unwritten rules. While respect for elders and authority is emphasized in various Iranian cultural patterns, Dutch society tends to focus on individual autonomy and direct communication. This divergence can lead to variations in parenting approaches. It is crucial to recognize that these cultural patterns do not uniformly apply to all individuals within these communities. Just as the labels 'Dutch' and 'Iranian' represent constructed notions reflecting a range of experiences and identities, parenting practices among Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands are influenced by a complex interplay of personal, familial, and societal factors.

For instance, actions such as stretching one's legs in front of elders or lying down are considered disrespectful in Iranian culture, as is responding to elders' comments in a manner perceived as challenging their authority. Saeed, a study participant, noted, *"In our culture, we didn't even have the right to make decisions about significant life events like marriage or immigration. Disagreeing with the family was often labelled as disrespect. However, I've taught my children to stand up against any wrong, whether it's from me, their mother, or strangers."* Saeed's shift towards encouraging his children to challenge authority and stand up against perceived wrongs may reflect an integration of Dutch values emphasizing individual rights and autonomy, though it's not clear whether this approach was directly influenced by Dutch examples or represents a broader adaptation of universal values. Understanding this transition requires further exploration into how Iranian immigrants like Saeed engage with and reinterpret local societal norms in their parenting practices.

Saeed's narrative highlights the dynamic process of home-making as articulated by Brun and Fabos, where home extends beyond a physical space to become a site of negotiation, belonging, and identity formation. This narrative underscores the complex interplay between cultural values and individual autonomy within the diaspora. Iranian immigrants navigate the challenge of maintaining traditional values while adapting to new societal norms, balancing respect for elders with fostering individual autonomy among their children. As families integrate into Dutch society, they face the challenge of aligning cultural expectations with empowering their children to express themselves and assert their rights. This dynamic reflects a broader trend observed in immigrant communities, where the preservation of cultural identity and the adoption of host country values coexist, albeit with tensions and negotiations.

The experience of my participants illustrates how parenting strategies evolve in response to integration pressures and the desire to instil both respect for cultural heritage and the ability to navigate a new social environment. This balance aids in the child's adaptation and maintains a sense of cultural continuity and identity within the family. The shift from rigid adherence to traditional norms to a more flexible approach, as seen in Saeed's parenting philosophy, exemplifies the adaptive strategies employed by immigrant families. It highlights how these families negotiate cultural differences and strive for a harmonious blend of respect for tradition and encouragement of autonomy in their children.

A recurring theme among participants was the adoption of Dutch values such as punctuality, orderliness, and directness in raising their children. These qualities, highly regarded in Dutch society, have been integrated into their parenting styles, reflecting a conscious effort to adapt to their new environment. This adaptation exemplifies cultural crossover, where elements of Dutch society are

incorporated into Iranian immigrant practices. In my analysis, I explored how this crossover extends beyond parenting to other dimensions of cultural adaptation, such as language use and foodways. For instance, while the integration of Dutch values is evident in parenting styles, the adoption of Dutch language and foodways follows different patterns. Dutch elements are adopted to varying extents across these dimensions, revealing a complex interplay between maintaining traditional Iranian practices and embracing aspects of Dutch culture.

Comparative analysis revealed that immigrant experiences shape adaptations in nuanced ways. In some areas, there is a clear shift towards Dutch elements, while in others, traditional Iranian practices are preserved or blended with Dutch influences. This dynamic process of home-making illustrates how Iranian immigrants navigate their cultural identities, creating hybrid solutions that incorporate both Dutch and Iranian elements. Farah, a participant, highlighted this transition: *"In the culture we grew up in, arriving late was somehow considered classy, a sign of being busy and important. But it's actually very disrespectful. We also tended to avoid direct confrontation to spare others' feelings, but I've encouraged my children to be straightforward like the Dutch."* This statement underscores the significant shift from traditional Iranian norms to the more direct and punctual ethos of Dutch culture.

An example of this blending is illustrated by Saeed, a study participant, who shared how his parenting has evolved through the integration of Dutch values. He explained, *"In Iranian culture, it's common to be quite reserved and avoid direct confrontation, even if it means sidestepping difficult conversations. However, I've encouraged my children to be more direct and assertive, reflecting the Dutch emphasis on straightforward communication. Additionally, while punctuality was not a significant concern in Iran, I now stress its importance to my children, aligning with Dutch values."* This evolution in parenting practices reflects a broader pattern of cultural adaptation observed in immigrant communities. As noted by De Valk et al. (2004: 11), "immigrants often modify their cultural practices to align with the host country's context, blending traditional and new cultural elements to create a unique cultural fusion within their homes." By incorporating Dutch values into their parenting, Iranian immigrants like Saeed facilitate their children's integration into Dutch society while enriching their familial practices with a blend of cultural influences. This adaptation reflects a complex interplay between maintaining cultural identity and embracing new norms, rather than solely underscoring resilience and flexibility. While Saeed's experience illustrates how Iranian immigrants blend cultural elements to navigate their new environment, this process is not universally positive or straightforward. Not all individuals find it easy to balance traditional and new cultural practices, and the capacity for resilience and flexibility can vary widely. Some participants struggle with these adjustments, experiencing challenges and conflicts in reconciling different cultural expectations. The adaptation process can lead to both positive outcomes, such as successful integration and enrichment of familial practices, and negative experiences, such as stress or a sense of loss.

The concept of "home-making," as articulated by Douglas (1991), is crucial for understanding how Iranian immigrants adapt their cultural practices in a new environment. According to Douglas, home extends beyond a mere physical structure; it is a dynamic and culturally significant construct that embodies a profound sense of belonging. For Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, home-making involves creating a living environment that resonates with both personal and cultural meaning. In my study, participants demonstrate home-making through a blend of traditional Iranian customs and contemporary Dutch norms. This integration is evident both physically and emotionally. Physically, Iranian immigrants incorporate elements of their heritage—such as rugs, calligraphy, and artwork—into their living spaces to maintain a tangible connection to their cultural roots. Emotionally, home-making involves merging cultural values and practices from Iran with those of their new Dutch context, reflecting a process of adaptation and negotiation. This blending of traditions highlights how Iranian immigrants navigate the complexities of maintaining cultural identity while integrating into Dutch society. The physical and emotional dimensions of home-making reveal how cultural practices are

adapted and reinterpreted within the diaspora, contributing to a nuanced understanding of what it means to create a sense of home in a new cultural landscape.

This adaptation reflects a deliberate effort to balance and harmonize Iranian cultural heritage with the evolving expectations of Dutch society. Home-making thus becomes a means through which Iranian immigrants negotiate their cultural identity in the context of their new environment. Rather than simply maintaining a singular past, this process involves selectively integrating aspects of Iranian heritage while also acknowledging and adapting to new realities. Douglas's notion of home as a symbolically laden space illustrates how immigrants create a meaningful environment that reflects both their cultural history and the practicalities of their present situation. This approach acknowledges that while some elements of the past are preserved, others may be reinterpreted or set aside as part of the ongoing negotiation of identity in a diaspora context.

The transformation in parenting approaches among participants is notably reflected in how children are placed at the centre of familial decision-making, marking a significant shift from traditional norms. This evolution is intricately linked with home-making, where integrating cultural values and new societal influences creates a dynamic environment for raising children. Farnaz's experience illustrates this shift: *"When I learned my son was gay, it felt devastating. I feared judgment and felt we would be blamed for not raising him 'properly.' However, the school psychologist helped me see that this is something to accept and embrace. Now, just as my daughter has the freedom to date men, my son is free to choose his partner."* Farnaz's narrative reflects a significant departure from some of the values commonly associated with pre-Revolutionary Iran, showing a more inclusive approach fostered by progressive educational and social systems in the Netherlands. This broader perspective has enabled immigrant families to reconcile their cultural heritage with contemporary social norms, influencing their parenting practices.

This shift aligns with Parsai et al. (2010: 207), who argue that "immigrant parents often grapple with the dual task of preserving their cultural heritage while facilitating their children's adaptation to the norms and values of their new society." The process of home-making, as articulated by Douglas (1991) and further elaborated by Brun and Fabos, involves creating a space that reflects and integrates cultural meanings and practices. According to Douglas, home-making encompasses not only the physical arrangement of space but also its emotional and symbolic dimensions, which influence how individuals and families establish a sense of belonging. Brun and Fabos expand on this by emphasizing that home-making among immigrants involves a dynamic interplay between maintaining traditional practices and adapting to new cultural contexts.

In the context of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, this means that parents navigate the complexities of raising children by integrating elements from both their Iranian heritage and Dutch societal norms. This process involves blending cultural traditions with contemporary practices to form a hybrid home environment. For instance, Iranian parents may incorporate traditional Iranian artifacts into their living spaces while simultaneously adapting their parenting styles to reflect Dutch values such as punctuality and directness. By applying Brun and Fabos's framework to Douglas's concept, it becomes clear how home-making among immigrants is a process of negotiation and adaptation, where cultural meanings are continuously redefined within a multicultural context.

By embracing new social norms and integrating them into their parenting practices, participants create a home environment that balances respect for traditional values with openness to progressive ideals. This approach reflects a broader pattern of acculturation where cultural practices adapt to the host country's context while maintaining a connection to one's heritage. The home serves as a complex site where cultural continuity and adaptation intersect, allowing immigrant families to navigate the challenges of blending traditional and new cultural elements. This process can be fraught with tension and compromise, as the ideal of home may not always align with the realities faced by immigrant families. Douglas's perspective acknowledges that home-making can sometimes become restrictive or

challenging, rather than purely nurturing or inclusive. Thus, while immigrant families may strive to create a supportive environment for their children, the reality of home-making often involves a negotiation between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to new societal norms, with both positive and negative dimensions. Thus, the intersection of parenting and home-making highlights the resilience and adaptability of Iranian immigrants as they navigate the complexities of raising children in a new cultural setting. The evolving nature of parenting practices and home-making underscores the ongoing negotiation between cultural preservation and the integration of new societal values, contributing to a unique and meaningful domestic environment.

According to Pels et al. (2022: 3), "The notion of time—encompassing the past, present, and future—is crucial for understanding the experiences of families, particularly in how they engage with home-making and heritage." This view highlights that home-making involves more than just adapting cultural practices to the present; it also requires reconciling past experiences with future aspirations. For immigrant families, creating a sense of home is a dynamic process that intertwines their cultural heritage with their current circumstances. The past, reflected in Iranian cultural practices, continues to shape their parenting and values. The present involves adapting these practices within Dutch society, often leading to a redefined identity. Looking ahead, families, like Farah's, focus on equipping their children to navigate a multicultural world by blending the strengths of both cultures. This temporal dimension is essential for understanding how immigrant families build and negotiate their sense of home, balancing traditional and contemporary influences while preparing their children for future success.

Another critical aspect discussed by participants is the concept of independence, a core value in Dutch culture. Unlike Iranian social practices, where families often remain closely involved in their children's lives, Dutch society encourages young adults to be self-sufficient once they reach adulthood. This includes managing their own finances and making independent life decisions. Sia reflected on his experiences: *"I was 30 when my mother in Iran arranged my marriage. We were incompatible and ended up divorcing, and then the revolution led me to the Netherlands. Now, seeing my children, I finally understand the importance of responsibility and independence."* This narrative underscores the cultural negotiation that Iranian immigrant parents undertake, as described by Douglas (1991), who emphasizes the role of home as a site of cultural exchange and adaptation.

While the parenting section has thus far emphasized the positive adoption of Dutch cultural patterns, it is important to acknowledge the struggles and uncertainties that Iranian immigrants face in this process. Adapting to Dutch norms, such as valuing individual autonomy and progressive attitudes towards issues like LGBTQ+ rights, can present significant challenges. For instance, some Iranian parents grapple with conflicting values when their children embrace aspects of Dutch culture that diverge from traditional Iranian norms, such as the acceptance of diverse sexual orientations. This struggle is exemplified by Saeed, a participant who expressed concern about balancing Dutch openness with Iranian cultural values. Saeed shared, *"I find it challenging to reconcile my desire for my children to be open-minded with my own reservations about certain Dutch values. For example, while I want my children to accept and respect all people, including those who are LGBTQ+, it sometimes clashes with the more conservative views I grew up with."* Such tensions highlight the complex and often painful process of negotiating between preserving Iranian values and embracing new Dutch norms. This nuanced experience contrasts sharply with the more positive portrayal of adaptation seen in discussions of language and food, illustrating the broader spectrum of immigrant experiences in navigating their cultural identities.

De Valk et al. (2004: 11) highlight that "immigrants shape their homes and family life in a new environment by adapting their cultural practices, traditions, and values to fit the host country's context while also maintaining elements of their heritage." This process involves attempting to establish a sense of stability and personal relevance in their living spaces, incorporating aspects of their cultural identity, and navigating the challenges of cultural integration within the family unit. Immigrants blend traditional

and host country practices in areas such as food, language, celebrations, and child-rearing to create a unique cultural fusion in their homes. By balancing these elements, immigrants strive to establish a harmonious and inclusive environment that reflects their cultural background while embracing new cultural influences. These narratives provide valuable insights into the complex processes of cultural negotiation and adaptation among Iranian immigrants. The integration of Dutch values into their parenting practices reflects a broader pattern of acculturation.

As these families navigate the complexities of raising children in a foreign cultural context, they embody Douglas's idea that home is not merely a physical structure but a site of memory, identity, and adaptation. The data gathered from participants reveals that parenting among Iranian immigrants is deeply rooted in the desire to preserve cultural values while simultaneously adapting to the societal norms of their new environment. This dual commitment reflects Brun and Fabos's assertion that home-making involves reconciling traditional practices with the realities of a different societal context. For instance, Saeed's narrative about encouraging his children to challenge authority highlights the tension between maintaining respect for elders, a core Iranian value, and fostering individual autonomy, a principle more prevalent in Dutch society. This negotiation process underscores the broader immigrant experience, where the home becomes a site of continuous adaptation, allowing families to bridge their cultural heritage with the demands of their new social landscape, ultimately shaping their children's identities in a way that honours both their past and their present.

2.5 House as a Roof: Navigating Home Purchase, and Decorating Among Iranian Immigrant Home-Making Process

In Mary Douglas's (1991) work, she posits that the concept of "home" extends far beyond a mere physical structure; it is a complex symbolic space that reflects and shapes social identities, cultural practices, and a sense of belonging. According to her, a house becomes a home through the process of homemaking, where individuals imbue their living spaces with personal and cultural significance. This transformation is not just about physical arrangements but involves the creation of a space that resonates with memories, values, and identity. The home serves as a microcosm of one's world, where the familiar and the intimate converge, providing a semblance of stability and affiliation. In the context of immigration, this process becomes even more pronounced, as individuals navigate the challenges of displacement and seek to recreate a sense of "home" in a new environment. This process of homemaking involves crafting spaces that resonate with their hybrid identities, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and continuity in their new surroundings. I aim to illuminate how the concept of home functions not only as a personal sanctuary but also as a reflection of broader cultural and social processes, shedding light on the intricate balance between cultural preservation and adaptation within the immigrant experience.

In the context of housing, most of the interviewees from my sample did not face significant challenges in securing accommodation in the Netherlands. This group predominantly included students and professionals from more affluent backgrounds, who were financially supported by their families. These students often brought funds for their living expenses from Iran, which covered up to six months of costs. In this context, Iranian families typically offer substantial financial support during significant life events like marriage. The groom's family might cover the cost of buying or renting a home, while the bride's family provides household goods, referred to as *jaheziyeh*, which includes items such as beds, sofas, pots, and carpets.

However, it is crucial to recognize that this description does not encompass the full spectrum of Iranian experiences. Iranian society is diverse, with variations in customs and economic practices across different groups, including Shi'ites, Sunnis, Bahá'is, secularists, and socialists. Marriage customs and financial support can differ significantly depending on religious and cultural affiliations, as well as

socioeconomic status. Additionally, the experiences of lower-class student immigrants are not adequately represented in this discussion. Many lower-class Iranian students may face substantial challenges in securing housing and managing living expenses in the Netherlands. Some of these individuals might return to Iran due to financial constraints or other difficulties, which limited my ability to interview them. Therefore, the affluent student sample in this study represents only one segment of the Iranian immigrant community. Acknowledging this diversity is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the broader immigrant experience. Farah recalls, "*Back then, the student population was smaller, so finding rental housing was never an issue for us during our university years. Later, after Farid secured a job and obtained his master's degree, we enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. At that time, our main concern was securing our residency permit rather than financial difficulties. However, transitioning from a rental property to creating a space that truly felt like home was a separate challenge. It involved more than just financial stability; it required us to personalize and adapt the space to reflect our cultural identity and sense of belonging.*" This narrative reflects a broader pattern observed among immigrant communities, where financial support from extended family networks plays a crucial role in facilitating the immigration and settlement process (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). This support system highlights the collectivist nature of Iranian social practices, where family obligations and interdependence are deeply ingrained. The practice of providing *jaheziyeh* is not only a financial transaction but also a cultural ritual that symbolizes familial support and continuity of tradition across borders.

The second group of refugees faced a more challenging path. They lived in camps until they received their asylum decisions. Once approved, they moved into shared housing (2-3 people per unit) and eventually into social housing provided by the Dutch government. These houses varied from one to three bedrooms, depending on the family size. Parviz shares, "*When I first received the keys to my own house, I felt like I was in heaven. After five years of shared living and a difficult asylum process, I finally felt peace. But when I saw the house, I was disappointed. It had no flooring, and the walls were bare concrete. This wasn't my idea of a home. It felt worse than the camp.*" In the Netherlands, homes are typically handed over without flooring, leaving tenants or new homeowners to install it themselves, a practice unfamiliar to many Iranian immigrants who are used to fully furnished homes in Iran. This difference in housing standards initially affected their sense of belonging. Parviz's experience might have been more positive if the homes were furnished similarly to Iranian standards, providing a quicker sense of security and comfort (Douglas, 1991). This experience underscores the importance of physical space and material culture in the construction of a sense of home and belonging. The stark, functional design of Dutch social housing often contrasts sharply with the elaborate and personalized interiors that Iranians are used to, creating a dissonance that can complicate the process of adaptation and integration.

However, Saeed had a different perspective: "*I welcomed this approach. I built my home corner by corner with my own hands, designing a hidden kitchen reminiscent of my mother's home in Iran. Every time I entered the kitchen, I felt a deep sense of security. Later, when I found a job and moved out of social housing, leaving felt like leaving my homeland all over again.*" Some interviewees continue to reside in social housing due to unemployment and dependence on government assistance. Saeed's story, however, highlights how home-making involves significant personal agency and inventive expression. His experience demonstrates how constructing and decorating one's home can be a powerful way to assert cultural identity and individual agency. This practice embodies what can be described as cultural bricolage, where immigrants integrate diverse cultural elements from both their country of origin and their new environment to craft living spaces that embody their hybrid identities.

The third group of immigrants followed a slightly different path. Shahla recounts, "*We lived in a warehouse with all our group members for a short period. Then we were each given a house to live in until we learned Dutch and found jobs. The houses were small, but for those of us who fled the regime's danger, they provided a great sense of security and peace.*" Most in this group found jobs within a year and moved from social housing to rented homes. Shahla adds, "*Our second home, which we rented*

ourselves, was much smaller than the first one provided by the government. But that attic apartment gave us a real sense of independence, motivating us to start anew. We were very happy in that home and still cherish the memories."

A concerning observation within the second group of Iranian immigrants was the prevalence of illegal subletting practices. Many individuals relying on social housing and government benefits were found to be renting out rooms to students or others without proper registration. This practice, which contravenes Dutch regulations, was notable for its apparent lack of enforcement by authorities. Some individuals continued to occupy social housing even after their children had moved out, by not registering these changes and renting out the vacated rooms to maintain their benefits. When questioned about their reasons for engaging in such practices, many cited the insufficiency of government support as a primary factor. They reported that the financial assistance provided was inadequate to cover their living expenses, leading them to resort to informal or illegal means to supplement their income. Despite being asked why they did not seek employment, it emerged that many had adapted to a modest lifestyle supported by benefits and found it difficult to transition away from this dependency.

This behavior highlights the significant economic pressures faced by some Iranian immigrants, which can lead them to engage in practices such as illegal subletting to manage financial shortfalls. It is important to recognize that these actions are driven by economic necessity rather than a reflection of personal values or the quality of their home life. These practices underscore the broader challenges of adapting to a new socio-economic environment and the difficulties inherent in navigating legal and financial systems in a different country. Understanding these issues requires a nuanced approach that focuses on the economic and structural factors influencing such behavior. It is essential to frame these findings within the context of economic survival and the complexities of integration, rather than reducing them to stereotypes or judgments about immigrant practices. This perspective helps maintain a compassionate view of the challenges faced by immigrants and supports a more accurate and empathetic understanding of their experiences.

In terms of household customs and Iranian social practices, almost none of the participants reported entering their homes with shoes on, even those with foreign spouses. Masoud explains, *"I requested my wife to adopt this cleanliness principle from my culture. Now, even our children remove their shoes and wear slippers when they visit with their partners."* Farah confirmed this practice, indicating its swift transmission to foreign partners and second and third generations. Another common practice was the use of a water hose for cleaning oneself after using the toilet. Almost all interviewees insisted on having this from the start of their immigration. This practice, deeply rooted in Islamic teachings which emphasize cleanliness and the validity of prayers (Metcalf, 1996), reflects both religious and cultural norms. While this practice is primarily observed among Muslims, it has also been adopted by some non-Muslims in Iran and in the diaspora, demonstrating its significance in the broader cultural context.

Even I adopted this practice, installing bidets in every house I lived in after immigration. This adaptation highlights the persistence of cultural habits in the diaspora, underscoring a commitment to personal hygiene that transcends practical needs. The decision to invest in bidets, despite financial constraints, reflects a prioritization of maintaining familiar and culturally significant practices over adapting to local alternatives perceived as less acceptable. While this focus on hygiene might not directly align with notions of resisting assimilation, it does illustrate how maintaining certain cultural practices can be a way of preserving a sense of identity and comfort in a new environment. Therefore, the adoption of bidets and other culturally significant practices can be seen as part of a broader effort to sustain personal and cultural continuity amidst the challenges of immigration.

Including Iranian decor and artifacts in the home does more than just beautify the space; it connects people to their cultural roots and identity. These items act as symbols of their homeland, helping immigrants maintain a sense of continuity in a new country. In terms of home decoration, elements like carpets, Iranian art, handicrafts, and even curtains are often considered essential by Iranian immigrants

to recreate a familiar environment in their new surroundings. Farnaz explains why she still uses curtains: *"My husband disliked the idea of people passing by and seeing us inside. He would draw the curtains immediately upon arriving home."* This sentiment was echoed by others and is deeply relatable to me as an Iranian. In Iran, such privacy concerns are linked to the concept of *ghairat*⁹, where men protect the visibility of their women from outsiders. Although educated Iranians may view this as an outdated notion, it has evolved to represent privacy concerns. These individuals didn't view the act of drawing curtains as a reflection of cultural values or traditions, but rather as a practical way to maintain their privacy. My participants' views on whether including Iranian elements in home decor signified an attachment to their cultural identity varied. Some saw it purely as an aesthetic choice, incorporating anything beautiful that matched their taste, while others felt these elements represented their identity. Farnaz states, *"To me, it's clear that we should decorate in the style of our ancestors. A real Iranian home embodies this. Even my Dutch neighbor, upon learning I was Iranian, gifted me this Isfahan art piece, saying that Iranian artifacts belong in Iranian homes."* Below, you can see the gift that Farnaz mentioned.



Figure 3: Gift from Farnaz's Neighbor

In the realm of expatriation, Iranian immigrants residing in the Netherlands often grapple with a potent mix of nostalgia and longing for their homeland. This emotional connection to their past dwelling plays a pivotal role in shaping their perceptions and construction of the concept of “home” in their adopted country. The act of crafting a sense of home-making among Iranian immigrants involves a delicate interplay of tangible and intangible elements. Within their dwellings, they infuse spaces with mementos evoking memories of Iran, while simultaneously upholding cherished cultural practices and principles (Bourdieu, 2013). Rooted in their cultural heritage and personal narratives, Iranian immigrants may hold an idealized vision of both home and homeland, colored by a tapestry of reminiscences and traditional norms that influence their quest for belonging in the Netherlands.

Everyday rituals and communal bonds are foundational to the sense of home that Iranian immigrants cultivate within Dutch society. Through an anthropological lens, these practices extend beyond the mere preservation of cultural heritage and emerge as crucial tools for negotiating identity, fostering community, and achieving social integration. Participating in Iranian festivities like *Shabe Yalda*, *Nowruz (Persian New Year)*, and *Chaharshanbe Suri* enables Iranian immigrants to connect with their cultural roots, maintaining a sense of continuity and collective memory amidst displacement. These gatherings serve not only to uphold tradition but also to reinforce community ties, as shared rituals provide moments of cultural solidarity and mutual recognition in an unfamiliar context.

⁹ *Ghairat* is an Iranian concept of honour and pride, emphasizing the protection of family reputation and adherence to cultural and moral values, particularly in relation to the behaviour of female family members

Simultaneously, engagement in Dutch traditions such as King's Day and Christmas signifies the fluidity of cultural identity in the diaspora. Iranian immigrants are not simply passive bearers of tradition; they actively navigate the tensions between cultural preservation and adaptation. By participating in Dutch customs, they demonstrate a willingness to integrate into Dutch society, while also enriching their own identities through cultural hybridity. It is this ongoing negotiation of identity—through the blending of Iranian and Dutch practices—that highlights the adaptive and responsive nature of cultural identity in immigration.

These activities also contribute significantly to the feelings of attachment and inclusion that Iranian immigrants experience in their newfound homeland. For instance, the physical abode of an Iranian immigrant often transforms into a sanctuary where Dutch architectural features blend with Persian design aesthetics. Homes are adorned with Persian rugs, ornate calligraphy, and intricate tilework, creating spaces that symbolize both continuity with their past and adaptation to their present. This fusion of the old and the new reflects their journey and evolving identity, where the physical home becomes a metaphor for the broader process of home-making in the diaspora.

An experience from my ethnographic research vividly illustrates this. At a *Nowruz* festival in The Hague, I encountered an elderly Dutch woman attending the celebration. I was struck by her presence, as she stood out among the largely Iranian crowd. Curious to understand her connection to Iranian social practices, I approached her for an interview. Unfortunately, language barriers impeded our conversation—she could not speak English, and I did not know Dutch. However, with the help of another participant who translated for us, I learned that her late husband was Iranian. Even after his passing, she continued to attend Iranian festivals like *Nowruz* to honor his memory and maintain her connection to him. This moving encounter highlighted the deep emotional and cultural bonds that transcend national or ethnic identity, as well as the limitations imposed by language in ethnographic research. The inability to communicate directly with her underscored the challenges of cross-cultural understanding, yet her story reflected how cultural practices can serve as powerful symbols of attachment and belonging, even across different generations and backgrounds.

Mary Douglas's exploration of the concept of home as a complex symbolic space aligns closely with the ideas presented by Fabos and Pels regarding the interplay between cultural identity and the immigrant experience. Douglas emphasizes that a house transforms into a home through the process of homemaking, where individuals infuse their living spaces with personal and cultural significance, creating a microcosm of their identities. This notion resonates with Fabos and Pels, who highlight how immigrants navigate the challenges of displacement by crafting spaces that reflect their hybrid identities and foster a sense of belonging. In my work, I illustrate how Iranian immigrants, particularly those from affluent backgrounds, utilize familial support and cultural practices, such as the provision of *jaheziyeh*, to facilitate this process of homemaking in a new environment. Conversely, the experiences of refugees, who often face significant barriers in establishing a sense of home, underscore the broader social and cultural dynamics at play. Together, these perspectives illuminate the intricate balance between cultural preservation and adaptation, demonstrating how the concept of home serves as a vital framework for understanding the immigrant experience.

In conclusion, the home-making practices of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands reveal a dynamic interplay between cultural preservation and adaptation. By blending Iranian and Dutch traditions, they create spaces—both physical and symbolic—that reflect their hybrid identities and experiences. These rituals and communal activities not only foster a sense of belonging within their own communities but also facilitate broader social integration. Ultimately, home for these immigrants is not a static place bound by tradition, but a fluid, adaptive process shaped by the complexities of life in a new cultural landscape.

2.6 Boundaries and Opportunities for Iranian Immigrants During Integration

In discussing discrimination, most participants acknowledged that both positive and negative experiences exist everywhere. Although often unpleasant, they appreciated the opportunity to protest and assert their rights in the Netherlands. However, many still feared being judged or misunderstood, which may have influenced their responses during the interviews. Some expressed concerns about facing more challenges in finding jobs compared to Dutch citizens, feeling the need to prove themselves more. For instance, Masoud shared, *"Dutch people are friendly as long as you aren't above them. All my Dutch colleagues were nice to me until I got a promotion and surpassed them in the company. Then they thought I was taking their place and started distancing themselves."* Similarly, Farnaz shared an incident with a neighbor: *"I had a neighbor who was always critical of my every move in the building, from the number of guests I had to my comings and goings. Once, when I was taking a ladder out of the storage, I accidentally broke my neighbor's storage window. I informed him, and he came out yelling and cursing at me in Dutch. I was terrified and kept apologizing. However, another Dutch neighbor came out and defended me, telling him he had no right to yell at me. This support was heartwarming and made me feel secure."* These experiences highlight the complex interplay between discrimination and support within Dutch society, shaping the integration process for Iranian immigrants.

On the other hand, Farah mentioned, *"I always felt hurt that I couldn't make close Dutch friends. They are kind and helpful but maintain a certain distance."* This sentiment was not universal, however. For instance, Mrs. Leila shared a contrasting experience, stating, *"I have never faced any discrimination in the Netherlands. They have always supported me."* This perspective was surprising when compared to the experiences of other participants. Further exploration revealed that her seemingly positive view of the Netherlands might be influenced by her experiences in Iran, where she faced racial slurs due to her darker skin tone. During a trip to Northern Iran, she was called *kaka siyah*, a term used for people with darker skin. She explained, *"When my fellow countrymen mocked me for my skin color, what can I expect from people in a foreign country where I live as a guest and from whom I receive support through their taxes?"* This suggests that her perception of racial discrimination in the Netherlands might stem from a sense of entitlement to endure such treatment, given her previous experiences. This suggests that her view of racial discrimination in the Netherlands might be shaped by a sense of obligation to endure such treatment due to her previous experiences. Even after years of living in the Netherlands, she still sees herself as a guest rather than fully integrated.

The experiences of opportunity and discrimination highlight the challenges immigrants face as they try to keep their cultural identity while adapting to a new culture. This balancing act is not just about individual effort; it reflects how society handles inclusion and opportunity. While immigrants receive support to help them settle and succeed, they also encounter discrimination that affects their sense of belonging and their ability to fully integrate. These experiences show how personal adjustments and societal conditions interact, shaping the immigrant experience and the broader processes of inclusion and exclusion.

During this phase of my research, I found it challenging to fully capture the experiences of discrimination faced by the Iranian immigrant community. Several participants seemed hesitant to open up about these sensitive issues, likely due to concerns about the trust they felt towards me as a researcher. I also sensed that some feared that admitting to discrimination could somehow negatively impact their lives or their children's future, as they might have assumed I could report such information to immigration authorities. This lack of openness made it difficult for me to gain their full trust, underscoring the importance of building strong rapport in qualitative research, particularly when

dealing with sensitive topics like discrimination and integration challenges. More time and a deeper connection could have encouraged them to share more vulnerable aspects of their experiences.

2.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the multifaceted experiences of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, focusing on their complex process of home-making within a new cultural landscape. By integrating Mary Douglas's (1991) theoretical framework with the insights from Brun and Fabos(2015), I have examined how these individuals infuse their living spaces with both cultural and personal significance, transforming their homes into reflections of their hybrid identities.

Douglas's perspective on home-making emphasizes how domestic spaces become sites for negotiating and expressing cultural identity. In this context, Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands incorporate elements such as traditional decor, artifacts, and cultural rituals like *Shabe Yalda*, *Eide Nowruz*, and *Chaharshanbe Suri* into their homes. This practice not only preserves their cultural heritage but also adapts to their new environment by participating in Dutch festivities like Christmas and King's Day.

Incorporating insights from Brun and Fabos, this chapter has demonstrated that home-making extends beyond mere preservation of tradition. It involves a dynamic process of adaptation to new cultural norms and socio-political conditions. Their work underscores the tension between maintaining cultural heritage and integrating into Dutch society. This tension is reflected in how Iranian immigrants negotiate their identities through practical adjustments, such as using Dutch in daily life while striving to maintain cultural continuity. Ethnographic research has revealed that these practices of home-making are deeply influenced by the broader socio-political context of displacement and immigration. Observations of Iranian restaurants and personal anecdotes illustrate how immigrants adapt their practices, such as blending Iranian and Dutch food traditions and decorating their homes with a mix of cultural symbols. The integration of Iranian and Dutch cultural practices highlights the fluid and responsive nature of cultural identity in a diasporic context.

The chapter also addressed the diverse experiences within the Iranian immigrant community, from students to refugees, each navigating their integration into Dutch society in unique ways. These practices, including the adaptation of home spaces and the blending of cultural elements, demonstrate how Iranian immigrants negotiate their identities and find comfort in their new surroundings. Overall, this chapter underscores the importance of the home as both a personal sanctuary and a site of cultural continuity. It reveals the interplay of identity, belonging, and adaptation, illustrating how Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands construct their sense of home amidst the challenges of cultural integration and identity negotiation. This comprehensive approach enriches our understanding of home-making as a complex, adaptive process shaped by both personal choices and broader socio-political influences.

3. Chapter 3: Conclusion

3.1 Summary of findings

This thesis explores the integration journey of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, focusing on how their experiences are shaped by both the structural support provided by the host society and their individual resilience. Central to this analysis is the concept of "home-making," a process deeply influenced by the intersection of cultural identity, social integration, and the adaptation of traditional practices in a new environment. This study draws on empirical data to examine how different groups of Iranian immigrants navigate the complexities of integration, and how their strategies are informed by the specific support structures available to them.

3.1.1 The First Group: Overcoming Barriers to Integration

The first group of Iranian immigrants, who arrived in the Netherlands during earlier waves, faced significant challenges in establishing their new lives. As demonstrated by the empirical data, language barriers were a critical obstacle, severely limiting their ability to secure well-paying jobs and integrate fully into Dutch society. Many were forced into low-skilled jobs despite having qualifications from Iran, highlighting the disconnect between their skills and the opportunities available to them in the Netherlands. However, through persistent efforts to learn Dutch, they gradually improved their employment prospects, leading to higher levels of integration over time.

Food played a pivotal role in this group's integration process. On one hand, traditional Iranian cuisine provided a connection to their homeland, fostering a sense of identity and continuity. On the other, sharing these dishes with Dutch neighbours became a means of building social bridges, reducing cultural gaps, and facilitating social integration. This dual role of food is a key example of how cultural practices can serve both as a means of preserving identity and as a tool for integration.

Parenting practices in this group were heavily focused on education as a pathway to better opportunities, ensuring that their children could navigate Dutch society more successfully than they had. The home-making process was also central to their integration strategy, with many families incorporating traditional Iranian elements into their homes, such as Persian rugs and artwork. Over time, these homes evolved to include Dutch design elements, symbolizing their gradual integration and the blending of their Iranian heritage with their new Dutch reality. This group's resilience and adaptability, as seen through these efforts, enabled them to establish a strong sense of belonging in the Netherlands, despite the significant challenges they faced.

3.1.2 The Second Group: The Impact of Structured Support

The second group, arriving under different circumstances, benefited from more organized support systems provided by the Dutch government, including access to housing, language classes, and social services. This group's experiences highlight the importance of engaging with key dimensions such as language, foodways, parenting, and material culture in the integration process.

Within this group, two distinct subgroups emerged. The first subgroup actively pursued education and employment, which led to successful integration. Their proactive approach to learning Dutch and adapting their traditional culinary practices not only facilitated career advancement but also helped bridge cultural divides, fostering strong connections with both the Iranian diaspora and the broader

Dutch community. Their homes, where Iranian heritage and Dutch modernity coexisted, became a reflection of their adaptability and successful integration.

In contrast, the second subgroup struggled with language acquisition and remained more isolated. This isolation was compounded by perceived discrimination, which they felt constrained their opportunities for improvement and integration. The challenges faced by this subgroup underscore the varying impacts of structural support and individual engagement in the integration process. These experiences reveal that while structured support is crucial, the level of individual engagement with these resources plays a significant role in determining integration outcomes.

3.1.3 The Third Group: Comprehensive Support and Strategic Integration

The third group of Iranian immigrants received the most comprehensive support from the Dutch government, including free language classes, immediate residence permits, tailored employment opportunities, and suitable housing. These resources enabled them to integrate into Dutch society more quickly and effectively than the other groups.

Proficiency in Dutch was a significant factor in their integration, opening up a wide range of employment opportunities and facilitating social interactions that reduced experiences of discrimination. The empirical data shows that this group's engagement in cultural exchanges, particularly through foodways, played a central role in their social integration. By introducing Dutch elements into their traditional Iranian diets and sharing meals with their Dutch neighbours, they were able to build strong community ties and foster mutual respect.

Parenting practices in this group were guided by Bahá'í values of equality and community service, which emphasized education and cultural adaptation. This approach not only helped their children succeed academically and socially but also reinforced the group's overall integration into Dutch society. The decision to settle in Almere, provided a strong support network that allowed them to maintain their cultural practices while actively engaging with the local community. The success of this group's integration can be attributed to the comprehensive support they received, their proactive engagement with the four key dimensions of integration, and their strategic settlement in Almere. Their Bahá'í identity, emphasis on gender equality, and commitment to both cultural retention and adaptation were significant factors in their ability to thrive in their new environment.

Across all three groups, food and culinary practices emerged as crucial tools for maintaining cultural identity and fostering a sense of "home" in a new cultural setting. Traditional Iranian dishes like *ghormeh sabzi* and *kebabs* connected these immigrants to their heritage while also serving as a means of social integration, particularly through shared meals with Dutch neighbours during cultural celebrations such as Nowruz and Yalda. These practices were instrumental in breaking down cultural barriers and building mutual respect, contributing to stronger community ties.

Language and cultural transmission varied across the groups, with many families prioritizing Dutch to meet economic and social needs, sometimes at the expense of Persian. In households where Persian was actively spoken, it served as a vital link to cultural roots, though its limited practical utility in the Netherlands often made it a secondary priority. Parenting practices reflected a blend of Iranian and Dutch influences, with varying degrees of success depending on the parents' level of integration. Those who balanced traditional practices with contemporary expectations provided their children with a more integrated identity, enabling them to confidently navigate both Iranian and Dutch cultural landscapes.

Home-making was central to the integration process, with Iranian households creating a sense of "home" by incorporating Iranian cultural values alongside Dutch elements. This hybrid living

environment not only reflected their cultural past but also allowed them to adapt to their new reality, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity in their adopted country.

Iranian parents in the Netherlands navigate the transmission of cultural values, traditions, and heritage to their children by blending Iranian and Dutch influences within their families. They work to preserve their cultural identity by integrating Iranian customs, values, and artifacts into their daily lives, while simultaneously adapting to Dutch societal norms, such as individual autonomy and directness. This dual approach involves teaching their children the importance of respecting their Iranian heritage while also encouraging them to embrace the new cultural values of their host country. However, the degree to which this balance is achieved varies among different groups of Iranian migrants. For instance, parents who fled Iran post-1979 and struggled to learn Dutch, often relying on unemployment benefits, may face greater challenges in transmitting these cultural values effectively. Their children might experience a different form of cultural adaptation, potentially focusing more on survival and less on cultural continuity. In contrast, those parents who learned Dutch and secured stable employment are generally more successful in balancing traditional practices with contemporary expectations. This enables their children to thrive in a multicultural environment while maintaining a strong connection to their Iranian roots. This variation in experiences highlights the complex ways in which Iranian parents manage the cultural integration of their children, with outcomes that depend significantly on the parents' socio-economic status, level of integration, and engagement with both Iranian and Dutch cultural practices.

By examining the integration experiences of these three groups, this thesis highlights the complex interplay between structural support, cultural practices, and individual agency in the integration of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands. The findings underscore the importance of both external support systems and internal resilience in navigating the integration process. Using anthropological theories, such as Mary Douglas's concept of home-making, this study interprets how Iranian immigrants create and maintain a sense of "home" in a foreign land. The varied outcomes across the three groups illustrate that successful integration is not solely dependent on the availability of resources but also on the degree to which immigrants engage with and adapt to key dimensions such as language, foodways, parenting, and material culture.

3.2 Theoretical Implications

This study explores the integration and home-making practices of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, providing insights into how these practices are shaped by cultural identity, adaptation, and the structural support from the host society. By engaging with the work of scholars like Mary Douglas, Pels et al., Fabos, and Brun, this research adds to our understanding of how immigrants navigate the complexities of settling in a new environment.

Home-Making and Cultural Identity: Mary Douglas's concept of home as a meaningful space is particularly relevant in understanding how Iranian immigrants create a sense of belonging in the Netherlands. The study shows that these immigrants use traditional Iranian artifacts and customs within their homes to maintain a connection to their heritage. However, it also highlights that home-making is not a static process. Many Iranian families adapt their living spaces by incorporating Dutch elements, creating a hybrid environment that reflects both their cultural roots and their new life in the Netherlands. This suggests that home-making involves an ongoing negotiation between preserving cultural identity and adapting to new surroundings.

Language as a Cultural Conduit: Language plays a crucial role in the integration process, as Pels et al. have emphasized. This research confirms that while many Iranian immigrants prioritize learning Dutch to improve their economic and social prospects, Persian remains important for maintaining

cultural ties. However, the study also notes that Persian often becomes less emphasized, especially among younger generations, due to its limited use in daily life in the Netherlands. This highlights the tension between the need to integrate into Dutch society and the desire to preserve cultural heritage through language.

Foodways and Social Integration: Fabos and Brun's framework on home-making, which includes physical, emotional, and societal aspects, helps explain the role of foodways in this study. My findings show that traditional Iranian dishes are more than just meals; they are a way for immigrants to maintain cultural continuity and to build connections with their Dutch neighbours. Sharing food during cultural celebrations, such as *Nowruz* and *Yalda*, helps to foster mutual respect and understanding. This supports the idea that foodways are a dynamic part of the home-making process, contributing to both cultural preservation and social integration.

Parenting and Cultural Adaptation: This study provides additional insights into how Iranian parents in the Netherlands transmit cultural values to their children. Many parents strive to balance the preservation of Iranian traditions with the need to adapt to Dutch norms. The success of these efforts varies, influenced by factors like socio-economic status and language proficiency. This aligns with existing research that highlights the challenges of cultural transmission in immigrant families and adds depth to our understanding of how these processes unfold in a multicultural context.

The way Iranian immigrants blend Iranian and Dutch elements in their homes offers a perspective on how material culture influences identity. While traditional Iranian items help maintain a connection to the past, the inclusion of Dutch design elements shows an adaptation to their new environment. This blending of cultures in the home reflects the creation of a hybrid identity, where immigrants navigate between maintaining their cultural heritage and embracing their new life in the Netherlands. The findings of this study contribute to our understanding of how Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands navigate the challenges of integration while maintaining their cultural identity. By applying theoretical perspectives from scholars like Mary Douglas, Pels et al., Fabos, and Brun, this research provides a view of how home-making, language, foodways, parenting, and material culture play essential roles in the integration process. This study shows that integration involves both preserving cultural practices and adapting to new circumstances, offering valuable insights that are relevant not only to Iranian immigrants but also to other immigrant communities.

3.3. Limitations of the Study

In conducting this study, I encountered several limitations that are important to acknowledge. First, the political climate surrounding the Iranian diaspora, particularly after the Mahsa Amini protests, created a tense environment for my research. Many Iranian immigrants were understandably cautious and wary of sharing their experiences openly, fearing potential surveillance or being labeled as informants. This atmosphere of distrust likely influenced the depth of information that participants were willing to disclose, especially on sensitive topics related to their migration and integration.

Another significant limitation was my difficulty in accessing certain groups of participants due to geographic and financial constraints. Although I identified potential participants who lived in cities far from my location, the cost of travel, which would have been at least 35 euros per trip, made it impractical for me to visit them in person. Additionally, many of these individuals were not comfortable with or proficient in using digital communication tools, which further hindered my ability to connect with them remotely. As a result, I had to exclude these groups from my study, which may have limited the diversity of perspectives represented in my findings. If I had financial support for fieldwork, it would have significantly enhanced the breadth and depth of the data I was able to gather.

Another challenge I faced was the fact that I was a newcomer to the Netherlands myself, which meant I lacked an established network within the Iranian community. This lack of familiarity made it difficult to gain the trust of potential participants. Some even suspected that I might be a spy for the Iranian regime, leading to a number of rejected interview requests. This suspicion undoubtedly limited the number of participants who were willing to engage with my research, potentially affecting the range of experiences and insights I was able to capture.

Lastly, I recognize that this study captures only a snapshot in time of an evolving community. The ongoing political instability in Iran continues to drive emigration, and the experiences of these newer immigrants may differ significantly from those of earlier waves. This dynamic nature of the Iranian diaspora suggests that further research will be necessary to fully understand how these changes impact the home-making practices and cultural adaptation of Iranians in the Netherlands over time.

3.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The migration experience often triggers shifts in traditional gender roles, and this is particularly relevant for Iranian immigrant families in the Netherlands. Iranian norms around gender and family structure may come into conflict with Dutch societal expectations, leading to changes in household dynamics, parenting practices, and individual roles within the family. These shifts can have profound effects on family cohesion, identity, and the integration process. Understanding how gender roles evolve after immigration and how Iranian families negotiate these changes can provide important insights into the broader integration experience, highlighting the intersection of culture, gender, and adaptation in a new societal context.

The political landscape in Iran, particularly events like the Mahsa Amini protests, has not only captured global attention but also deeply influenced the Iranian diaspora's experience of home-making in the Netherlands. These political developments have profound implications for how Iranian immigrants perceive their sense of belonging, both within the Dutch society and in relation to their homeland. There is a pressing need to explore how these events affect the ways in which Iranians create and maintain their homes abroad, especially in terms of cultural retention, identity formation, and emotional ties to Iran. Understanding how political unrest shapes the narratives and practices of home-making among the Iranian diaspora could provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of their identity and the complexities of maintaining a sense of home in exile. This research could also shed light on the role of transnational activism and how it influences or disrupts the traditional notions of home and belonging among Iranian immigrants.

The integration of second and third-generation Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands presents a complex and evolving issue that warrants further exploration. While first-generation immigrants often grapple with maintaining their cultural identity while integrating into Dutch society, subsequent generations face different challenges. These younger generations, having been raised in the Netherlands, may experience a dilution of their Iranian heritage as they become more embedded in Dutch culture. This raises critical questions about cultural retention, language use, and identity formation. Understanding how these generations navigate their dual identities and the factors that influence their cultural connections is crucial for gaining a comprehensive picture of the long-term integration of the Iranian community in the Netherlands.

3.5 Conclusion

In this thesis, I explored the integration experiences of Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands, focusing on how they manage their cultural identity, social integration, and adaptation of traditional

practices in a new environment. By examining the experiences of three different groups, I aimed to understand how these immigrants create a sense of "home" and how their integration is influenced by both the support they receive and their own efforts.

The findings from my research emphasize the role of external support systems, such as government-provided housing and language classes, alongside the personal efforts made by the immigrants themselves. Throughout this study, I found that home-making is an ongoing process that involves balancing the preservation of cultural identity with the need to adapt to new surroundings. The way Iranian families integrate their cultural practices with Dutch elements in their homes, manage the use of Persian and Dutch languages, and maintain traditional foodways reflects this continuous process of integration.

In conclusion, this thesis has provided an examination of how Iranian immigrants in the Netherlands navigate the challenges of integration while maintaining their cultural identity. By focusing on home-making and applying relevant anthropological theories, I hope this research offers useful insights that contribute to a better understanding of immigrant integration, particularly for the Iranian community and others facing similar challenges.

References

- 1- Anderson, J. A. (1971). Scholarship on contemporary American folk foodways. *Ethnologia Europaea* 5(57).
- 2- Atkinson, R. (2002). Life Story Interview. In J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein (Eds.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context & Method* (pp. 121-140). Sage Publications.
- 3- Azadi, P., M. Mirramezani, and M.B. Mesgaran. (2020). Migration and Brain Drain from Iran. Stanford Iran 2040 Project.
- 4- Bourdieu, P. (1991). *Language and Symbolic Power*. Harvard University Press.
- 5- Bourdieu, P. (2013). *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511812507>.
- 6- Bozogmehr, M., and D. Douglas. (2011). "Success(ion): Second-Generation Iranian Americans." *Iranian Studies* 44 (1): 3–24.
- 7- Brun, C., & A. Fábos (2015) "Making homes in limbo? A conceptual framework", *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees* 31/1: 5-17.
- 8- Bryman A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- 9- Cohen, R.A., Yefet, B. (2019). "The Iranian diaspora and the homeland: redefining the role of a center", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2019.1605893
- 10- Crang, M. (2000). Picturing practices: Research through the tourist gaze. In P. Boyle, M. Crang, & M. Domosh (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of cultural geography*: 247-262.
- 11- De Valk, H., Liefbroer, A. C., Esveldt, I., & Henkens, K. (2004). Family formation and cultural integration among migrants in the Netherlands. *Genus*, 60(3/4), 9-35.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/29788822>
- 12- Douglas, Mary.(1991) "The Idea of a Home: A Kind of Space." *Social Research*, vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 287-307.
- 13- Fishman, J. A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages*. Multilingual Matters.
- 14- Gabaccia, D. R. (2009). *We are what we eat: Ethnic food and the making of Americans*. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press.
- 15- Gharibi, K., & Seals, C. A. (2019). Heritage language maintenance and loss in Iranian immigrant families. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 40(6), 499-512.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2019.1585868>
- 16- Gholami, R. (2014). "Is This Islamic Enough?" Intra-Diasporic Secularism and Religious Experience in the Shi'a Iranian Diaspora in London." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 40 (1): 6–78.
- 17- Ghorashi, H. (2003). Multiple Identities between continuity and change the narratives of Iranian women in Exile. *Focaal*, 42, 63-75.
- 18- Ghorashi, H. (2018). "Challenges of integration and belonging: Iranians in the Netherlands." In M. Mostafavi Mobasher (Ed.), *The Iranian Diaspora: Challenges, Negotiations, and Transformations* (pp. 74-92). University of Texas Press.
- 19- Grosjean, F. (2010). *Bilingualism: A psycholinguistic approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- 20- Hannerz, U. (1992). *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*. Columbia University Press.
- 21- Holtzman, J. D. (2006). Food and memory. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 35, 361-378.
- 22- Horst, Heather A. "Reclaiming Place: The Architecture of Home, Family and Migration." *Anthropologica*, vol. 53, no. 1, 2011, pp. 29-39.

- 23- Hulsen, M., de Bot, K., & Weltens, B. (2002). "Between two worlds. Social networks, language shift, and language processing in three generations of Dutch migrants in New Zealand." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 153, 27-52.
- 24- Karim, P. M. (2013). "Guest Editor's Introduction Iranian Diaspora Studies." *Iranian Studies* 46 (1): 49-52.
- 25- Khosravi, S. (2017). "A Fragmented Diaspora: Iranian in Sweden." *Nordic Journal of Migration Research* 8 (2): 73–81.
- 26- McAuliffe, C. (2016). "Unsettling the Iranian Diaspora: Nation, Religion and the Conditions of Exile." In *Identity and Exile: The Iranian Diaspora between Solidarity and Difference*, edited by R. Mohabbat-Kar, Heinrich Böll Foundation. Berlin: 32–46.
- 27- Meeteren, M.V., Pol, S.V., Dekker, R., Engbersen, G., & Snel, E. (2013). "Destination Netherlands: history of immigration and immigration policy in the Netherlands." In *Immigrants: Acculturation, Socioeconomic Challenges and Cultural Psychology*; Ho, J., Ed.; Nova Science Publishers: New York, NY, USA, 2013; pp. 113–170.
- 28- Metcalf, B. D. (1996). *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe*. University of California Press.
- 29- Modarresi, Yahya. (2001) "The Iranian Community in the United States and the Maintenance of Persian." In *Language Maintenance and Shift in the Iranian Community in the United States*.
- 30- Parsai, M., Nieri, T., & Villar, P. (2010). *Away From Home: Paradoxes of Parenting for Mexican Immigrant Adults*. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 91(2), 201-208.
- 31- Pels, Peter, Jasmijn Rana, Simay Çetin and Willem van Wijk (2022) *At Home Otherwise*. Research Proposal for NWO Open Competitie. Leiden: Unpublished.
- 32- Piller, I. (2001). Identity and language use: The politics of speaking English in the multilingual world. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 2001(148), 87-103. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2001.024>
- 33- Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (2001). *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. University of California Press.
- 34- Sayadabdi, A., & Howland, P. J. (2021). Foodways, Iranianness, and National Identity Habitus: The Iranian diaspora in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Food and Foodways*, 29(4), 331-354.
- 35- Van den Tillaart, H., Oide Monnikhof, M., van den Berg, S., & Warmerdam, J. (2000). *Nieuwe etnische groepen in Nederland: een onderzoek naar vluchtelingen en statushouders uit Afghanistan, Ethiopif, Eritrea, Iran, Somalif en Vietnam*. Ubbergen: Tandem Felix.