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ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF EXILES DIFFERENT FROM IMMIGRANTS?  
THE CASE OF IRANIANS IN LOS ANGELES 1

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## About the Author.

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## INTRODUCTION

The large influx of Iranians into Los Angeles since the second half of the 1970s has added a sizeable and distinctive minority to the population of this metropolitan area. According to the 1980 U.S. Census, about a quarter of the nation's Iranian population resided in Los Angeles,<sup>2</sup> making it the largest single concentration of Iranians in the United States. In spite of the rapid growth of the Iranian population in Los Angeles and the U.S., published material on this immigrant group is meager (Ansari 1977; Askari et al. 1977; Gilanshah 1986; Iran Times 1983, 1984; Lorentz and Wertime 1980; Momeni 1984; Moslehi 1984).

One of the distinctive features of Iranian immigration to the United States and Los Angeles is that it occurred before and after a revolution that altered substantially

social and political conditions in Iran. It may be argued that these two groups of immigrants had very different motives for leaving their country, thus resulting in different statistical profiles for each group. The later wave must have included a substantial number of political refugees and exiles as contrasted to the earlier wave of students and economically motivated immigrants. While Iranians who arrived in the U.S. after the Iranian revolution were not officially admitted as "parolees" or refugees, the lives and welfare of many of them were affected just as adversely as the well being of the official refugees from Cuba or Vietnam. Therefore, the status of Iranian exiles has a sociological rather than a legal or political basis (Suhrke 1983).

The main objective of this paper is to use the Iranian case to test three hypotheses about the demographic, religious, and socioeconomic differences between immigrants and political refugees or exiles, which are commonly found in the literature. These hypotheses will be tested by using data from the 1980 U.S. Census Public Use Microdata Sample for the 1975-80 and the pre-1975 Iranian immigrant cohorts. While the pre-1975 cohort includes mainly Iranians who came to the United States for study, for a visit, or for work, the 1975-80 cohort is made up of these types of immigrants as well as exiles or political refugees who fled Iran after the 1978 revolution. Of course, if census data were available by single year of immigration, we would have selected instead the post-revolution period of 1978-80 and the pre-revolution years prior to 1978. Nevertheless, because the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) data indicate that over half of Iranian arrivals during 1975-80 occurred after the revolution, it may be assumed that half of this recent cohort is made up of exiles or political refugees.

The differences in the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of economic immigrants and political refugees or exiles have been discussed or documented in a number of studies (Bernard 1976; Fagen et al. 1968; Gaertner 1955; Nelson and Tienda 1985; Pedraza-Bailey 1985; Portes and Bach 1985; Rogg 1974). As stated by Portes and Bach (1985:73), "refugees have been described as internally homogeneous groups, since reasons for their flight are often linked to a common class origin, religion, or political ideology." While an exile or refugee migration stream may be selective of only one religious, ethnic, or political group, within that group we expect to find little selectivity demographically and socioeconomically. In other words, even though a refugee stream as whole is homogeneous with respect to a given group, within that group we expect heterogeneity. This does not constitute a contradiction in empirical findings, as Portes and Bach (1985) appear to argue.

Our first hypothesis is that the 1975-80 immigrants include a higher proportion of religious minorities than the pre-1975 immigrants. It is in accordance with Kunz' (1973:139) hypothesis that in "all mass flights ethnic or other religious minorities participate beyond their demographic proportions." Consequently, the comparisons between cohorts should take into account the ethno-religious identity of the immigrants. In view of the radical Islamic nature of the Iranian revolution, political refugees and exiles must have comprised not only Muslim Iranians who opposed the new regime but also a large number of non-Muslim religious minorities who feared persecution. This pattern of selective immigration could not have occurred prior to the revolution.

Within religious minorities that are forced into exile from a country, we would expect little demographic selectivity (Bernard 1976). Therefore, it is likely, therefore, that a refugee stream that comprises religious minorities will also be characterized by a balanced demographic structure. Consequently, our second hypothesis is that the 1975-1980 cohort, composed of a large number of refugees, is much more balanced with respect to age and sex distribution than the pre-1975 cohort. This hypothesis pertains to the whole immigration cohort as well as to ethno-religious groups within it.

Despite their diversity in social class origin, early waves of exiles have higher socioeconomic status than immigrants (Fagen et al. 1968; Gaertner 1955; Peterson 1978; Rogg 1974, Stein 1981). This pattern is difficult to ascertain because its components need to be disentangled. The use of occupation and income of exiles in the receiving country is problematic because it is affected by the migration experience. In view of the involuntary migration of exiles and, in some cases, the problem of compatibility of their skills to the country of destination, they initially experience downward mobility (Briggs 1984; Chiswick 1979; Stein 1979). Thus, data on occupation and income of exiles in the receiving country may not accurately reflect their occupational selectivity. Using educational attainment as a proxy for social class, however, Pedraza-Bailey (1985) shows that the Cuban exiles who immigrated during 1960-1970 had a higher social class origin than the Cuban immigrants who came to the U.S. in the 1945-1959 period or before

the Cuban revolution. Thus, our third hypothesis is that Iranians who arrived in 1975-80 had a higher socioeconomic achievement than those who came before that date. This hypothesis will be tested mainly by considering educational achievement. Indirect evidence pertaining to this hypothesis, however, may be provided by an analysis of U.S. Census data on occupation and income.

The analysis of data from the 1980 U.S. Census on immigration cohorts will be preceded by a brief review of trends and types of Iranian immigration to the United States as documented by tabulations from the INS. While these tabulations pertain only to the United States, they also reflect immigration trends to Los Angeles, since this metropolitan area is the favored destination of Iranian immigrants to the United States.

#### Iranian Immigration Cohorts to the United States, 1950-1980

Iranian immigration to the United States is essentially a post-World War II phenomenon which can be divided into two chronological phases or cohorts: 1) after World War II until the Iranian revolution (1950-1977); and 2) during and after the Iranian revolution until the census year (1978-1980). According to INS data, during the first phase (1950-1977), an average annual of 1,515 immigrants and 17,001 nonimmigrants from Iran were admitted to the United States (Table 1). Data on nonimmigrants provide information about visitors and students, both common types of international migration from Iran to the United States. This phase of Iranian emigration was triggered by Iran's gradually recovering economy after World War II as its oil production and revenues resumed. It coincided with the beginning of a period of direct U.S. influence in Iran. Towards the end of this period (1974-1977), the explosion of oil revenues enabled many Iranians to come to the United States, particularly as visitors and students.

The short second phase of Iranian immigration (1978-1980) can be distinguished from the first phase in terms of both its increasing volume and the motives for emigration. The number of Iranian nonimmigrants increased sharply to an annual average of 112,205 during the one and three quarter years for which INS data on nonimmigrants are available between 1978 and 1980 (Table 1). The upward trend in Iranian arrivals to the United States after 1978 suggests that after the revolution they included a substantial proportion of exiles and refugees.

The number of Iranian immigrants, excluding those with visitor or student visas, increased to an annual average of 8,249 (Table 1). Much of this growth, however, was due to adjustment in status from nonimmigrant to immigrant, particularly in the year 1980. These conversions reflect the major mode of resident status attainment among Iranians; i.e., to enter as nonimmigrants (mostly visitors and students) and subsequently to adjust to immigrant status. Adjustment to immigrant status signifies a desire to settle in the United States among persons who first arrived as visitors or students.

Table 1. Iranian Immigrants and Nonimmigrants Admitted to the United States, 1950-1980.

Year(a)	Immigrants Admitted	Nonimmigrants Admitted
1950	245	644
1951	237	826
1952	223	804
1953	160	839
1954	249	871
1955	219	1,113
1956	227	1,417
1957	328	1,723
1958	433	2,595
1959	409	3,351
1960	429	3,705
1961	471	3,426
1962	601	3,614
1963	705	4,685
1964	754	5,808
1965	804	5,954
1966	1,085	5,796
1967	1,414	6,421
1968	1,280	9,533
1969	1,352	11,237
1970	1,825	14,475
1971	2,411	14,927
1972	3,059	18,238
1973	2,998	22,561
1974	2,608	30,164
1975	2,337	35,088
1976	2,700	54,230
TQ1976(b)	1,031	28,964
1977	4,261	98,018
1978	5,861	130,545
1979	8,476	65,813(c)
1980	10,410	NA(d)

Annual Averages

1950-1977	1,515	17,001
1978-1980	8,249	112,205(e)

Notes: (a) Fiscal definition shifted after 1977 from year ended June 30 to year ended September 30.

(b) TQ = transition quarter July-September.

(c) Excludes the fourth quarter of fiscal year for which data were not available.

(d) NA = not available.

(e) For October 1, 1977-December 31, 1979.

Sources: Immigration and Naturalization Service (1958-1977,1978-1980).

Assessment of the 1980 U.S. Census Data on Iranians in Los Angeles

There is a wide variation in the estimates of the Iranian population in Los Angeles-Long Beach SNSA, which contains 82 percent of Iranians in the five counties (Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino and Riverside) included in the present analysis. The 1980 U.S. Census reported 25,510 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1983:Table 195). Time (1983:22) claimed 200,000, and ranked Iranians as the second largest ethnic minority in Los Angeles, Mexicans being the first. Time's source for this excessive

estimate is unknown, thus reducing its reliability. On the other hand, it is very likely that the 1980 U.S. Census undercounted Iranians. First, the census enumeration took place during the Iranian "hostage crisis." Under those circumstances, many Iranians may have disguised their national origin in the Census questionnaire for fear of hostility and deportation. Refusal or disguise was probably most common among Iranians who were in violation of their visas at the time. According to INS, 1,203 Iranians were deported for visa violations in the fiscal year 1979-80, which was the largest number of deportees for any immigrant group in that year (INS 1980:Table 39). Second, many non-Muslim Iranians (especially Armenians and Assyrians), may have only reported their ancestry rather than place of birth or Iranian origin in the U.S. Census, thus reducing the number of Iranians enumerated. However, in spite of its limitations, the 1980 U.S. Census is the only source of systematic demographic and socioeconomic data on Iranians in the United States.

Another feature of Iranians is the presence of a large number of students. In 1980, 29 percent of Iranians in Los Angeles were students.<sup>4</sup> Census data on the characteristics of Iranian students and non-students 20 years and older indicate that despite their relatively younger age, students have a higher educational level than non-students. Students also are more fluent in English. Not surprisingly, Iranian students do not do as well economically as non-students. The former show lower labor force participation with smaller proportions holding high status jobs. These factors combined with working fewer weeks per year and a lower self-employment rate result in about half as much earnings for students than non-students (around \$9,000 as compared to \$17,000 during 1979). Therefore, the inclusion of students with non-students in any analysis of Iranians distorts the statistical profile of this minority. It leads to younger age distribution, greater knowledge of English, less reliance on self-employment, lower occupational profile, and markedly lower levels of income.

Iranians in Los Angeles are composed of several distinctive ethno-religious sub-groups, such as Muslim, Bahai, Jewish, Zoroastrian, Armenian and Assyrian. Compared to their population size in Iran, non-Muslim religious minorities appear to be over represented among Iranians in this metropolitan area. Unfortunately, since the U.S. Census has no questions on religion and the tabulations of the 1980 Census question on ancestry explicitly excluded religion, it is impossible to identify all of these sub-ethnic groups in the 1980 U.S. Census. Only a non-governmental sample survey could do so. Nevertheless, the new question on ancestry, introduced for the first time in the 1980 Census, makes it possible to identify persons of Armenian ancestry and classify Iranians into two sub-groups: Armenians and non-Armenians. The latter sub-group is, of course, heterogeneous and includes all the other ethno-religious groups mentioned above. Although the ancestry question also allows us to identify other sub-ethnic groups such as Assyrians, Kurds and Turks, these ethnic groups are included in the non-Armenian category because they are too small to warrant a separate analysis.

#### Minority, Demographic, and Educational Characteristics of Immigration Cohorts

Data from the 1980 U.S. Census allow us to test the three hypotheses about the differences between minority, demographic, and educational characteristics of the pre-1975 and the 1975-80 non-student immigration cohorts.

There appear to be proportionately more minorities in the 1975-80 than the pre-1975 cohort. While the percentage of Armenians increased only from 24.4 in the pre-1975 cohort to 28.8 in 1975-80 cohort, this increase was statistically significant at the 5 percent level (calculated from Table 3). If the census data had also enabled us to identify Iranian Jews and Bahais, there would have been a much greater increase in the minority composition of these two immigration cohorts. Thus there is clear support for the first hypothesis.

Tables 2 and 3 provide support for the second hypothesis as it applies to all refugees as well to specific religious minorities within the refugee stream. For all non-students, the sex ratio drops sharply from 153 for the pre-1975 cohort to 97 in 1975-80 (calculated from data given in Table 2), thus suggesting that Iranian exiles tend to have a more balanced sex distribution than other immigrants. Also, both men and women who arrived in 1975-80 were not only younger on the average than those who came before 1975 but had also a more balanced (or heterogeneous) age distribution as measured by the standard deviation. The increase in the standard deviation of age between the earlier and later cohorts, however, is only statistically significant for men.

Since there are marked differences between Armenians and non-Armenians, the contrast between pre-1975 and 1975-80 immigrants within these sub-groups should be even greater than for all Iranians. Among non-Armenians, the 1975-80 migration cohort is much more balanced in terms of sex ratio and age than the earlier cohort, thus suggesting less migration selectivity for the more recent migrants. The sex ratio dropped sharply from 193 to 95 men per 100 women, and the mean age decreased from 39.2 to 35.8 years (Table 3). What is more significant, however, is that the standard deviation of age increased markedly from 11.0 to 16.5. It is clear that, among non-Armenians, the cohort with the large number of refugees was much more balanced demographically than the pre-1975 immigrants. Among Armenians, the demographic differentials between cohorts are similar to those for non-Armenians, but are surprisingly much less marked. It should be noted, however, that the sample for Armenians who arrived before 1975 is small. While these results are consistent with the second hypothesis, they fail to suggest a higher demographic heterogeneity among minority than non-minority refugees or exiles. But, as pointed out earlier, the non-Armenian category itself includes religious minorities.

One interpretation of these findings is that, over time, all immigrant streams become more balanced demographically because of family reunification. But, family reunification assumes that immigrants have acquired citizenship. It appears that this interpretation does not apply to Iranian immigrants,

Table 2. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Iranians who immigrated in 1975-80 and those who immigrated before 1975, male and female non-students, Los Angeles, 1980.

Characteristics	Male Non-students		Sig. of Diff.	Female Non-students		Sig. of Diff.
	1975-80	Immigrated Before 1975		1975-80	Immigrated Before 1975	
Mean age	38.1	39.0(a)	NS	36.3	43.5(a)	S**
Standard deviation	18.0	11.0	S**	15.4	14.0	NS
Percent who know English						
well or very well	70.2	94.4	NS	59.7	67.2	NS
Mean years of education	14.3	18.1	S**	12.9	14.9	S**
Percent with four or more years college	43.3	80.0	S**	26.7	43.0	S**
Percent in labor force	54.6	87.8	S**	19.8	42.1	S**
Percent in top white collar occupations	28.5	53.7	S**	9.1	18.7	S*
Occupational Prestige Score(1)	213	201	NS	100	187	S**
N	(298)	(164)		(307)	(107)	
Weeks worked in 1979	37	45	S**	35	39	NS
N	(157)	(143)		(54)	(45)	
Percent self employed (including unpaid family work)	34.0	27.9	NS	11.3	8.3	NS
N	(215)	(174)		(97)	(60)	
Mean income from all sources 1979	\$17,264	\$25,629	S**	\$ 7,627	\$ 9,442	NS
N	(203)	(153)		(97)	(65)	
Mean wage or salary income 1979	\$15,604	\$23,676	S**	\$ 5,858	\$11,299	S**
N	(125)	(123)		(51)	(42)	
Mean interest or net rental income	\$ 8,940	\$ 2,892	S**	\$ 7,212	\$ 1,638	S*
N	(70)	(61)		(35)	(16)	

Notes: (1) The lower the score, the higher the occupational prestige.

(a) These figures are for age in 1980. The age at emigration is substantially lower for this cohort

S\* Differences significant at the .05 level.

S\*\* Differences significant at the .01 level.

Source: Public Use Microdata Sample from the 1980 U.S. Census.



Table 3. Demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Iranians who immigrated in 1975-80 and those who immigrated before 1975, Armenian and Non-Armenian non-students, Los Angeles, 1980.

Characteristics	Armenian Non-students			Non-Armenian(1) Non-students		
	Immigrated 1975-80	Before 1975	Sig. of Diff.	Immigrated 1975-80	Before 1975	Sig. of Diff.
Males and females						
N	(174)	(66)		{431}	(205)	
Percent male	50.6	43.9	NS	48.7	65.9	S**
Mean age	40.6	45.8(a)	NS	35.8	39.2(a)	S*
Standard deviation	16.9	15.1	NS	16.5	11.0	S**
Percent who know English not well or not at all	37.3	20.0	S**	34.0	9.4	S**
Percent with four or more years of college	24.2	33.2	S*	39.2	68.4	S**
Males						
N	(88)	(29)		(210)	(135)	
Mean years of education	13.6	17.1	S**	14.6	18.3	S**
Percent in labor force	51.9	79.3	S**	55.8	89.6	S**
Percent occupational distribution						
Admin., managerial and professional	22.7	51.8	S*	46.9	58.7	S*
Tech. and sales	19.7	22.2	NS	22.1	16.7	NS
Clerical	16.7	3.7	NS	4.0	4.0	NS
Service	3.0	3.7	NS	2.7	6.3	NS
Craft, operatives and laborers	37.9	18.2	S*	24.2	14.3	S*
Percent self-employed (including unpaid family work)						
	33.3	25.0	NS	34.2	28.6	NS
N	(66)	(28)		(149)	(126)	
Mean family income 1979	\$19,402	\$35,965	S**	\$24,536	\$32,196	S**
N	(69)	(27)		(159)	(101)	
Mean income from all sources 1979	\$14,180	\$24,486	S**	\$18,620	\$25,885	S**
N	(62)	(28)		(141)	(125)	
Mean wage or salary income 1979	\$ 9,373	\$20,200	S**	\$17,932	\$24,351	S**
N	(34)	(20)		(91)	(103)	
Mean interest or net rental income	\$12,970	\$ 3,470	S**	\$ 7,328	\$ 2,778	S*
N	(20)	(10)		(50)	(51)	

Notes: (1) Includes Assyrians, Bahais, Jews, Kurds, Muslims, Turks, and Zoroastrians.

These figures are for age in 1980. The age at migration is substantially lower for this cohort.

S\* Differences significant at the .05 level.

S\*\* Differences significant at the .01 level.

Source: See Table 2.

since only 10 percent of all persons born in Iran and residing in Los Angeles had been naturalized by 1980.

Using educational achievement as a proxy for socioeconomic achievement, the evidence given in Tables 2 and 3 clearly contradicts the third hypothesis. Between the pre-1975 and the 1975-80 cohorts, the mean years of education decreased from 18.1 to 14.3 for men and from 14.9 to 12.9 for women. This decline in educational level is statistically significant for both men and women.

For both Armenians and non-Armenians, there is a noticeable decline in educational achievement between the two migration cohorts. For the larger group of non-Armenians, the percent with "five or more years of college" decreased markedly from 64.0 to 36.2 in the same period (Table 3). Similar differences were observed for Armenians. These findings indicate that those who arrived in 1975-80 included more elements of Iran's population such as women and older persons who were less likely to have a graduate school education. It may be noted that the lower levels of education of the 1975-80 cohort was accompanied by a lesser knowledge of English. Thus, for non-Armenians, the percentage "knowing English not well or not at all" increased drastically from 9.4 in pre-1975 to 34.0 in 1975-80 periods (Table 3). This pattern may be indicative of either a lower socioeconomic status or lesser acculturation of the 1975-80 cohort. Nevertheless, Iranian migrants as a whole probably have a better command of English and more education than most other immigrants in Los Angeles. For example, 34.2 percent of Iranians completed more than four years of college compared to 30.2 percent for foreign-born Koreans, a highly educated immigrant group. Furthermore, 10.7 percent of Iranians had little or no knowledge of English, a level much lower than the comparable figure of 39.2 for Koreans.

While the findings on education contradict our third hypothesis, they undoubtedly reflect the fact that education increases with duration of residence in the United States. Also, the pre-1975 cohort of non-students must have included many Iranians who obtained their college education in the 1960s and the mid-1970s.

#### Occupational and Income Characteristics of Immigration Cohorts

We shall examine now the differences in occupational achievement and income between the two immigration cohorts and consider the relevance of our findings to the third hypothesis (Tables 2 and 3). For men, occupational level and income is much higher for those who came before 1975 than those who came during 1975-80. The only difference in favor of the exiles is interest and rental income that is three times higher (around \$9,000) than for immigrants (about \$3,000). The pattern is similar for women.

The comparisons of occupational status and income for Armenians and non-Armenians will be limited to males (Table 3). A comparable analysis could not be carried out for women because of their small number in the sample.

For both Armenians and non-Armenians, the distribution of occupations differs appreciably between the pre-1975 and the 1975-80 period. For Armenians, the percentage in the two top occupations (administrative, managerial, and professional) decreased noticeably from 51.8 to 22.7 and the percentage in the two bottom occupations (craft, operatives, and laborers) increased markedly from 18.5 to 37.9. A similar though less marked trend may be noted for non-Armenians. One unexpected finding is the high level of self-employment among Iranians in Los Angeles, almost irrespective of group or period (Table 3). The percentage of Armenian males reporting self-employment increased from 25.0 to 33.3 between pre-1975 and 1975-80. For non-Armenians the comparable figures are 28.6 and 34.2 percent. These self-employment rates suggest that all Iranians, whether Armenians or non-Armenians and exiles or immigrants, share in common with many other immigrant groups a high reliance on self-employment as a form of economic adaptation in the United States (Light 1984).

Both Armenian and non-Armenian males who arrived in 1975-80 had substantially lower mean 1979 incomes than those who immigrated earlier. Mean income dropped from \$24,486 in pre-1975 to \$14,180 in 1975-80 for Armenians and from \$25,885 to \$18,620 for non-Armenians in the same period (Table 3). There is a similar trend for mean wage or salary income. These lower income levels of men in 1975-80 may be explained, in part, by the fact that the revolution and subsequent emigration impaired the earning ability of those who left at that time. It may also be explained by lower educational achievement and the lesser hours of work for recent immigrants. An interesting finding in Table 3 is that while mean income from wages or salaries declined between the two migration periods for both groups, the opposite is true for mean income from interest or net rental income.

Mean income from the latter source increased from \$3,470 to \$12,970 for Armenians and from \$2,779 to \$7,328 for non-Armenians. These figures imply that Iranians who arrived in 1975-80 had much more capital at their disposal than those who immigrated earlier. Given the short length of stay of this cohort in the U.S.; it is unlikely to attribute the availability of capital to savings in the U.S., rather it reflects bringing in capital from Iran. The greater availability of capital may be a distinctive feature of some exile or refugee groups compared to economic immigrants.

In assessing the meaning of the substantial differences in mean income between Iranian males who came before 1975 and those who arrived after that date, we need to establish whether or not these differences remain after controlling for the effects of relevant variables. A multiple classification analysis was carried out separately for Armenian and non-Armenian males 16 years of age and over who reported that they worked 40 hours or more per week in 1979 (Table 4). In order to increase the sample size, this population included students who worked full-time. Income from all sources for males is the dependent variable and the independent variables are age, education, knowledge of English, occupational status, self-employment, and year of immigration. The results are strikingly different for Armenians compared to non-Armenians. Mean income dropped sharply from \$26,950 for Armenians who came before 1975 to \$16,430 for those who arrived after 1975. After controlling for the effects of the five independent variables, the decline in mean income remained as great (from \$25,130 to \$17,860). For non-Armenians, the unadjusted mean incomes are \$28,510 and \$23,520, and the means adjusted for the effect of the other variables are \$26,440 and \$25,930. Thus, these variables, that usually explain levels of income of males, have little effect on income differences for the two Armenian migration cohorts. On the other hand, they seem to explain all of the differences for non-Armenians. It should be noted that all six variables explain much more of the variance of Armenians' income (50 percent) than that of non-Armenians' (35 percent).

Table 4. Multiple classification analysis of income from all sources in 1979, Armenians and Non-Armenians, males age 16 and over and working 40 hours a week or more, by year of immigration, Los Angeles, 1980.

Variables	Armenians		Non-Armenians(1)	
	Unadjusted means	Adjusted means(2)	Unadjusted means	Adjusted means(2)
Year of Immigration				
1975-80	\$16,430	\$17,860	\$23,520	\$26,440
N	(28)	(28)	(90)	(90)
Before 1975	\$26,950	\$25,130	\$28,510	\$25,930
N	(22)	(22)	(102)	(102)
R2	.50	.35		

Notes: (1) Includes Assyrians, Bahais, Jews, Kurds, Muslims, Turks, and Zoroastrians.

(2) For the adjusted means, the effects of age, education, knowledge of English, self-employment and occupation are controlled.

Source: See Table 2.

The fact that timing of migration has a strong net effect on Armenians' income could be interpreted in terms of exile status. It is in agreement with the findings by Chiswick (1979) that political refugees or exiles cannot translate their education and labor market experience from the country of origin into earnings as easily as immigrants. It is likely that as a predominantly exile population, Armenians arrived mostly after the Iranian revolution of 1978. Considering the small Ns for Armenians, however, we have to be cautious in interpreting these findings.

The fact that timing of migration has little net effect on the earning ability of non-Armenians can be considered to confirm the third hypothesis. If we were able to control for the general tendency of socioeconomic status to increase with longer residence in the United States, it is likely that the income of the 1975-80 cohort would have been greater than that of the earlier one. While all exiles have lower educational levels than immigrants, some exiles may have more funds at their disposal and achieve a higher income than immigrants.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Annual data from the Immigration and Naturalization Service were used to identify two broad phases of Iranian migration to the United States, before and after the Iranian revolution of 1978. Between the first and second phase, the average annual number of Iranian immigrants increased about fivefold and nonimmigrants nearly sevenfold. While most of those who came before 1978 were permanent or temporary immigrants, the majority of the non-students and some of the students who arrived after the revolution may be considered to be exiles.

The Public Use Microdata Sample from the 1980 U.S. Census was used to analyze the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of Iranians in Los Angeles with a focus on a comparison between the 1975-1980 and the pre-1975 immigration cohorts. While these intervals do not coincide exactly with the two phases of Iranian immigration, they do provide a basis for describing the characteristics of Iranian migration streams during these phases.

The analysis of census data for Iranians provides a clear-cut image of the differences between the 1975-80 and the pre-1975 immigration cohorts for both Armenians and non-Armenians. These findings reflect only partially, however, the differences between immigrants and exiles. While the former pre-dominate in the pre-1975 period, the latter comprise only a portion of those who arrived during 1975-80. Furthermore, the category of non-Armenians is heterogeneous and includes major sub-groups such as Jews, Muslims, and Bahais.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of data from the 1980 U.S. Census, our analysis gives preliminary support for the first and second hypotheses that the 1975-80 cohort includes a higher proportion of religious minorities and is much more balanced with respect to age and sex distribution than the pre-1975 cohort. However, the third hypothesis that Iranians who arrived in 1975-80 had a higher socioeconomic achievement than those who came before that date is not corroborated by the data. It is clear that Iranian exiles have a lower educational attainment than immigrants. Given the preponderance of former students among Iranian immigrants, this finding is not surprising. The lower occupational and income levels of Iranian exiles than immigrants may reflect both their social class origin and the downward mobility of exiles immediately after arrival. Unfortunately, census data do not allow us to disentangle the two. Only a survey can resolve this issue and provide a firm test of this hypothesis.

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2. The Los Angeles metropolitan region comprises the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura, Riverside, and San Bernardino. It is identical to the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim Standard Consolidated Statistical Area (SCSA) in the 1980 U.S. Census. The Bureau of the Census rationale for defining SCSA is that it includes "adjoining SMSA's" which "are themselves socially and economically interrelated." See U.S. Bureau of the Census (1982:6-4,A-4).

3. Calculated and derived from the INS Annual Report (1980:7) and Table 1.

4. Some of the Iranians who were non-students in 1980 may have come as students rather than as immigrants before 1975. While they may have initially intended to go back to Iran after the completion of their studies, they changed their minds and became de facto expatriates in the United States as a result of the Iranian revolution. Unfortunately, it is impossible to evaluate the relative importance of this group, using the census data.

5. Data for Koreans were obtained from the analysis of the Public Use Microdata Sample for Los Angeles.

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