IRANIAN ACCESS TELEVISION OF DALLAS
CULTURAL ISSUES, PRESERVATION,
AND COMMUNITY FORMATION

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

BY

Mohammad Karimi
Denton, Texas
August, 1997

This study focused on the televisual and cultural practices of Iranians via public access television in Dallas, Texas. It includes analysis of format and content. It combines demographic, structural, and statistical information with a culturalist and interpretive viewpoint in examining the efforts of Iranians, via access television programs, in preserving their culture and the formation of a coherent and active community in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex.

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 is a discussion and literature review of culture, cultural issues and theories, cultural studies, consumer culture, and immigrant cultural issues. Chapter 2 is a review of Iranian television in the United States, and chapter 3 contains demographic information about Iranians in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Chapter 4 is a case study of Iranian public access television (teletime) in Dallas, including the history, management structure, program mix, and program examples. Chapter 5 consists of summaries, implications, and suggestions. It includes observations on the concepts of "melting pot," and multiculturalism.
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This qualitative and interpretive paper grew out of my experiences and knowledge of culture and television, not to mention my world view. Every attempt was made to follow "scholarly standards." These standards have been crucial to the progress of knowledge. Nevertheless, these standards are historical products not a natural given. They are represented as a scholarly manner of discourse, research, talking, and thinking. Indeed, many scholars have argued for exploring alternative methods that may be more responsive to global exigencies (Lee, 1995; Wynter, 1984; Zavarzadeh, 1991). 

The progress of knowledge is incumbent upon refinement and advancement of modes of thinking and doing research. Pursuing alternative and complementary methods of doing research is imperative. As Gitlin (1989) reminded us, our challenge "at the fin de millennium is to continue the search" (p. 53).

This paper may deviate slightly from the conventional scholarly standards in three respects. First, it emphasizes macro-issues and debates in the literature review that may not be tied directly to the televisual practices of Iranian immigrants in Dallas, yet are deemed important to consider. The purpose of discussing such issues is two fold: (a) to indicate that they are
relevant issues which should be considered in researching and studying any
cultural aspects or cultural product; and (b) to stimulate debate of such issues
by the immigrants. Among these macro-issues are monopolization of mass
media, hegemony, consumer culture, degree of pluralism in society, and the
state's multicultural strategy.

Second, personal observations, comments, and interpretations are
incorporated—mostly in the note section and conclusion—to raise questions. In
a scarcely researched topic, raising questions and expanding the arena of
debate are important, simply because one cannot bring empirical evidence for
every notion or assertion. The issues must first be raised in the hope of future
follow-up, research, and substantiation. This is specially valid when it relates
to macro-issues and forces, because conducting research on such issues
usually takes more resources than unaffiliated researchers.

Third, this paper deviates from the conventional scholarly standards in
the sense that it has an advocative tone and point of view in favor of diversity
and multiculturalism and opposes unrestrained propagation of consumer
culture and any form of monopolization either in the means of communication
or of cultural discourses. I am thankful to my committee professors--Stephen
R. Craig, John B. Kuiper, Justin B. Wyatt--and the Department of
Radio/Television/Film at the University of North Texas, Denton, for allowing
me this flexibility.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Today, mass media (media produced by giant transnational corporations and disseminated to a wide public audience, e.g. commercial television) are omnipresent. Metallinos (1996) argued that "it is increasingly more difficult to escape the influence of the homogeneous mass society ruled hegemonically by the visual communication media" (p. 106). The media do more than just deliver news, information, and entertainment. Advertisers demand from the media perpetuation of the consumer culture, a culture and a world outlook that seek the solution of problems and the satisfaction of needs in consumption (Angus, 1989; Bagdikian, 1992; Berger, 1992; Cooper, 1989; Downing, 1992; Ewen, 1989; Held, 1980; Hobbs & Frost, 1992; Jhally, 1989; Leiss, Kline, & Jhally, 1986, 1990; Lichter, Rothman, & Lichter, 1986; Parenti, 1986, 1992; Riggins, 1992; Schiller, 1973, 1989; Schudson, 1984; Tuchman, 1978, 1988; Williamson, 1978, 1986).

In 1954, Potter argued that advertising is a force that dictates the editorial and entertainment content of the media that depend on advertising dollars for their revenues. Countless scholars have since argued the same
point. By defining borders, positions, and identities, mass media (the so-called mainstream media) speak for "others," interpret social situations, and describe reality according to their elitist worldviews, in ways that are powerful, if subtle. Instead of acting as means for communication, the mass media act as gatekeepers for communication between groups, cultures, and leaders. The mass media remain oblivious to the fact that only through an appreciation of our diversity and differences will we be able to determine and act upon our mutual needs.

The media have a significant effect on social values by creating role models and ways of living and thinking. By selective emphasis and deemphasis of societal norms, by creating self-serving images, and by creating stars and celebrities, the mass media create a synthetic culture. By imposing symbols, codes, ideas, messages, and signifiers, the mass media often suggest, and sometimes dictate, what society's values, beliefs, ideology, and culture should be (Metallinos, 1996, pp. 105-114; also see Enzensberger, 1974; Jhally, 1989).

The vigorously disseminated consumer culture is first and foremost for the quick and profitable sale of products made by the transnational corporations (TNCs), which fund the pervasive media. The media and the transnational corporations not only share many objectives, but they also share
directors who oversee the operations of these economic, information, and cultural institutions. For example, Jhally (1989) pointed out the following:


Drier and Weinberg (1979), examining the interlocking directorship among the 25 largest U.S. newspaper companies, found that "the directors of these companies...sit on the boards of regional, national and multinational business corporations" (p. 51). And with the rash of mergers and acquisitions both among transnational corporations and among transnational media conglomerates in the past decade, one can imagine how few wield so much power and influence. By the same token, Bagdikian (1992) argued that "the ultimate financiers of both the global media firms and the global advertising agencies are the multinational manufacturers of consumer goods" (p. 246). Moreover, by disseminating the consumer culture, the mass media enhance their own effectiveness, since it is vastly simpler to peddle goods to the constituencies of a homogeneous culture whose values are based on materialism and possession than to peddle the same goods to an array of cultures based on a variety of value systems.

The notion of narrowcasting of the "big" media (as opposed to the narrowcasting of, for example, public access television or indigenous media),
on the surface, seems to refute the premise that mass media strive to create homogeneous audiences based on consumer culture. However, there is no contradiction, because homogenization of the basic value system is pursued in regard to infrastructure (not in the Marxist sense but as cultural underpinnings), whereas narrowcasting is an effective superstructure strategy utilized to reach different audiences and markets. For example, a cosmetic commercial, whether aired on NBC or BET or Bravo, basically functions the same, though it is "revised" and narrowcasted to different audiences. In this example, the messages of the commercial on all three channels are the same; that is, to buy this product, to seek gratification in consumption, and to value outer beauty—surface. Using black or Latin models does not refute the attempted dissemination of the underpinning—structural—cultural values.

What the mass media seek is homogenization of the basic value system, not homogenization in terms of deindividualization of the audiences. In fact, the individuals must remain unique and yet incomplete, for it is an array of products that are constantly promised to help make them complete upon continuous consumption. However, the above assertions are not meant to be taken as a blanket indictment of all the media. Indeed, the media are also the site of tension, contradiction, and diversity. The above assertions are meant to point out the hegemonic tendencies of the media.
Many scholars have argued that a handful of media conglomerates, in serving themselves, the advertising industry, and the transnational corporations (TNCs), seek to create uniformity based on consumer culture (Drier & Weinberg, 1979; Granham, 1979; Held, 1980; Jhally, 1989; Leiss et al., 1986, 1990; Parenti, 1986, 1992; Schiller, 1973, 1989; Williamson, 1978, 1986). This is not to say that all media outlets and all transnational corporations participate, or participate equally, in the propagation of consumer culture. Furthermore, the symbiotic consensus among the media, the advertising industry, and the transnational corporations is more the result of elitist perceptions—a symbiotic understanding—rather than conspiratorial intentions.

Naturally, to create uniformity of ideas, values, and cultures, the diversity of the same must be minimized. However, diversity is crucial to a genuine democracy. In 1948, Lasswell argued that "in democratic societies, rational choices depend on enlightenment, which in turn depends upon communication; and especially upon the equivalence of attention among leaders, experts, and rank and file" (p. 99). Bagdikian (1985) has reminded us that the diversity of the cultural realm and communication are not merely "ornaments of a democracy but essential elements for its survival" (p. 97). Thus, monopolization of communication, perpetuation of uniformity, and suppression of diversity are inherently antidemocratic. Uniformity of thought,
culture, and action is precisely what the Soviet mass media intended to create. Indeed, monopolization is a varietal form of centralization.

On the other hand, it was the intention of the founding fathers of this nation to preserve diversity through the establishment of the Constitution and its amendments. Later on, Congress established antitrust laws to prevent monopolization of the economy. Moreover, the FCC instituted guidelines to prevent monopolization of the media and communication. However, in anticipation of the global market in response to possible global competition, and convinced by the rationale of economy of scale, the government, the courts, and the FCC have relaxed considerably their efforts to guard against monopolization of vital institutions. Consequently, in the last few decades giant transnational corporations and their cultural industries including the advertising, entertainment, and television industries, have consolidated their power and their reach.

Today, a handful of motion picture companies, television networks, and media conglomerates dominate the commercial marketplace and the marketplace of ideas. This means that few have access to mass communication, and others are effectively cut out. Few communicate and influence many, thereby creating an uneven distribution of social, political, and economic power. By any standard, these giants cannot be labeled anything but monopolies, or more accurately, oligopolies. They wield an
unprecedented power, steer cultures, pressure politicians, demand further relaxation of antitrust laws, and set the agenda for government policies (Bagdikian, 1992; Lichter et al., 1986; Metallinos, 1996; Patterson & Abeles, 1975; Schiller, 1989). It is ironic, as many scholars, community leaders, parents, and ordinary citizens have argued, that the very institutions which were trusted to be "watch dogs" of the society now have to be watched.

Some communication scholars have argued that uniformity is subversive and that diversity has to be protected through responsible national policy. Many communication scholars and practitioners have argued for the preservation of some space outside the market for the disenfranchised voices and cultures (Bagdikian, 1985; Engelman, 1990; Fuller, 1994; Higgins, 1994; Oringel & Buske, 1987; Stoney, 1986; Szykowny, 1994). One way to accomplish this is to make available the means of televisual production so that the public can produce and air its own programs in order to sustain its diversity of ideas, thoughts, beliefs, values, and cultures. Public access television provides such a means—albeit minimally. The people using public access facilities are as diverse as can be found anywhere: senior citizens, males and females, children, minorities, immigrants, and (unfortunately) some hate groups (Fuller, 1994, pp. 76-82; see also various issues of Community Media Review).
Some Iranian immigrants in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex use the Dallas public access facilities to produce Iranian television programs in order to strengthen their marginal community and preserve some aspects of their culture. Whether their access teletime can perform a vital function in preserving their cultural heritage in the midst of the powerful hegemony of mainstream commercial television remains to be seen.

Purpose of the Study

Iranian televisual practices via Dallas public access are the subject of this study. Some of the four different program series produced by Iranians in Dallas are examined to see how their traditional cultural narratives, values, and identities are reconstructed, how the problems of cultural dislocation are dealt with, and how the processes of acculturation and assimilation into the consumer society are facilitated.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is in its contribution to the growing body of research conducted on the microhistories of local media use and narrowcasting wherein micro and marginal ideology, power, and politics are played out (Downing, 1992; Madden, 1992; Naficy, 1993c). And in order to heed Morley's (1991) advice that analysis of micro-issues should incorporate and be put in the context of macro-issues, effort has been made to highlight some macrocultural issues (multiculturalism, pluralism, Iranian politics, etc.).
This study should benefit not only Iranian immigrants, but also other minorities and practitioners of public access television in general. Highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of access and marginal television will facilitate this type of televisual effort in the long run, and consequently will encourage diversity of ideas, thoughts, values, and cultures. The issues at hand are not simply about some access programs with low viewership and low production quality. Public access television is about diversity, freedom of expression, availability of means of expression, and indigenous culture (bottom to top)—culture "of the people, by the people, for the people."

Literature Review of Culture

It is an ill-directed effort to attempt to comprehend the ramifications of any cultural product or cultural practice without an understanding of what culture is, how it is produced, and how it is played out. An intense interest in culture is one of the most significant trends in contemporary communication studies. The term culture is widely used, yet its meaning is far from concrete. It has been said that culture is "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Williams, 1976, p. 76). This is due, in part, to the fact that it is a concept in several intellectual disciplines.

Williams (1976) explained that the term culture came from colere which meant to till, cultivate, or inhibit. He noted:

Culture in all its early uses was . . . the tending of something, basically crops or animals . . . . From early sixteenth century the
tending of natural growth was extended to human development . . . .
In the eighteenth century England [culture] acquired definite class
associations . . . [in] modern usage . . . we have to recognize three
broad active categories . . . (i) a general process of intellectual,
spiritual and aesthetic development; (ii) a particular way of life,
whether of a people, a period or a group; (iii) the works and practices
of intellectual and especially artistic activity . . . music, literature,
painting and sculpture, theater and film. (pp. 77-80)

A look at the evolution of the concept of culture in the last 3 centuries
indicates not only that culture is a complex and variable concept, but that how
a society defines this concept has profound ramifications--although it is
beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate on these ramifications except in
passing.

In the 18th century, German writer Johann Gottfried Herder associated
culture with nation and national spirit (O'Connor & Downing, 1995). This
conception of culture led to the identifying of culture with civilization, with
the Europeans at the top and the rest of the world ranked below, which in
turn justified cultural superiority and unleashed the colonial aggressions;
hence the British "civilizing mission" and the American "Manifest Destiny."

Evolutionists (Morgan, 1877/1963) saw culture as having several
developmental stages (e.g., savagery, barbarism, etc.), whereas materialists
(Engels, 1964) argued that a given stage of technology brought about a
cultural "package"--a certain type of religion, family structure, and custom.
(Incidentally, both evolutionary and materialistic concepts have found their
way, albeit slightly reformulated, into the polemics of "cultural imperialism").
By the end of the 19th century, many historians and social philosophers used the concept of culture to characterize a society, denoting its advancement, religion(s), arts, esthetics, and distinctiveness. It was assumed that each society's culture possessed a coherent unity. Furthermore, culture implied an elitist conception, related to literature, prestige, and class—thus the notion of "high" culture.

In the early 20th century, anthropology expanded the concept to consist of "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (Tylor, 1920; as cited in Williams, 1958, p. 297). This anthropological view of culture was different in the sense that it applied to the whole societies, rather than just the elite.

Williams (1981) has called culture "the 'informing spirit' of a whole way of life, which is manifest over the whole range of social activities" (p. 11). By the same token, Mutahhari (1985) has argued that the "culture" of a society amounts to the "spirit" of that society (p. 30). In this conception, human beings basically have two dimensions. One dimension includes those features that humans share with animals, and the other dimension includes those features which distinguish humans from animals. In other words, human life has two aspects: the animal life or "the material life," and the human life or "the life of culture" (p. 28). According to this view, culture encompasses
everything that sets human beings apart from animals (i.e., science, philosophy, literature, religion, law, morals, and art).

Geertz (1973) regarded culture as both a simplifying and an ordering device; a product of and a guide to people searching for categories, interpretations, and meaning in their social lives. Without this type of simplifying and ordering device, that is, without a system of values, meanings, and beliefs--cognitive structure--life would be intolerably uncertain and ambiguous (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Thus, culture is a world view constructed through active human interaction (Schneider, 1977, 1980; Turner, 1968, 1974).

Today, most definitions of culture include activities and their products and perspectives on the meanings of those products and life in general. Culture is both objective and subjective (Stewart, 1978; Tokarav, 1977). Smelser (1992) has reminded us that in studying culture "the investigator, as well as the conceptual apparatus he or she brings to the study, must be considered as an active factor--a source of variation" (p. 23).

In terms of how culture is transmitted in the society or to the next generation, Durkheim (1925/1956) argued that culture is passed via the process of socialization by the institutions of education and pedagogy. Parsons et al. (1955) argued that culture is passed to individuals--in an incomplete form--by the family. Moreover, Parsons argued that "elements of
culture are used [by people], modified, or discarded depending on their usefulness in organizing reality...to fit their needs" (1977, p. 147).

For the Marxist tradition, institutionalization of culture into the social structure takes place by the dominant classes through the creation of "false consciousness" via the instruments of social control for the purpose of continuous subjugation of the subordinate classes (Engels, 1845/1987). However, in Marxist theory this solution is doomed to failure and defeat as the subordinate classes acquire "revolutionary consciousness" in the later stages of capitalism.

For the neo-Marxists, the dominant classes lull the masses through the manipulation of the mass media and welfare state to accept the postcapitalist values and conditions (Habermas, 1970, 1975; Marcuse, 1964). In regard to postcapitalism, Marcuse argued that the dominant classes impose a false consciousness of consumerism by utilizing technology and the media. Habermas argued that the ruling classes sustain their domination by imposing technical/rational ideologies and thus steer the culture. Althusser (1970, 1971) argued that the dominant class reproduces itself, in large part, by controlling ideology and culture through ideological state apparatuses, the media being one of these apparatuses.

For Gramsci (1971), the state is interested in changing the culture in order to perpetuate the apparatus of production. Naficy (1993c) argued that
for Gramsci, culture (popular) is not an instrument of domination, but an
access to domination. Gramsci's concept of "hegemony" does not assume a
static form of domination by the ruling class, rather a dynamic relation
between the various forces, cultures, and values in the society; a struggle to
achieve "the moment of hegemony" (1988, p. 194, as cited in Naficy, 1993c).
However, O'Connor and Downing's (1995) understanding of Gramsci's theory
is a bit different. They argued:

Gramsci essentially saw the formula for rule by these [ruling] classes
as an amalgam of force and consent. Force is . . . in the shape of
police, courts, prisons . . . [consent means] the public needs to feel,
either gladly or at least passively, that the country is being run by the
most competent, farsighted, experienced sectors of the society. By
"run" we do not mean only the actions of presidents, prime ministers,
and their cabinets, but also the actions of major business executives,
leading bankers, top civil servants and military leaders, the scientific
and engineering establishment, and, in some countries, even religious
leaders--the whole constellation of power at the top. (p. 15)

In Gramsci's view, culture is not spontaneous public expression, rather it
is processes of building consent in which we are invited to understand the
world in certain ways but not in others. And ways of comprehending the
world have political ramifications--they are not neutral. Moreover, Gramsci
argued that to be successful, hegemony must be flexible. Thus, the possibility
16). In any case, hegemony is never "finished" because it can never be
"complete" (Ang, 1990, p. 245).
Another line of "culture-as-domination" analysis is found in the Frankfurt school, exemplified by the critical works of Lowenthal (1967), Horkheimer and Adorno (1972), and Adorno (1973). Horkheimer and Adorno argued that mass culture is a cultural expression generated by big business, especially the entertainment, fashion, and advertising industries, for the purpose of maximizing profit. In this view, culture itself is considered an economic institution, with its processes of production, distribution, and consumption. Cultural products are created based on surveys—which provide insight into the consumer's psyche—and on what generates the maximum profit (Gandy, 1995). Thus, the resulting culture is as synthetic as plastic packaging and is based on formulas of consumer capitalism. The Frankfurt school argues that mass consumer culture does not develop from the values, hopes, dreams, aspirations, and the wishes of the American people. On the contrary, consumer culture is based on what sells the best and what values perpetuate corporate capitalism.

Allegedly elitist, pro-high-culture Frankfurt school theorists initiated a healthy and productive debate among communication scholars, resulting in questioning and reformulating of their "mass media and mass society" thesis. Hence the development of uses and gratification, cultural studies, semiotic, and postmodern theories.
Before discussing the all-important contemporary approaches of cultural studies, it is useful to review, albeit briefly and superficially, what consumer culture is, how and why it is perpetuated, and what general theoretical approaches have been utilized in analyzing it.

At the heart of contemporary cultural debates is the consumer culture. Consumer culture is the belief that to have is to be; that is, defining oneself and others in terms of possessions. It has been argued that consumer culture has helped the development of "possessive individuals"—a notion of the ideal individual as an owner (Abercrombie, Hill, & Turner, 1986; Clifford, 1988; Macpherson, 1962; Pateman, 1988).

Consumer culture has been shown to affect the construction of identities, the formation of relationships, and the framing of events (Lunt & Livingstone, 1992). In consumer societies, more than other societies, individual and social identities are tied with material possessions. While goods are symbolic in all societies (Appadurai, 1986; Douglas & Isherwood, 1980; Sahlins, 1976), they are "doubly" symbolic in consumer societies (Leiss, 1978). Material-saturated lifestyles are used by individuals for "social positioning" (Lury, 1996, p. 80).

The mass media have a central function in encouraging this cycle of consumption, making judgments and social positioning based on possessions. Cannon (1994) argued:

Invasive media have been used to promote brand names . . . Research shows that young people who drop out of school with little grasp of
mathematics and history have in fact detailed stores of information on computer gear, fashion products, and recreational equipment. (p. 2)

Featherstone (1991) argued that the media have trained the middle classes in ways of making meaning which encourage the development of lifestyle as an ideal project. However, because many individuals do not have the economic resources to participate in acquiring possessions, this leads to a new form of inequality hidden deeply in the illusion and the rhetoric of "freedom of choice" (Bauman, 1990). Because an overwhelming number of the so-called "dispossessed" or low-possession individuals are people of color and the immigrants from the third world countries, Lury (1996) argued that "consumer culture is intimately bound up with the processes of imperialism, colonialism, and the creation of hierarchical categories of races" (p. 156).

According to Giddens (1991) consumer culture has contributed to a "reflexive" understanding of identity; that is, the individual is less concerned about the actions of others than with taking control of his or her life through the negotiation of self-identity. This entails both opportunities and dangers. In response Lury (1996) argued:

The significance of consumer culture is . . . that the individual is no longer judged by him or herself or by society in terms of how well they carry out their duty or responsibilities in relation to some wider collective or external morality ('the family,' 'the community,' 'the greater good of all' or 'God's will'), but in terms of how well they exercise their capacity to make a (consumer) choice. (p. 248)

Hirsch (1977) observed that historically, only a small aristocratic elite engaged in positional consumption. However, consumer culture allows the
mass of the population to engage in "positional consumption," hence providing a "democratization" of competitive consumption. Positional consumption is defined as "the tendency for groups of individuals to use goods to make distinctions between themselves and other groups of individuals" (Lury, 1996, p. 80). In other words, to use goods to indicate social status. Shils (1960) argued along the same lines that today there is a trend toward "leveling up" and not "down" of opportunities, a trend toward a more egalitarian and democratic environment. Furthermore, mass-produced commodities and cultural products can be customized, and signs can be reversed or their meanings can be renegotiated critically or oppositionally (de Certeau, 1981; Hebdige, 1979; Wilensky, 1964).

It is beyond the scope of this paper to elaborate any further on consumer culture, how it is being artificially synthesized, how it is propagated and disseminated with the utmost professionalism and expertise, or the role of mass media and the culture industries. For further discussions on the above topics see the following: Appadurai, 1986; Bell, 1976; Bennett et al., 1977; Bourdieu, 1984; Debord, 1970; Douglas and Isherwood, 1980; Ewen, 1976; Ewen & Ewen, 1982; Habermas, 1981; Jameson, 1982, 1984; Leiss, 1978; Leiss et al., 1986; Marcuse, 1964; Sahlins, 1976; Swingewood, 1977; Williams, 1961.
Cultural Studies

A contemporary and influential method for the study of culture and cultural products is the "cultural studies" approach. Cultural studies looks at culture differently than previous forms of cultural criticism "which considered political questions as being of peripheral relevance to the appreciation of culture" (During, 1993, p. 2). Cultural studies, Fiske (1992) argued, is neither "aesthetic nor humanist in emphasis, but political" (p. 284). Indeed, cultural studies theorists attempt to explore culture's political functions by analyzing it through the concept of hegemony in order to bring to light the dynamics of domination by the dominant segments of the society. In analyzing culture, cultural studies theorists drew from the Frankfurt School, Western neo-Marxism, semiotics (structuralism, notions of polysemy and hybridization), and psychoanalytic concepts. Thus, "cultural studies is not one thing" (Hall, 1990, p. 11).

Cultural studies defines culture:

*Both as a way of life--encompassing ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions, and structure of power--and a whole range of cultural practices: artistic forms, texts, canons, architecture, mass-produced commodities, and so forth. (Grossberg, Nelson, & Treichler, 1992, p. 5)*

Ostensibly, cultural studies is "concerned with the generation and circulation of meanings in industrial societies" (Fiske, 1992, p. 284). Cultural studies does not have a well-defined methodology for investigation. It "draws from whatever fields are necessary to produce the knowledge required for a
particular project" (Grossberg et al., 1992, p. 2). Furthermore, "cultural studies is not merely interdisciplinary, it is . . . actively and aggressively anti-disciplinary" (1992, pp. 1-2). Cultural studies' "intellectual loyalties reach beyond the walls of the academe to the critique of current cultural issues in the broadest sense . . . . In this context, topicality, critical sensibility and sensitivity for the concrete are more important than theoretical professionalism and methodological purity" (Ang, 1990, p. 240).

In terms of approaches to analyzing cultural products and practices, two broad paths can be sketched in cultural studies. One is the more "optimistic" approach, in which audiences are looked at as being independent in the cultural struggle over meaning and pleasure (Fiske, 1987a, 1987b; Newcomb, 1988). Advocates of this approach place the emphasis on the audience in the "cultural process of making meanings" (Fiske, 1992, p. 312). In this version emphasis is not put on meaning coming from top-to-bottom (culture industry to the consumers) but rather bottom-to-top resistance (consumers choose and have independence in creating their own resistive interpretation and consumption). Audiences and consumers use what has been offered to them by the dominant culture as raw material, and they appropriate those products in ways that suit themselves.

Hall (1980) developed the theory of "preferred reading." He argued that audiences interpret texts in three broad ways: "dominant," "negotiated," and
"oppositional." First, some audiences may agree with the messages encoded in the television text by the producers. This is called the "dominant" reading or interpretation. Second, some audiences may somewhat change the messages in order to make the messages fit their own particular situation or social position. This group still agrees with the dominant messages, but needs to give it their own flavor. This is called "negotiated" reading. Third, some audiences may subvert the messages; that is, interpret those messages oppositionally. This group's social situation and ideology put them in direct opposition with the dominant group's ideology and the dominant messages in the text. This is called "oppositional" reading.

Advocates of preferred reading theory argue that media's dominant messages are negotiated and even subverted by the audiences, that audiences are active meaning producers and imaginative pleasure seekers (Chambers, 1986; Fiske, 1987b; Hodge & Tripp, 1986; Newcomb, 1988). Thus, the media status quo is not and cannot synthesize an artificial culture and impose a particular value system. This view, in a subtle way, comes to defend popular culture, consumer culture, and the culture industry (for more perspective on this view see Hall, 1980; Hall & Jefferson, 1976; Hebdige, 1979; Morley, 1980, 1986; Radway, 1984; Willis, 1977). By the same token, uses and gratification theory postulates that the audiences watch television in order to gain gratification for their needs. They actively look for programs that match
their interests. If a program does not satisfy their needs, they either turn off the TV or change to another channel (Rubin, 1985; see also Blood, Keir, & Kang, 1983; McCombs, 1977; Weaver, Wilhoit, & Reide, 1979; Wells & Hakanen, 1991).

The second, broad approach in cultural studies goes beyond analysis of media/audience encounter; that is, how the audience may interpret the text. They argue that it is imperative to uncover the more general social relations of power if there is to be cultural independence or democracy. This approach insists upon going beyond discovering patterns of reception and into the social production and reproduction of meaning as well as power. Morris (1988) argued:

There is a romanticizing and romanticist tendency in much work that emphasizes (symbolic) resistance in audience reception, which can all too easily lead to an apologetic 'yes, but . . . ' discourse . . . in favor of the representation of a rosy world 'where there's always a way of redemption'. (p. 23)

Advocates of the second approach argue that culture and cultural texts are linked to social structure and power. They argue that the dominant segments of the society attempt, through the media and cultural products, to "naturalize" the meanings that serve their interests and reproduce the dominant ideology in people (Gripsrud, 1989; Modleski, 1986; Schudson, 1987). Ang (1990) reminded us:

The ethnography of media audiences emphasizes, and tends to celebrate, the capability of audience groups to construct their own meanings and thus their own local cultures and identities, even in the
face of their virtually complete dependence on the image flow distributed by the transnational culture industries. (p. 250)

Advocates of the second approach have argued that it is imperative to fully incorporate notions of politics, power, and context into analysis of culture and cultural products, such as television texts. In this approach the questions and dynamics of hegemony are not "unfashionable," and the vitality and exuberance of popular and consumer culture are not intoxicating. In fact, it is in the midst of this euphoria and confusion that the strands of hegemony can be rediscovered (Ang, 1990; Gripsrud, 1989; Modleski, 1986; Morley, 1991; Morris, 1988; Schudson, 1987).

On a harsher note, Willemen (1989) criticized cultural theorists, especially the advocates of the audience reception approach:

Cultural theory in the UK and in the US has become a serious handicap in that it has become hypocritically opportunist (for example, the proliferation of attempts to validate the most debilitating forms of consumerism, with academics cynically extolling the virtues of the stunted products of cultural as well as political defeat) or has degenerated into a comatose repetition of 70s deconstructive rituals. (p. 2)

The approach that most informs the analysis of this paper is an amalgam of the two approaches discussed above. (Hence, the review of macrocultural topics in this paper. Although I cannot incorporate all of these topics into the context of Iranian access television--due to lack of sufficient knowledge--it is my firm belief that they are all relevant and must be further researched.) It is recognized that audiences are not cultural dupes. Audiences are complex and have varied backgrounds and outlooks, and therefore will produce different
readings of texts based on their idiosyncrasies. However, the boundaries of
potential readings of a text are limited. Fiske (1992) acknowledged:

This potential is proscribed and is thus neither infinite nor free; the
text does not determine its meaning so much as delimit the arena of
the struggle for that meaning by marking the terrain within which its
variety of readings can be negotiated. (p. 303)

Furthermore, it must also be recognized that human beings are social
beings and are profoundly affected by the societies and cultures in which they
live and by the media they are exposed to. Metallinos (1996) argued:

Inhabitants of the global village are influenced culturally, politically,
and socially by media, particularly television—the hegemones of the
global village. Pioneering studies on the process and the effects of
mass communication (Jacobs, 1961; McQuail, 1969; Schramm &
Roberts, 1971), cultural studies on the influence of the media on the
people in mass society (Rissoner & Birch, 1977; Rosenberg & White,
1957), social studies of the influence of the media on individual's way
of living and behaving in the society (Agee, Ault & Emery, 1988),
and critical studies on the artistic merits of programs produced by the
media (Burns & Thompson, 1989; Newcomb, 1982) indicate that the
visual communication media, particularly television, decisively
influence the individual viewer. (p. 106)

Moreover, consumer culture is saturated with images and texts produced
by talented individuals with the backing of highly structured and purposeful
cultural industries. The interest of the dominant segments of the society are
inscribed in these texts with subtlety and expertise. Furthermore, to
acknowledge that audiences are not passive is not the same as saying that
audiences are empowered and independent of cultural industries. It is
important to recognize that unchecked power begets power, that there are
macro-structures at work, that hegemony is not just a theoretical concept, that
popular is not synonymous with indigenous, that television's image and text
"flow" is not without direction, and that the monopolization of the media and
the cultural industry is not haphazard. In today's image--and experience--
saturated environment, audiences, especially the younger ones, often receive
their first experiences (the most potent) via the media, especially television.
People will have hundreds of experiential encounters through the media, of a
Middle Easterner or an Indonesian, for example, and will have formed many
opinions about them before they actually encounter one. Mills (1967)
observed the following:

The first rule for understanding the human condition is that men live
in second-hand worlds. They are aware of much more than they have
personally experienced...their lives is determined by meanings they
have received from others...No man stands alone directly confronting
a world of solid fact ....
Between consciousness and existence stand meanings and designs and
communications...the management of symbols...man is increasingly
dependent upon the observation posts, the interpretation centers, the
presentation depots, which in contemporary society are established by
means of what I am going to call the cultural apparatus. (pp. 405-
406)

As previously cited in this paper, many scholars believe that the media,
especially television, are influential apparatuses and sources of "received
interpretation." The images that saturate the televisual flow not only present
certain interpretations of reality, but they also instill certain attitudes and
feelings.

In the final analysis, audiences will "negotiate" the texts, and some even
form oppositional readings; however, the aggregate results will be in favor of
the messages inscribed in the texts—the grand narrative—which are for the benefit of the dominant segment of the society, since the pervasive flow is all too uniform in content—although varied in form.

Up to this point, culture and cultural issues, in a broad sense, have been examined. In the next section, cultural issues that relate more to minorities, immigrants, and the Iranian immigrants in the United States are reviewed.

Immigrant Cultural Issues

Migration of any type entails many problems and stresses that can be temporary or can last a lifetime (see Ansari, 1992; Fathi, 1991; Hanassab, 1993; Kelley, Friedlander, & Colby, 1993; Naficy, 1993c; Tohidi, 1993). Several major factors contribute directly to the duration and the intensity of psychological and sociocultural stress due to uprootedness and culture clash.

Evens et al. (1985) argued that the state promotes patterns of intellectual communication or cultural modeling; that is, the state establishes social and cultural boundaries that frame the production of culture. Along the same lines, Munch and Smelser (1987) asserted that macro-phenomena in society set the agenda for micro-processes (p. 381); that is, macro-phenomena or macro-realities set the frame of reference for individual and group actions. This means that no society is absolutely free. Every society has limits and boundaries within which individuals and groups must act, react, socialize, produce, and reproduce culture. The more structural limits are called macro-
realities or macro-phenomena. These structural limits, of course, vary from society to society in terms of flexibility, but all societies have limits. It is in the light of the above conceptions that cultural activities must be examined. The degree of rigidity or flexibility of the cultural boundaries and the macro-realities within which indigenous cultural production and reproduction take place determines the degree of psychological and sociocultural stress.

Moreover, Williams (1980) argued that the state acts, decisively, to conform popular culture to the dominant culture. By extension, it can be argued that the state acts, decisively, to conform the cultural heritage of the immigrants into the dominant culture. Here the important factor is the degree of decisiveness and pluralism of the country, which determines the degree of psychological and sociocultural stress. Pluralism is the degree to which a society's character or culture is an amalgam of its different ethnicities, races, and religions. Pluralism is the degree to which a state and its dominant culture are willing to accommodate minority cultures. Baudrillard (1989) wrote America's indifference:

The strategy of [cultural] indifference was there from the start . . . Sheltered from the vicissitudes of history far from its shores, America was indifferent to the world. Inside its boundaries, the radical form of its indifference became the toleration of any and all differences. (p. 54)

However, Naficy (1993c) argued that what is tolerated are not "all differences" but rather "harmless differences," meaning those differences that are open to appropriation. Naficy described the dynamics of appropriation:
The dominant culture appropriates exilic world views and artifacts in such a way as to soften or neutralize their specificity or their antagonistic content . . . ultimately [rendering them] . . . as mere difference, as "style." . . . Having thus defused the subcultural and exilic threat ideologically, the remaining unthreatening difference is diffused economically to create "new and improved" products with a difference, that is, products with a safe ethnic gloss. (p. 34)

Another factor relevant to the psychosocial stress of the immigrants is the state's multicultural strategies, which can be classified into five models (Riggins, 1992). First is the "integrationist model." In this model, the state assumes that encouraging and even subsidizing minority media would better integrate minorities into national life. Minorities are more likely to perceive the state as a "benevolent institution." At the same time, the state can more effectively conduct surveillance of the minority group members, and, if needed, halt trends toward political independence.

The second model is the "economic model." Since ethnic minorities are usually economically deprived, and consequently suffer at a higher rate from illiteracy, they are more likely to be employed in manual labor or menial jobs. As societies modernize, necessitating higher levels of education and training, the state may view multiculturalism as a method of raising literacy levels and creating a more productive work force. Thus "the state's commitment may not be to multiculturalism per se but to the economic advantages that are perceived as being one of its consequences" (Riggins, 1992, p. 9). Riggins argued that both integrationist and economic models are compatible and "presuppose a state superficially committed to multiculturalism" (p. 9). Such
policies, Riggins argued, might be referred to as the "new assimilationism" that is disguised as multiculturalism (p. 9).

The third model is the "divisive model." In this model the state simply uses ethnicity to maintain or to create "some level of tension and rivalry . . . to further its own objectives of social control either in the context of colonialism or geopolitical order" (Riggins, 1992, p. 10). This model seems to apply to many of the previously colonized countries and regions.

The fourth model is the "preemptive model," in which the state creates its own minority media to preempt minorities from establishing their own media which might become independent of the state" (Riggins, 1992, p. 10).

The fifth model is the "proselytism model," in which the state or a transnational institution intends to promote specific values through the mass media and therefore create suitable means of communicating--press, radio, or television--to the minority groups in their own languages.

Another significant factor to the newly arrived immigrants is the "cultural compatibility" between the original "home" culture and the new "host" culture. The more compatible the original and the new cultures are, the less the intensity and duration of psychosocial stress for the immigrants and the easier the assimilation process. One assimilation model is the "melting pot" model. This model purposes that the newly arrived immigrants must put aside their indigenous cultures and languages and, instead, adopt the culture and
language of their new country. Melting into the new society means that the immigrants would no longer be identified by their national origin. Melting is the price of participation in the society (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995).

Another assimilation model is variously referred to as the "multiculturalism," "stew pot," or "salad bowl" model. In accordance with this model, "each group retains its individual identity while maintaining and contributing its distinctive flavor to those of other groups and absorbing some of the flavors of other groups" (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995, p. 7; also see JanMohammed & Lloyd, 1990). In this configuration, it is recognized that every culture has something to offer to the tapestry of America.

Another topic related to immigrants—which needs to be explored--has to do with what processes or phases they go through before feeling at home with the new culture. Transnational immigration, obviously, is not only moving from one's birthplace and settling in another place, it is also a transcultural metamorphosis. Transnational immigration entails physical relocation as well as a difficult--for some indeed painful--psychological and cultural transformation.

Naficy (1993c) postulated three phases in the transformation that exiles and immigrants generally experience: separation from the homeland, a temporary or permanent liminality, and a partial or complete incorporation into the host society. He emphasized that these phases "are not just
consecutive but also simultaneous." Relocated in a new culture, exiles or/and immigrants experience a "push-pull drama," which is the result of the conflict between "descent" and "consent" (Sollors, 1986). "Descent relations are ancestral and hereditary, emphasizing bloodline and ethnicity; consent relations are contractual and self-made, involving law, marriage, and nationality" (Naficy, 1993c, p. 9).

Liminality results from trying to keep descent relations while at the same time trying to become part of the consensus that forms the host culture. Thus one is pulled by two cultures, two different lives, essentially in a dichotomous state of mind, vacillating back and forth. According to Turner (1974), the liminar becomes "ambiguous, neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification" (p. 232). In liminality "there is a promiscuous intermingling and juxtaposing of events, experience, and knowledge" (Turner, 1967, p. 106). Liminality dismembers structure in order to transform, renew, and re-member it. Thus, this state is marked by "deterriorlization," ambivalence, and fundamental doubt about everything and all values.

According to Naficy (1993c), liminality creates two types of emotions and attitudes: celibacy and celebration. On one hand, it can produce great pain, grief, dystopia, celibacy, and a paralyzing crisis. This state is more endemic to intellectuals and those involved with "high" culture and art, who
are no longer with their source of inspiration (language, landscape, daily patterns of life, etc.) nor with their primary audience at home.

The second type of emotions and attitudes that liminality can produce is ecstasy and euphoria. This state is the result of a sense of freedom from constraining values and belief systems. This state manifests itself more in popular culture, as it is evidenced in the case of Iranian immigrants, in the profusion of Iranian musical performances, nightclubs, discos, and elaborate weddings.

The third phase of the immigrant's transformation is syncretism. Syncretism is a "process following on traumatic cultural contact that results in mutual borrowing, sometimes resurrecting atavistic forms, but impregnating them with new meanings appropriate to their new context" (Naficy, 1993c, pp. 17-18). Out of the dualities of cultures and identities a third syncretic culture will evolve, a culture made of a bit of this and a bit of that. Syncretism results in less ambivalence toward the dominant culture and less focus on the home cultures. Of course, the dominant host culture is more powerful and tends to want to assimilate the immigrants. The immigrants, in turn, may accept or resist the dominant culture's tendency. The syncretic process which ultimately "reterritorializes" the "detrerritorialized" immigrants and exiles is not simple, swift, or certain. Some immigrants may remain in a permanent state of liminality, and some may become hybrids.
Hybridity, Naficy (1993c) argues, seems to be "a special case of syncretism, less motivated by trauma and limited to the individual or to a small groups" (p.189). Multiple positioning, multiple beliefs, and polyidentity are among the characteristics of hybrids. Hybridity is an idiosyncratic form of acculturation, and as such it may fail to be passed on to the next generations. Moreover, because of the idiosyncratic aspect of hybridity, it is vulnerable to being misunderstood and misread, thus leading to isolation, harassment, and even violence and imprisonment.

This study will focuses on the televisual activities of the Iranian immigrants in the Dallas/Forth Worth Metroplex. It analyzes the use of public access television by Iranians in their quest to preserve some aspects of their culture and to form a cohesive ethnic community. This study analyzes the evolution of their programming mix and content in order to discover any trends in terms of the processes of liminality and syncretism. Furthermore, this study attempts to contribute to the understanding of macro-issues of society's structural limits, the degree of pluralism in the United States, the multicultural strategies of the United States, and melting pot versus multiculturalism.

Chapter 2 focuses on the Iranian televisual activities in the United States, their move from political activity to cultural activity, and the dynamic of commercially derived televisual production and competition within the context
of corporate capitalism. Chapter 3 provides an introduction to the Iranian community in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, in order to familiarize the reader with the target audience of Iranian access television. This chapter cites some demographic data from a recent anthropological study. Chapter 4 offers information on the Iranian media in Dallas/Fort Worth. It also discusses the "dual" functions of minority media. But above all, it contains a case study of the Iranian public access television in Dallas. The chapter focuses on the history, management structure, programming mix, and programming content. Furthermore, it discusses some of the inherent difficulties in producing access television and dealing with cable companies. Chapter 5 is the conclusion which offers some observation and implications. This chapter attempts to decipher and contribute to the understanding of macro-issues of pluralism, society's structural limits, multicultural strategies of the United States, and the importance of cultural compatibility as it relates to the concepts of "melting pot" versus "stew pot."
CHAPTER 2

IRANIAN TELEVISION IN THE UNITED STATES

In this chapter televisual activities of the Iranian immigrants in the United States are examined. Included in this chapter are (a) demographic data of the Iranian-Americans, (b) a chronology and basic sketch of the development of Iranian television programs in the United States and a brief discussion on the role that Iranian television plays in the life of the Iranian immigrants and their acculturation into the mainstream consumer culture.

Demographic Data of Iranian-Americans

Immigration can be defined as the act of moving from one geographical area to another. Immigration changes the physical, psychological, social, and cultural world of the immigrants. It is a major life change and can be extremely stressful. In 1958, Petersen identified five general types of migration:

1. Primitive migration is due to ecological changes.

2. Forced migration is displacement by the state, such as removing some Native American Indians from their tribal land. Slave trade is another example.
3. Impelled migration is due to social forces. Included in this type are exiles who plan and hope to return someday to their homeland; and refugees who plan to settle permanently in the new land.

4. Free migration is due to individual desire.

5. Mass migration can occur with or without other circumstances operating as incentives (as cited in Fathi, 1991, pp. 8-9).

Based on the above classifications, Iranian immigrants in the United States can be placed in third and fourth categories; that is, impelled migration—consisting of both exiles and refugees—and free migration.\(^5\) The above categories are by no means accepted as universal categories (for example, see Said, 1984, for a somewhat different delineation between exiles, refugees, expatriates, and émigrés; also Gold, 1988).

The Iranian population in the United States has been estimated by the 1990 Census to be at about 235,521. However, many scholars believe this estimate is low (Bozorgmehr, 1992; Mobasher, 1996). They argue that the low estimate is due to, among other reasons, the identification by the Census Bureau of the Iranian minorities with their ancestry—for example, Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish, and so on—rather than with their Iranian nationality. Bozorgmehr and Sabagh in 1988 estimated the Iranian population to be at about 341,000. Naficy (1993c) argued that even 341,000 is a low estimate (p. 25).
Furthermore, Bozorgmehr and Sabagh (1991) estimated that about half of the Iranian immigrants reside in California, primarily in Los Angeles County. However, Iranians are scattered in all 50 states. California having the highest number and Wyoming having the lowest number (Ansari, 1996).

Bozorgmehr and Sabagh's (1988) study showed that Iranian immigrants have a high level of education, with about 23% holding a graduate degree as compared to 7.5% of the U.S.-born population, and 12.5% of immigrants born in other countries. Additionally, 27.3% of Iranian immigrants are independent professionals as compared to 12.3% of the U.S.-born population, and 10.8% of immigrants born in other countries (pp. 25-26). Although there are some low-income Iranians, generally, Iranians are among the wealthiest newcomers to America, and one of the wealthiest minorities (Ansari, 1996). Their high wealth is for the most part due to the assets they brought to the U.S. when they left Iran.

Iranian immigrants in the United States are religiously and ethnically heterogeneous. Iranian immigrants with religious affiliations such as Baha'is, Jews, Armenian and Assyrian Christians, and Zoroastrians are more devout and observant of their religious rituals than are Muslim immigrants. Bozorgmehr, Sabagh, and Der-Martirosian (1991) have found that only 2% of Muslim Iranians in the United States practice their religion, which the authors
speculate is due to the secular background of the Muslims before coming to
the U.S. and/or their current opposition to the Islamic government (p. 14).

In terms of political orientation, the majority of Iranian immigrants are
opposed to the Islamic government of Iran. A good number of these
immigrants are monarchists, some are communists, and some are members of
the Mojahedin guerrilla group, who are fighting the Islamic government
(Bozorgmehr & Sabagh, 1988).

Kelley (1993) stated:

Many Iranians here [in Los Angeles] are more American than I am . . .
Many Iranians here are model corporate consumers and some, like
Bijan (who promotes himself as well as his perfume in elaborate
marketing campaigns) are even active shapers of consumerist values . . .
Most Iranians here have absorbed . . . the values of Western
popular culture. (pp.373-374)

The observations of Kelley are valid for a good number of Iranians in the
United States. His observations are further important because they come from
a non-Iranian-educated observer who does not belong to any Iranian political
faction, and, unlike some observers and journalists, does not have deference
to the consumer culture.

Kelley's observations (1993) underline the unproblematic submersion of
most Iranian immigrants into the values of consumer culture, such as their
obsession with appearance, their indulgence in positional consumption, and
their emulation of narcissism of the self. "I am moved by the great warmth,
deep passions, generous hospitality, rich cultural tradition, profound grief,
tormenting melancholy [of Iranian-Americans]. . . . I am repulsed by their conspicuous materialism, obsession with status, and pretense" (Kelley, 1993, p. 376).

Development of Iranian Television in the U.S.

Most of the Iranian television programs, music videos, and pop music are produced and distributed from Los Angeles, not only because Los Angeles is the entertainment capital of the world, but also because about half of the Iranian immigrants in the United States reside in Los Angeles County. There is little research on the televisual practices of Iranian-Americans, although, as Naficy (1993c) argued, Iranian-Americans are the most prolific producers of televisual products among the newcomers in the U.S. The remainder of this chapter is based on Naficy's research in 1991a, 1993a, and 1993b which culminated in his 1993c book, The Making of Exile Culture.

Naficy (1993a, 1993c) divided "the menu of 'minority television'" into three types: ethnic, transnational, and exilic television. Ethnic television programs are those produced mainly by long-established indigenous minorities, such as Black Entertainment Television (BET). Also, a portion of the Spanish-language network's programs can be classified as ethnic television.

Transnational television includes those programs that are either imported from the homeland or are produced by multinational media, such as Korean,
Japanese, and Chinese programs. Naficy (1993c) argued that Spanish-language national networks should be categorized as primarily transnational television and only partly ethnic, because many of the programs are imported from Mexico, Venezuela, and Brazil and are produced by multinational media corporations.

Exilic television, Naficy (1993c) argued, is produced by exiles living in the United States. Exilic television is produced by individual producers not by "media conglomerates of the home or host societies" (p. 63). Thus it is "an example of the decentralized global narrowcasting model" (Naficy, 1993a, p. 9). Examples of this type of television include Iranian, Arab, and Armenian television programs in the United States. With the exception of Aftab, all Iranian programs aired in the U.S. are produced by individuals who oppose the Islamic government of Iran (Naficy, 1993c).

Since 1981, Iranians have produced many television programs, music videos, and other media in the United States. Except for Spanish-language programs, the number of locally produced Iranian programs exceeds that of any other ethnic programs in Southern California (Naficy, 1993c). This high production volume is partly due to the fact that a substantial number of Iranian producers, directors, actors/actresses, comedians, musicians, and pop singers left Iran after the 1979 revolution and eventually found their way to Southern California.
The congregation of this segment of the Iranian artistic community in Southern California was perhaps due to the necessity of being close together for the purpose of collaborating in the formation of a consolidated popular media front against the Islamic government and its hegemony. In the words of Bibian, producer of Jaam-e Jam, their mission was "to wage a campaign against the current government in Iran and to offer the public political information" (Moslehi, 1984, p. 115).

From the beginning, copies of Iranian exilic television programs, music videos, and audio cassettes of pop music recordings have been smuggled into Iran. However, their effectiveness in undermining the official culture of the Islamic Republic is very much in doubt (Naficy, 1993b; Sreberny-Mohammadi & Mohammadi, 1991; also see Fathi, 1991, p. 216).

The first regularly scheduled Iranian television program was aired in March 1981 in Los Angeles, befittingly, called Iranian. By 1992, a total of 62 regularly scheduled programs had been aired. Some of these programs failed after a short period, but some remained viable. Table 1 lists the programs on the air in Los Angeles as of 1992. In all, 37 different producers created the 62 programs. Because these shows are commercially driven, there is a fierce competition among the producers for advertising dollars. However, Naficy (1993c) asserted that there are rumors that some producers "receive regular funding from factions opposing the Islamic Republic" (p. 67). Moreover,
"Iranian programs are financially less stable" and "more prone to manipulation by exile groups" (p. 73). However, most of the producers have another job as a way of making an adequate income.

Table 1


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Length (minutes)</th>
<th>Year (first aired)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bet Naharin (Assyria)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1981</td>
<td>weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sima-ye Ashena (Familiar Face)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonbesh-e Iran (Iran's Uprising)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sima-ye Azad (Face of Freedom)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pars</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midnight Show</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negah (Look)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jong-e Bamdadi (Morning Magazine)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobh-e Ruz-e Jom'eh (Friday A.M.)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran va Jahan (Iran &amp; the World)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahr-e Farang (Peep Show)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assyrian American Civic TV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emshab ba Parviz (Tonight with Parviz)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Nightly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pezeshg-e Khub-e KhanevadADC</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Family's Good Doctor)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheshmandaz (Perspective)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mardom va Jahan-e Pezeshgi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(People &amp; the World of Medicine)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Biweekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You &amp; the world of Medicine (in English)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Triweekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozddeh (Glad Tidings)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aftab (Sunshine)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diyar (Country)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melli (National)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harf va Goft (Words and talk)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Biweekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sokhani ba Ravanahenas (Talk with Psychologist)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. From The making of exile cultures: Iranian television in Los Angeles (pp. 207-209), by H. Naficy, 1993, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
According to Naficy (1993c) the number of minutes given to commercials rose so drastically in 1987 that "it reached an all-time peak of over 40 minutes per hour of programming" (p. 71). (Nobody can accuse Iranian producers of not having "market forces," "market economy," and shrewd business mentality). After many complaints by the viewers to the stations airing these programs, and subsequent pressure by the stations, producers agreed to limit commercial time to 20 minutes per hour. This does not include entertainers, lawyers, real estate agents, and others paying the producers in order to be interviewed on TV, thus blurring the line between "program (text) and advertising (supertext)" (p. 78). As of 1993, on the average, the cost of a 30-second commercial was $90-180.

Most of the producers do not have formal training in television production, or, for that matter, even in journalism. Naficy (1993c) contended that of all the 37 producers, only 4 could be classified as journalists, and only 7 had radio or television training, although most have show business or media-related backgrounds.

Most of the technical personnel and craftspeople worked as freelancers on a number of shows. Most of the shows in Table 1 were taped, edited, and transmitted at a later time. However, the following shows were either transmitted live or taped live: Sima-ye Ashena, Jong-e Bamdadi, Cheshmandaz, Emshap ba Parviz, Har va Goft, and Sokhani ba Ravanshenas.
In terms of audience demographics, it is almost impossible to obtain any reliable data. Naficy (1993c) cited the producer of Jonbesh-e Iran, who claimed that more than 2 million worldwide watch his program, while the producer of Sima-ye Ashena claimed that half a million from San Diego to San Francisco watch his program (p. 84). The nature of these grandiose and self-serving claims becomes more apparent in the light of Bozorgmehr and Sabagh's 1988 statistical research, which estimated the whole population of the Iranians in the U.S. to be about 341,000. Naficy stated that "middle-aged and elderly people form the largest segment of the Iranian television audience" (p. 113). The younger generation of Iranian-Americans, who are fluent in English, watch American television channels, and children watch cartoons on American television with which Iranian children's programs cannot compete (Bibian, producer of Jaam-e Jam, as cited by Naficy, 1993c, p. 113).

In terms of program format, the 1st decade of Iranian television was overwhelmingly in magazine format. Most programs imitated the predominant magazine format of mainstream media. Midnight Show apparently tried to simulate ABC's Nightline, and calling its host "Iran's Ted Koppel" (p. 122). Ma, translated as Us, which is no longer produced, was fashioned after ABC's Oprah Winfrey, but ironically its hostess was billed as "the Iranian Barbara Walters." (There is more discussion of magazine format in chapter 4).
Moreover, pre-Revolutionary programs such as music videos, musical performances, and a few television serials brought from Iran were the staple of early exilic programming. The conditions of these materials were for the most part very poor—grainy and difficult to watch—due to being copied many times.

It has been noted that communication is the essence of culture and that "language is the primary symbolic code on which all human communication" depends (Howell, 1992, p. 217). Languages "have intrinsic value as the primary source of ethnic identity and cultural expression" (p. 217). Today, in order for language and culture to thrive, it is necessary to use the means of mass communication. Howell asserted that "broadcasting seems to invest its content with status" (p. 217). Thus, if a language is used on the television, it automatically acquires legitimacy and credibility in the minds of the viewers. This is more so in the case of children (pp. 217-218). That is why so many of the ethnically produced television programs exclusively utilize their respective ethnic language. Although the use of the native or mother tongue does not prevent assimilation, especially in the case of the second generation immigrants, or prevent the co-opting of the indigenous culture by the powerful mainstream media, it helps the community by giving an understanding of the language, by increasing the sense of cohesiveness in the immigrant community, and by working as a protective shield.
Twenty-three of the five programs listed in Table 1 are in Persian; one is in Assyrian; and another is in English. The only English program is You & the World of Medicine, a medical program produced by Iranian medical doctors. It was first aired in late 1991. Some programs at one time or another experimented with the use of English, but each time, viewers have reacted negatively, forcing the producers to abandon the use of English. Of course, some of the television commercials and some talk shows or call-in shows in which ordinary individuals try to express their views, use a mixture of Persian and English called Penglish. Older viewers have always reacted more strongly in showing their desire for Persian language programming. Naficy (1993c) argued that overreliance on the native language has discouraged younger people from watching exilic television (p. 113). Though this may be true, one must also account for the homogenization and assimilation effects of the mainstream media, especially television.

Currently, on the International Channel Network, there are six programs in Persian and one Afghani program that is also in Persian. These programs can be accessed via cable TV in Dallas and its suburbs of Plano, Richardson, Garland, and Mesquite (Cable Guide, Jan. 1997). There is more on ICN in chapter 4.

During the 1st decade, Iranian television’s discourse generally can be summarized into “disavowal of exile,” "fetishization" of pre-revolution Iran,
and "anti-Islamic Republic politics" (Naficy, 1993c, p. 79). By and large, the Iranian television in the United States and its producers engaged in an anti-Iranian government propaganda campaign. Through monopolization of the exilic media, along with harassment, intimidation, character assassination, and similar tactics, they effectively imposed their own views and politics on the whole of the Iranian immigrant community. By excluding other voices, they authorized themselves to define the community's issues. Naficy wrote "The exigencies and vulnerabilities of exile, at least in its early phase, open the producers to heavy political (even financial) influences brought on by powerful political factions" (p. 98). The commercial nature of the Iranian television, that is, income generated through selling commercial time to Iranian businesses, made these television programs vulnerable to influence and manipulation by the monarchists who owned most of these businesses.

Naficy pointed out:

There is a relationship between ethnicity and socioeconomic characteristic and achievement which has a determining impact on exile television . . . 82 percent of Iranian Jews are self-employed, more than any other new immigrants groups in the United States . . . . The high percentage of self-employment among Jews and Armenians means that they have a disproportionate role in sustaining exile television and an extraordinary power to influence Iranian exile discourse. In addition, if we take into account the high representation of Jews, Armenians, and Baha'is in the production and distribution of music and entertainment recordings, the extent of their influence becomes more evident. (1993c, p. 27)
In short, the discourses of a heterogeneous Iranian community became homogeneous and univocal. The focus of television in particular has been intense nostalgia and idealized fantasies of the past and of pre-revolution Iran. Regardless of the monovocal nature of their discourse, Iranian immigrants in the U.S., through popular culture and television, have created a "symbolic community... In it certain representation of home and the past are repeatedly circulated and reinforced--thus, for the moment, unifying and preserving their cultural and ethnic identity" (Naficy, 1993b, p. 325). However, it has been argued that the minority media have a "dual role," meaning that, although they are used as tools for cultural preservation, they could at the same time "surreptitiously contribute to the assimilation of ethnic minority audiences to the dominant culture within which they are immersed" (Riggins, 1992, p. 276). Indeed, there are clear indications that the commercially driven Iranian media function both as preservers of some aspects of Iranian culture (particularly the Persian language, music, and dance) and as surreptitious agents of assimilation into the consumer culture.

Naficy (1993c) has observed that, by reproducing consumerist ideology, the minority media procures for the dominant culture what Bourdieu (1977) called "cultural capital" (p. 34, p. 63). Naficy stated that "the formation of the new self as a consumer is evident predominantly in commercials [of the exilic media]... The incessant repetition of commercials on Iranian
television not only makes economic sense for the advertisers and program
makers but is productive ideologically" (p. 119). The exilic popular culture
and television's "resistive and counter hegemonic spin" is thus ultimately
turned "chiefly into social agencies of assimilation" (p. 192).

Moreover, the commercially driven economic relationship is also
responsible for "rationalizing and professionalizing" the immigrant media
including television, thus bringing them more in line with consumer culture.
This professionalization is manifested in advertising-driven schedules, time-
brokerage, syndication, and creation of advertising agencies. "Professionalism
entails internalization of ideological, narrative, and aesthetic codes of
representation" (Naficy, 1993, p. 122), which are tied to consumerism
symbiotically, if not directly.

Finally, two major factors impede further proliferation of Iranian cultural
and popular products, including televisual products. The first factor is the
relatively low population of the Iranian immigrants in the United States.
Contrary to self-serving claims from television and pop-music producers and
self-appointed political leaders, the population of the Iranian immigrants in
the U.S., as well as in other countries outside of Iran, is too low to form a
sufficient market for pop cultural products. Moreover, this population is
scattered all over the U.S. creating further distribution obstacles.
Second, and perhaps more important, is the violation of copyright laws and intellectual property. Television programs and music videos are repeatedly copied not only by individuals, but also by businesses and distributors without compensating the producers and the artists. In doing so, a major incentive is eliminated; that is, the incentive of bona fide financial return. Furthermore, in the case of audiovisual products, the copies are not made from the masters—resulting in inferior products and thus reducing the desirability of those products.

The focus of this chapter has been the Iranian immigrants and Iranian television in the United States. In the next chapter, the demographics of the Iranian immigrants in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex are reviewed. In chapter 4, the role of ethnic media and the Iranian media in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex, particularly the Iranian public access television, is examined.
CHAPTER 3

IRANIANS IN DALLAS/FORT WORTH

This chapter provides demographic data on Iranians living in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex (DFW). The information contained in this chapter is based mainly on recent research conducted by Mobasher (1996). He combined fieldwork and a community survey to arrive at the data that are presented in this chapter. During the fieldwork (September 1993-February 1994), Mobasher participated in many community events and frequently visited Iranian restaurants and grocery stores. Additionally, he took part in two local Iranian radio broadcasts. The purpose of the fieldwork was to be acquainted with the local Iranian community and to publicize his research project.

For the community survey, due to the lack of a complete list of Iranian residents in Dallas, the nonprobability sampling was used. Mobasher (1996) distributed 3,500 questionnaires. Of the questionnaires, 2500 were inserted in a local Iranian magazine, which was then mailed to Iranian households. In addition, he placed 700 questionnaires at local Iranian restaurants and grocery stores and personally distributed 300 questionnaires at community events. All questionnaires had self-addressed envelopes, but no stamps. The survey was in Persian and had 28 questions. In all 485, questionnaires were completed.
and returned, a 14% response rate. To obtain the demographic characteristics, the data were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). Mobasher noted that "since various techniques were utilized to collect as many questionnaires as possible, the results of the community survey can be considered representative of the universe of Iranian immigrants in Dallas" (p. 19).

According to Mobasher’s 1996 research, 63% of the Iranian population in the DFW area arrived in the U.S. between 1977-1980. He divided the arrival of Iranian immigrants in the DFW area into four phases. The first phase, between 1976-1978, saw the arrival of mostly students who came from large Iranian cities. Initially, these students had no intention of remaining in the United States after completion of their studies. However, after the 1979 revolution, and due to unfavorable economic and political circumstances in Iran, many of these students decided to remain in the United States.

The second phase, between 1980-1983, was characterized by the arrival of Iranian students, not from Iran, but from other small colleges and towns in the U.S. Southwest. Among the reasons for this relocation were continuation of education in larger universities, better employment opportunities, and the resemblance of an Iranian community due to the existence of a few Iranian restaurants and grocery stores in the DFW area.
The third phase occurred between 1983-1987. These immigrants were primarily refugees from Iran who had lived in another country for a few years before coming to the United States. Some of these refugees were single men who left Iran to avoid being drafted by the military. And some were Baha'i members who left Iran due to religious persecution.

The fourth phase occurred in 1986 and continues today. These latest immigrants are mainly the parents, siblings, fiancées, and spouses of the previous Iranian immigrants who have become naturalized U.S. citizens. By becoming a naturalized citizen, one can obtain residency for her/his spouse, children, parents, and siblings.

There is no precise count of the Iranian population in the DFW area. The only number comes from the mailing list and circulation of the locally published and distributed Iranian magazine Parastoo, which estimates about 3,000 Iranian households. Mobasher (1996) considers this number to be "an acceptable estimate" (p. 75).

Iranian immigrants in the DFW area came from all parts of Iran, but they came mostly from large cities such as Tehran, Abadan, Ahvaz, Mashad, Esfahan, and Shiraz. Ethnically, they are diverse, consisting of Persians, Turks, and a small number of Lors and Kurds. Religiously, they are also diverse, made up of Muslims (mostly nonpracticing), Armenian and Assyrian Christians, Baha'is, Jews, Zoroastrians, agnostics, and atheists. What links the
heterogeneous Iranian community together is their shared Farsi language, history, and culture.

Iranians are not concentrated in any one single neighborhood, but rather they are spread throughout the DFW area. They live in predominantly Anglo neighborhoods, and nearly 60% of them own a home, as indicated in Mobasher's fieldwork and community survey. Iranians have close ties to their families, relatives, and friends. In terms of age composition, slightly more than 70% are between the ages of 30 and 50. Table 2 gives the breakdown of age composition. Mobasher (1996) argued that the relatively young age composition of Iranian immigrants, the number of single Iranian males and females, and the current increase in marrying with individuals from Iran and then bringing them to the U.S., can result in a high potential natural growth rate of the Iranian population in the DFW area.

The majority of Iranians in the DFW area are Muslims. However, most of the Muslims are nonpracticing and do not observe Islamic duties, events, ceremonies, and holidays. In contrast, members of other religions are more devout, participate in religious rituals, and are politically more active. Mobasher's (1996) findings in regard to the religiosity of the Iranian community in DFW are consistent with Bozorgmehr's (1992) and Ansari's (1992) findings of Iranian immigrants in Los Angeles and other parts of the
United States. Table 3 presents the religious affiliation of the Iranian immigrants in the DFW area.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17-22</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-29</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 and over</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3

Religious Orientation of the Iranian Immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
<th>Muslim</th>
<th>Baha'i</th>
<th>Christian</th>
<th>Jew</th>
<th>Zoroastrian</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As indicated in Table 4, almost 70% of Iranian immigrants in the DFW area are married, whereas nearly 21% are single. Another 8.3% are divorced, and fewer than 1% are separated.

Iranians in the DFW area, similar to the Iranian immigrants in other communities in the U.S. (Bozorgmehr & Sabagh, 1988), have a high level of education. Mobasher's (1996) research indicated that more than 41% have a
bachelor's degree, while more than 28% have graduate degrees. Table 5 presents the breakdown of their educational level.

Table 4

Marital Status of Iranian Immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Separated</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In terms of employment, as indicated in Table 6, the vast majority of Iranians are employed full-time. This is particularly notable for female Iranians. Over 50% of Iranian women have a full-time occupation, while more than 18% hold a part-time job. The Iranian women's contribution to family income is remarkable, considering that they, to a large extent, also shoulder household chores and child-rearing responsibilities.

Table 7 shows the occupational distribution in Mobasher's (1996) sample. Some Iranians work in fields related to their educational degrees; however, many Iranians are self-employed--mostly a one-man/woman operation--and mostly unrelated to their educational background.
Table 5

**Highest Educational Level of Iranian Immigrants in Percentage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some High School But No Diploma</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College But No Degree</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>41.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree (Hair &amp; Nail, Travel Agency, Etc.)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 6

**Employment Status of Iranian Immigrants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife With Job</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired With Job</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student With Job</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7

Occupational Status of Iranian Immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafting</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerical</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretarial</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operative</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Because of the method of classifying Iranian immigrants by the Census Bureau, which does not consider them a protected minority, Iranians cannot benefit from affirmative action policies. Although 82.9% of Iranian immigrants in the DFW area have college, graduate, and Ph.D. education and degrees, only 45.7% of them hold engineering, professional, or managerial jobs.9

Table 8 indicates the annual income of the Iranian Immigrants in the DFW area. It should be noted that the dollar amount of earnings is not the same as the dollar amount of salaries. Many Iranian immigrants brought a significant amount of money from Iran. Many have inherited money from their parents, which they have converted to dollars and brought to the United States. In addition, many are still transferring their assets or their family's and
relatives' assets from Iran. Some of these assets are used to buy luxurious houses in the middle-class and upper-middle class sections of the DFW area, some are invested in business, and some of the assets are put in banks, CDs, and mutual funds, which produces additional income. Since Mobasher has not specified that the figures in Table 7 are salaries, but rather "income," it should be considered total annual income generated from various sources including salaries, investments, dividends, and so on.

Table 9 shows the patterns of language usage by Iranian immigrants in the DFW area. Language is one of the major components, if not the major component, of ethnicity and cultural identity. The Persian or Farsi language binds the heterogeneous Iranian community together. However, in addition to Persian, Iranian ethnic and religious subgroups each have their own language which they consider their mother tongue. Table 9 indicates the usage of a mother tongue--whether Persian or something else--the usage of English, and the usage of both. About 27% of the sample use both their mother tongue and English at home. Mobasher (1996) observed that "this seems to be the pattern of language usage within families with second generation members who are not fluent in the native language" (p. 94).

Unlike the spoken language, not all Iranian ethnic subgroups have a written language, and most available written sources, such as books and magazines, are in Persian. Of course, Persian books and magazines are not as
widely available as are similar items in English; however, there are Persian language weekly papers and magazines to which one can subscribe. Additionally, Iranian grocery stores sell some Iranian magazines and papers. There is also an Iranian Cultural Center, established by local Iranian immigrants, which has a library from which patrons can check out books and magazines. Furthermore, there is a locally published bi-monthly Persian magazine, Parastoo, which can be obtained free of charge from Iranian grocery stores. As indicated in Table 10, more than 40% of Iranians in the DFW area do not spend any time per week reading in Persian. This finding is surprising and maybe due to a lack of written sources such as books and magazines in sub-ethnic languages.

Table 8

Annual Income of Iranian Immigrants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$5,000-10,000</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-20,000</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-30,000</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000-40,000</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000-50,000</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000-60,000</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000-70,000</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70,000-80,000</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000-100,000</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 and More</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9

Language Spoken At Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother Tongue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Persian, Turkish, etc.)</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 10

Number of Hours Read Persian per Week

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Per Week</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>40.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 Hours</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 Hours</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 Hours</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To summarize, Iranians in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex are ethnically and religiously heterogeneous, although the vast majority are nonpracticing Muslims. Iranian immigrants are spread all over the DFW area; therefore, there is no spatial community, no "Little Iran," so to say. They are relatively young, place a great significance on nuclear family structure, and keep close contact with relatives and friends. They have high levels of educational achievement. The vast majority are economically active and hold full-time and
part-time jobs. Only a small percentage are unemployed, students with no jobs, or retired with no jobs.
CHAPTER 4

IRANIAN ACCESS TELEVISION OF DALLAS

This chapter begins with a brief examination of the Iranian media in Dallas, followed by a look at the functions and features of minority media. The remainder of this chapter is a case study of Iranian televisual activities in Dallas, which are divided into four phases. This case study includes background information, a comparative analysis of the program mix, a discussion of the magazine genre, and some elaboration on Iranian music videos.

As of January 1997, the Iranian media in Dallas consisted of one bi-monthly magazine, two FM side-band radios stations (SCA), one public access television program and six television programs via International Channel Network. All of the above media are in Persian. Additionally, International Channel Network carries an Afghani program, which is also in Persian.

Parastoo (trans. swallow), is a locally published bi-monthly magazine. It is advertising supported. Its content includes many ads by local Iranian businesses and professionals, articles by Iranian physicians and mental health
professionals, poetry, sports, commentary, short stories, some community news, and announcements of local events. This magazine has been in business since 1988.

The two FM side-band (SCA) radio stations, Pars Radio and Iranzamin Radio, were established in 1992. In order to receive their programs, one must purchase a special receiver from the stations or from the local Iranian grocery stores. The revenues of these two stations come from the sale of commercial spots and the sale of their special receivers. Their programming includes music, some community news and announcements of local events, advertisements, poetry, interviews, commentary, some children's programming, and call-in programs. Pars Radio receives most of its programs, except local news and commercials, via satellite from Los Angeles. The same programs are also beamed via satellites to other metropolitan areas in the United States.

Iranzamin Radio was established by Ali Tajbakhsh, who in December 1984 also established the first Iranian television program in Dallas. Iranzamin Radio operates 24 hours a day and shares programs, in a network, with similar radio operations in Atlanta and Las Vegas. These three stations produce their own programs.

In addition to the Iranian public access television program series, which is case studied later in this chapter, six Iranian television programs and one
Afghani television program (in Persian) come to Dallas via satellite. The International Channel Network that carries these programs is offered by some cable companies in the DFW Metroplex. Table 11 lists these programs, along with their scheduled air time. Except Aftab, which is produced in New York, all the other five programs are produced in Los Angeles. As indicated in Table 11, some of these programs are aired twice a week.

Table 11

Schedule of International Channel Network’s Persian Programs in DFW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Duration (in minutes)</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 Days of Week</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>12-1 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sima-y Ashena</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>1-2 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Wen.</td>
<td>1-2 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emshab Ba Parviz</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>2-2:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Wen.</td>
<td>2-2:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ariana Afghanistan (In Persian)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Th.</td>
<td>1:30-2:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaam-e Jam</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>12-1 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanin</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>1-2 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aftab</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>1-2:30 a.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Role of the Minority Media

Contrary to the common perception, minority media, including television, are not unifunctional; that is, they do not just function to preserve cultural heritage of the minorities. Some scholars argue that minority media may unintentionally aid the assimilation of their audiences or readers to mainstream values (Black & Leithner, 1987; Hardt, 1989; Subervi-Velez,
Early in the 20th century, many sociologists argued that minority media encouraged assimilation of the new immigrants by informing, sometimes inadvertently, their audiences and readers about the dominant social values in the United States (Bogardus, 1933; Park, 1922).

Subervi-Velez (1986) wrote that minority media have a "dual role." On the one hand, they could help in the preservation of native culture; on the other hand, they could promote assimilation. According to Riggins (1992) "It appears that the long-term effects of ethnic minority media is neither total assimilation nor total cultural preservation but some moderate degree of preservation that represents a compromise between these two extremes" (p. 276). Minority media can help the cause of cultural preservation, but by no means is it a "panacea." There are several reason for this shortcoming. First, minority survival is not totally dependent on minority media; it also requires a critical demographic mass. Second, it requires the persistence of traditional and cultural institutions. Third, it requires a good measure of political conviction and skill. Fourth, it needs the good intentions of the state and the dominant culture to accommodate minority cultures. Riggins (1992) contended that:

"Modern states control the access to media technology and have the means to efficiently interfere with forms of broadcasting they consider subversive . . . . Accepting ethnic and cultural pluralism cannot mean that a nation promotes political independence for its minorities." (p. 276)
Moreover, Riggins (1992) argued that there are some features of minority media that may facilitate a minority's assimilation into the dominant culture. There are specifically four features that are pertinent to the Iranian television and media in Dallas. First, minority media cannot sever all ties with the dominant culture. Thus, they also create, at least from time to time, assimilationist content. Second, not all content in minority media is created by minority activists, journalists, producers, and others. At times, extensive use is made of information produced by mainstream media and institutions. Third, the minority media use genres borrowed from the mass media. The ubiquity of these genres makes it difficult to conceive of alternatives. This is especially the case when training is received from mainstream institutions. Fourth, the minority media use the majority language, in this case English.

Riggins (1992) has also postulated features of minority media that may counter cultural assimilation. First, the minority media can depict (in story topics, headlines, choice of photographs, videos, etc.) group members in assertive postures, as agents of change rather than simply victims of change. Second, by using the mother language, the minority media can show group members, especially the young, role models who speak the native language, thus validating the language and its group members.

Third, in order to counteract the usually negative coverage or no coverage of minorities and their issues by the mainstream media, a minority
news agenda can be created. "Minorities feel not only that they are neglected by the majority's media but that the meager coverage they do receive concentrates on the wrong events or on topics of minor interest" (Riggins, 1992, p. 283). Fourth, the minority media can announce and publicize community events. This can encourage and facilitate "the interactional density of communities which are spread over large areas" (p. 284).

Fifth, the minority media can encourage thriving business community by writing articles or giving television time in the form of interviews to minority businesses. This type of coverage can be considered unpaid advertisements. Sixth, the very existence of minority media has symbolic significance in terms of public validation and a sign of sophistication, both to the group members and to outsiders. Seventh, minority media practitioners can use their skills—in writing, speaking, public presentation—which they have acquired through their media work to further the community's participation and effectiveness in various social and political causes.

Riggins (1992) warned that the most obvious danger to ethnic media is the inability to survive beyond 2 or 3 years, especially in the case of radio and television. Minority media can prolong their survival by taking a few measures. First, they should avoid grandiose undertakings. Raising people's expectations only to disappoint them is more detrimental than planning modest projects and finishing them. Second, they should take occasional
surveys, even informal surveys, to determine what the community wants. It is more important to give the community members the information they want than to give them information that is perceived to be good for them. Third, mutually supportive institutions--local, regional, and national--should join forces.

The focus of the remainder of this chapter is on Iranian televisual activities in Dallas, including background information, management structure, program mix, and an examination of Iranian music videos.

Iranian televisual activities in Dallas can be divided into four periods and four television program series: Pars Television, Iranian Television of Dallas, Seema Television, and Iranian Television of Texas; all four are produced by single individuals with the help of volunteers. Background and management information are derived from one interview with Ali Tajbakhsh, producer of Pars Television, and two interviews with Behrooz Afkhami, producer of Iranian Television of Dallas and Iranian Television of Texas. (Appendixes A, B, and C contain the text of the three interviews.) The more accurate term for public access television programs is teletime rather than television. But since they are named television by the producers, and for clarity, throughout this study they are referred to as Iranian television.
Pars Television

The first Iranian television in Dallas was Pars Television. It was established by Ali Tajbakhsh with the help of five volunteers in December 1984. The bulk of Pars Television's programming (76%, see Table 14) was provided, free of charge, by Jaame-e Jam television and Iranian television from Los Angeles. Tajbakhsh had to pay the postage. However, the total cost of producing and airing each 1-hour program was $200-300. In making the tapes ready to be aired in Dallas, the portions that were relevant only to Los Angeles—for example, Los Angeles commercials—had to be edited out, and instead, local commercials, introductions, and announcements were inserted.

Pars Television was aired by Heritage Cable Company in Dallas via an open channel (nonpublic access channel) and a public access channel. The cost of leasing the open channel was, incredibly, only $50 for 2 weekly hours. The 1-hour programs were aired in Dallas every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. and at 7:00 p.m. on the open channel, and the same program was also aired on Thursday at 5:00 p.m. on the public access channel free of cost. It is noteworthy that all three time slots are considered relatively good time slots. Pars Television's programs were also aired in Plano for a few months, and some of the programs were sent to San Antonio to be aired there on a public access channel.
The objectives of Pars Television, Tajbakhsh stated, were "cultural . . . to preserve our Persian language for the younger generations." Among the problems facing Tajbakhsh were the inherent difficulty of producing television programs, the time required, the difficulty in dealing with the cable companies in Dallas and Plano, not enough volunteers and community support, the cost of producing the programs, and, finally, not knowing how many people viewed the programs and whether it was worth the effort. The above difficulties caused Tajbakhsh to stop producing Pars Television programs after little more than 1 year of operation.

Upon request to have access to all Pars Television's programs for selecting a sample, Tajbakhsh made 9 hours of programs available. From the available 9 hours, 5 hours were randomly selected. Assuming that Pars Television aired 52 programs during its 1 year operation, the available 9 programs would comprise 17.3% of the programs. With the help of a stop watch, all program segments were timed. The mean for each program segments was then calculated and converted to percentage. (The same procedure was used in program analysis of the other three Iranian television.)

The results are presented in Tables 13 and 14.

As indicated in Table 13, on the average more than 58% of the 60 minutes in each program was allocated to music videos and musical performances. (These two categories are further discussed at the end of this
Slightly over 12% of the programs consisted of educational materials. This category contained programs that gave dental, medical, and health information or contained information about revered Iranian poets. Comedies, often political satires, made up 11.86% of the 60 minutes. The poetry category (3.93%) consisted of recitation of poems, often with atavistic overtones and accompanied by classical Iranian music in the background and sometimes accompanied by still photos of Iranian monuments or by videos about the Iran-Iraq war, where people were shown in ruins sobbing over their dead loved ones.

Commentaries by and interviews with various monarchist personalities took 2.84% of the programming time. On the average, 6.06% of each 1-hour was taken up by opening-logos/end-credits and introductions/program promos. Unlike Iranian Television of Dallas and Iranian Television of Texas—which are discussed later—Pars Television was allowed to air commercials. Slightly more than 5% of the program time was allocated to commercials. These commercials consisted of ads for an Iranian grocery store, upcoming concerts, and theatrical production available on video tape.

As indicated in Table 14, of the programs in the sample, 15.48% had an "overt" political tone. Overt political tone is defined as direct references to the Iranian government or its leaders in a clearly negative or derogatory manner—for example, mocking officials of the Iranian government in
comedies and political satires—or interviews about the progress and preparation of the monarchists in regard to their final descent upon the Iranian government or promoting and bestowing lavish praises upon leaders of various monarchist factions. Furthermore, many of the station promos solicited volunteers who were adherent to the monarchist principals, or viewers were invited to attend various monarchist meetings. The results of the program analysis clearly contradict the assertion by Tajbakhsh that the objectives of Pars Television was only "cultural." In any case, this finding is not surprising. As previously mentioned, Bibian, producer of Jaam-e Jam, had stated that their mission was to "wage a campaign against the government of Iran" (as cited in Naficy, 1993c, p. 82). As it was evident from the sample tapes and as Tajbakhsh stated in the interview, the bulk of Pars Television programs (76.1%) came from Jaam-e Jam and Iranian televisions. As indicated in Table 14, only 23.96% of Pars Television's programs—consisting of logos, introductions, commercials, and some educational material—were locally produced.

In the interview, Tajbakhsh stated that Pars Television did not have any repeat programs (reruns) and that "all of the programs were new and produced weekly." Although the analysis of the sample did not detect any of the programs re-aired in its entirety; however, it showed that 17.87% of program segments were repeat segments. Considering that, on the average,
11.14% of the program time consisted of commercials/logos/introductions/end credits, which were not counted as repeat segments, the actual percentage of repeated segments should be revised from 17.87% to 20.11%.

Iranian Television of Dallas

Established in 1993, Iranian Television of Dallas was produced by Behrooz Afkhami with the help of a group of volunteers. This was a 30-minute program every 2 weeks, with the same program repeated twice, making it, in effect, half an hour of programming produced every month. The cost of producing every half hour was $50-75. Iranian Television of Dallas was produced using Dallas public access facilities and was aired on public access channels in six cities (Dallas, Arlington, Garland, Richardson, Plano, and Rowlett).

Afhkami stated that the motivation behind producing Iranian programs was "the realization that there was a need for a community television in Dallas" in order to get the "Iranian community together in the Metroplex and preserving our culture." The management structure was based on "four or five" committees—for example, an educational committee, cultural committee, children programming committee, and so forth. The head of each committee was also on the central committee. Each committee would decide what the next program should consist of, and then the central committee would either approve or disapprove the committees plans. Afkhami was a member of the
central committee; however, because he had established Iranian Television of Dallas, he could override the central committee's decisions. Afkhami argued that the committee structure caused many problems and delays because they "spent lot of time discussing and arguing about what to do and how to do it."

There were other problems in producing and airing the programs. First, Afkhami had to deal with different cable companies for airing the programs in six Metroplex cities, preventing him from airing the same program simultaneously or even in the same week. Thus at "any given week every city had a different program." Second, there was friction between Afkhami, who wanted to make entertainment programs, and some committee members, who were leftist and wanted to make more educational programs. Afkhami stated that "the situation got to a point where several of the committee members resigned and even accused me of wanting to dominate."

A number of problems caused Afkhami to stop producing Iranian Television of Dallas. First, the programs could not be aired in different cities in the Metroplex the same day or even the same week, causing complaints and dissatisfaction among the viewers. Second, the committee structure was not productive and created friction between the volunteers and the producer. Third was the lack of experience in television production. Fourth, because some of the committee members were leftist, the monarchists did not want to volunteer or "help financially." Fifth, Afkhami wanted to go back to school
and finish his master's degree. The combination of the above problems caused the operation of Iranian Television of Dallas to come to a halt in just 1 year.

For program analysis, 20 half-hour programs were made available, out of which 5 hours were randomly selected. Afkhami stated that they effectively produced half an hour of programs every month for 1 year which should have resulted in 12 programs. But 20 programs were made available for sample selection; thus, he must have made a mistake in recalling either the number of programs produced each month or the duration that Iranian Television of Dallas operated. In any case, it seems that 100% of the programs were made available for sample selection.

In terms of programming, 22.49% were music videos and musical performances (Table 13). All the music videos were produced in California. However, the majority of the musical performances were produced locally, and showcasing local Iranian musicians in solo recitals and traditional Iranian dances by teenagers. More than 20% was allocated to children's program segments. Children's segments consisted of rudimentary puppet shows, singing and dancing, musical recitals by children, and reading Persian children books with the camera showing the images in the books.

More than 23% of the programming was devoted to educational segments. These segments included such topics as Persian language and history. Moreover, one of these educational segments had a rare critical tone,
discussing how Europeans have traditionally altered world history to their benefit. Slightly over 3% of the programs consisted of comedies. Again, in one of the skits, there was a critical tone in terms of satirizing Western lifestyle. Slightly more than 9% time was given to poetry recitals. Interviews and commentaries also took slightly more than 9% of programming time, while 11.61% consisted of sponsor promos/introductions/logos and end credits.

Iranian Television of Dallas had only 2.36% overt political content. It had no repeated program segments. However, every half-hour program was aired twice in a month. Additionally, more than 87% of its programming was locally produced, making it more a public access television in the sense that it had low production quality and high local flavor. Also, few segments had been taped on location—for example, the coverage of a fundraiser to benefit Iranian Television of Dallas.

Seema Television

In February 1993, Mehdi Keshmirian, an Iranian access television producer in Austin, Texas met Afkhami. Keshmirian was interested in having his access program series, Seema Television, aired in the DFW area. Since Afkhami had finished his master’s degree, he now had the time to become involved again with producing access television, so the two decided to cooperate. The agreement was for Afkhami to fax some information about
the events taking place in Dallas to Keshmirian, and Keshmirian would, in turn, incorporate that information into his access program to make it relevant to the viewers in Dallas. Keshmirian would then mail the program, and Afkhami would air it in Dallas on a public access channel. The arrangement called for Afkhami to pay Keshmirian $50 a program to cover the cost of blank tape and Keshmirian's extra effort.

In this study, Seema Television is analyzed separately and as an entity of its own because of the following reasons. The programs were produced in Austin by a different producer, Keshmirian, and the program's name—Seema Television—opening logo, and musical signature were different. Moreover, the programs were stylistically different, with higher production qualities.

Seema Television's programs were 30 minutes each and aired every 2 weeks in Dallas. Afkhami has stated that only "5 minutes" about Dallas was added to each program to make them relevant to the viewers in Dallas (Appendix C). However, a viewing of Seema Television's sample programs revealed that the samples contained more than 5 minutes of material related to Dallas.

In any case, the collaboration between Afkhami and Keshmirian did not last long. Afkhami has stated that there was "the problem of distance." It was difficult to send information to Austin on a regular basis and then wait for the programs to arrive. Furthermore, Afkhami and Keshmirian had "a difference
of philosophy." "He [Keshmirian] was trying to find ways to make a living through producing programs," while Afkhami's objective was to "promote the Iranian culture" (Appendix C). After 8 months of collaboration on sixteen 30-minute programs, Afkhami decided to establish Iranian Television of Texas, which is discussed later.

Upon request, all the 16 programs produced by Seema Television were made available by Afkhami. From these programs, 10 programs--5 hours--were randomly selected for analysis. As indicated in Table 13, more than 23% of the programs were musical performances locally produced in Austin, while nearly 15% were imported music videos produced in Los Angeles. Close to 16% were children's segments. They included the reading of children's books with the camera showing the images in the books, and the telling of children's stories by a young male. The young man's character was an interesting hybrid, a mixture of Mr. Rogers and Forrest Gump. He projected Mr. Rogers's love and patience, along with Forrest Gump's inherent simplemindedness.

More than 9% time was allocated to a new program segment, the on location coverage of local events, such as a traditional Sizdah Bidar holiday, which is the 13th day of the Iranian new year, celebrated by families going to picnics in the countryside and parks. Additionally, there was the new category of a cooking show, which showcased an Iranian female chef along with her recipes for Iranian dishes and pastries. On the average, 5.59% of program
time was allocated to the cooking segment. *Seema Television* had no commentaries, that is, no editorializing in a direct way; instead, nearly 11% of the time was given to interviews with local Iranian personalities. There was also a news segment (3.05%) about current affairs in Iran, gathered from non-local news sources.

Comedies took up nearly 6% of the programming time. These were locally produced short skits interspersed in the programs. The comedy skits featured two young male Iranian performers with different ethnicities, similar to having, for example, an Oriental-American and an Italian-American or a Hispanic-American and an African-American. Some of the comedy skits were quite funny for access television. Another feature of *Seema Television* was the absence of didactic educational segments. Moreover, less than 1% was given to recitation of poetry.

Although it was access television, *Seema Television* contained commercials. In Austin, access producers are allowed to solicit and air commercials in order to generate revenue to cover their expenses. No commercials are allowed to be aired in Dallas and the suburbs, yet, interestingly, *Seema Television* was allowed to be aired in Dallas. The commercials were simple in terms of techniques and esthetics—often a voice over a photograph, a logo, or a blinking graphic of a restaurant, a local
magazine, auto dealership, mechanic shop, carpet gallery, insurance agent, travel agency, and so forth.

In general, Seema Television programs were varied, original, and interesting. These programs had shorter segments and faster pace and editing. In comparison with other access programs, they displayed higher production quality in terms of camera operation, editing techniques, colorful graphics, and mise en scene. Clearly, this higher quality can be attributed to Keshmirian's background and experience in television production in Iran (Appendix C).

Iranian Television of Texas

"Distance" problems and differences in "philosophy" prompted Afkhami to establish Iranian Television of Texas, producing programs in Dallas rather than collaborating with Seema Television in Austin. The first program was aired on October 28, 1993. Afkhami's objectives were to use access television to "promote the Iranian culture." After going through the training provided by Dallas Community Television, Afkhami and 13 volunteers produced 30-minutes of programming every 2 weeks, which later was increased to 1 hour of programming every 2 weeks. The programs of Iranian Television of Texas are aired once a week; that is, the same program is aired twice. Currently, Iranian Television of Texas is aired in 14 Metroplex cities (Table 15).
Moreover, some programs are occasionally sent to Houston and San Antonio to be aired on public access channels.

The cost of producing and airing each program is approximately $45 per tape. Since some cable companies operate in more than one city, eight tapes or copies are required to air the same program in all 14 cities, thus bringing the total cost of producing and airing each program in 14 cities to $360. The revenues for covering the expenses come from the sponsors, including individuals, families, and businesses.

In terms of management structure, Afkhami conceptualizes and produces the programs with some "members of the community" giving "input on issues" covered (Appendix C). Technical operations such as camera, switch board, and audio, are done by the volunteers, who have gone through the technical training provided by Dallas Community Television. (A fee is charged for training classes.)

In terms of the number of viewers, Afkhami estimates that "less than 2,000" households watch Iranian Television of Texas. Table 12 shows the results of Mobasher's (1996) community survey in regard to time spent by Iranians watching Iranian television programs. As discussed in chapter 3, Mobasher considers 3,000 to be an acceptable estimate of the number of Iranian households in the DFW Metroplex. Some individuals live with roommates, but the vast majority are married and have children, and some of
these married people have their siblings, parents, and in-laws living with them (for precise numbers and elaboration see Mobasher, 1996). Assuming that each household has on the average 4 individuals, the resulting population estimation of the Iranian community in the Metroplex would be about 12,000.

Table 12 indicates that 27.9%, approximately 3,348 individuals, watch between 1-5 hours of Iranian television per week. As discussed earlier, seven other Persian language programs are available in some areas of the Metroplex. Thus, what number of this estimated 3,348 individuals watch Iranian Television of Texas is unknown.

In terms of problems facing Iranian Television of Texas, there are always those of insufficient financial support, not enough sponsors, not enough volunteers, and lack of community support. In terms of difficulties in producing access television programs, Afkhami stated:

You have to produce the program . . . to reserve studio . . . line up all the technical people . . . plan the program . . . edit the program in another day . . . make copies . . . make different cable companies' deadlines. Assuming you do all of these. And then the cable company screws up, saying the tape didn’t run . . . The cable company treats access television like unwanted step-child . . . Or they give us times that [are] not good. For example...7:00 a.m. Friday morning.

The cable companies argue that, if people want "to watch it bad enough they would record it," regardless of what time it is aired. At the same time, viewers become upset when they program their VCRs to record something at an odd time and then realize it has not been aired. The cable companies are fully aware that the local access producers are struggling for the same viewers
that have been appropriated by the giant transnational television industry.

Furthermore, the cable companies know that it does not take much either to wear down the producers or to make their audiences change channels. (For different accounts of how the cable companies have historically been uncooperative with public access producers see various issues of the Community Television Review)

Upon request, 27 one-hour programs were made available for analysis. Five hours were randomly selected and analyzed, and the results are presented in Tables 13 and 14. In all, more than 27% of the time was allocated to music videos and musical performances. All of the music videos and a portion of the musical performances were non-locally produced, with some imported from Los Angeles. Slightly over 9% were children's segments, made up of children singing and dancing, musical recitals, and rudimentary puppet shows. Nearly 15% was taken up by coverage of local events, such as on-location coverage of No-Ruz (Iranian New year) celebrations, and entertainment news related to upcoming or past Iranian concerts and theatrical productions.

Slightly more than 12% was given to educational segments, such as expert discussion of health issues, examining the history and significance of No-Ruz, and discussions concerning Iranian poetry. Other than in the context of educational programming, there was no time allocated to recitation of poetry. There were also no significant time spent on commentaries (0.04%), while
14.21% of programming time was devoted to interviews. For example, one interview was with Ali Nasirian, a renowned Iranian actor who, at the time, was visiting the United States. In another program, Afkhami interviewed local Iranian teenagers. The topic of this interview was what the programs of Iranian Television of Texas should be like. Another interview was with an expert on Iranian ceramic art. This interview had English subtitles, which must have made it palatable to non-Iranians. Another unique feature of Iranian Television of Texas was the new segment of sports news. Based on the sample, 3.73% programming time was allocated to this segment, which consisted of a sportscaster reading short sports summaries gathered from the mainstream news sources.

As indicated in Table 14, slightly less than 1% overt political content was detected. More than 71% of the programming material was locally produced with a significant amount of on-location taping. Although there were no repeated segments in the sample, it must be noted that every program was by design aired twice in 2 weeks.

Table 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Per Week</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None (Not Have Cable)</td>
<td>61.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None (Lack of Interest)</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to Three Hours</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three to Five Hours</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13
Percentage of Program Segments in the Sample for the 4 Iranian Television Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Segment</th>
<th>Pars Television of Dallas</th>
<th>Iranian Television of Dallas</th>
<th>Seema Television of Texas</th>
<th>Iranian Television of Texas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Logo and End Credits</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Promos and Introductions</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>11.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercials and Sponsor Promos</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.66*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports News</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>3.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>10.79</td>
<td>14.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td>11.86</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>5.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>12.08</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>12.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Show</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coverage of Local Iranian Events</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>9.44</td>
<td>14.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Programs</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>20.83</td>
<td>15.98</td>
<td>9.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performances</td>
<td>12.42</td>
<td>15.87</td>
<td>23.04</td>
<td>14.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Videos</td>
<td>45.73</td>
<td>6.62</td>
<td>14.94</td>
<td>12.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This low number is due, rather cleverly, to giving more exposure to the sponsors in the "Coverage of Local Iranian Events" segment.

Table 14
Percentage of "Overt" Political, "Repeat," and "Locally Produced" Content in the Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Television</th>
<th>Overt</th>
<th>Repeat*</th>
<th>Locally Produced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pars Television</td>
<td>15.48</td>
<td>17.87</td>
<td>23.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian Television of Dallas</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>87.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seema Television</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>81.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian Television of Texas</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>71.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Indicates the percentage of repeated segments in different programs.
Table 15

Schedule of Iranian Television of Texas in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex

as of January 1997

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>DAY</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>CHANNEL</th>
<th>CABLE CO.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>25B</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sun.</td>
<td>4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>25B</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plano</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>5:00 p.m.</td>
<td>39A</td>
<td>Telecable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>39A</td>
<td>Telecable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrollton</td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>2:00 p.m.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wen.</td>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Prairie</td>
<td>Wen.</td>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garland</td>
<td>Wen.</td>
<td>9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers Branch</td>
<td>Wen.</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesquite</td>
<td>Wen.</td>
<td>8:00 p.m.</td>
<td>10B</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sat.</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>10B</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mon.</td>
<td>4:00 p.m.</td>
<td>10B</td>
<td>TCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coppell</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Paragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapevine</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Paragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irving</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Paragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewisville</td>
<td>Tue.</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Paragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arlington</td>
<td>Fri.</td>
<td>10:30 p.m.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Telecable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The results of program analysis revealed some common features shared by all four television program series. They all had magazine formats. Naficy (1993c) argued that exilic television is a genre. Exilic television, including Iranian television produced in the United States is characterized by the magazine format. Exilic magazine format differs from mainstream television's magazine format in the sense that it is "an extremely heterogeneous, composite genre, combining both fictional and expository narratives and their various sub-genres. In essence, this is a 'montage' genre" (p. 97). The above observations are consistent with the results of program analysis of all four
Iranian television program series in Dallas. Table 13 shows the degree of their compositeness and segmentation. Naficy (1993c) argued that the montage characteristic of the magazine genre reflects the formlessness of liminality of the producers and of the audiences. Although this may be a valid argument, it may also be true that the composite magazine format is a reflection of lack of resources, talent, and material, resulting in the use of kind of material just to fill the program.

Another commonality was that the programs of all four television series were filled with images, sounds, and symbols driven primarily by the Persian language and Iranian values and culture minus its Islamic components. While important dates such as Christmas and Easter have been recognized, celebrated, and congratulated by the Iranian media in Dallas, there has been no recognition or observance of the many Islamic calendar dates and occasions. In all the programs analyzed, only once was there a mention of Islam, and that was in a discussion about the influence of other languages on the Persian language in which the guest language expert, incidentally, observed that "Iran was not invaded by Muslims, rather, the Iranians accepted Islam."

Clearly, particular aspects of Iranian culture were selected and represented as the essence of Iranian culture. According to Naficy (1993c) censoring the Islamic symbols, icons, and discourses may be a reaction to the
Islamization of Iran. However, there may be other factors involved. Iranian popular culture in the United States is dominated by Iranian religious minorities, particularly Jewish and Baha'i Iranians (Naficy, 1993c), who are also monarchist. It is reasonable to assume that omitting Islamic references or discourses would work to their benefit.

Finally, it must be considered that at the core of the Shah's modernization program was the project of weakening Islam and Islamic values. Because of this campaign, some of the Iranian immigrants, even before the revolution, had already forsaken their Islamic values. As is often the case with complex situations, and in the absence of more concrete evidence, perhaps a combination of all the above factors is responsible for the current de-Islamization of Iranians' lives in the United States.

Another expected commonalty in all four television program series was the exclusive use of the Persian language. Of course, Penglish (a mixture of Persian and English) would be used occasionally. Additionally, on occasions, when the programs involved teenagers and children, either both Persian and English were used because this is how they use both languages in their everyday lives, or English was used exclusively because of a lack of sufficient familiarity with Persian. Another commonalty in all four program series, as indicated in Table 13, was the heavy use of music videos and musical performances as a programming staple.
There were also some aspects unique to the four program series. While *Pars Television* exhibited overt political discourse, the occurrence of explicit political discourse was insignificant in the other three program series. This finding is consistent with Naficy's (1993c) observation that, as the Iranians in the United States move from a temporary stay (with the hope of someday returning to Iran) to a permanent stay, they also move from political activity to cultural activity.

Except for *Pars Television*, the other three television program series devoted substantial programming time to children segments and showcasing young talents, clearly indicating a concern for the transmission of Iranian culture to the next generation. However, to what extent the children's segments, and for that matter any of the segments, are effective in terms of attracting audiences is unknown and admittedly difficult to ascertain.

Moreover, except for *Pars Television*, a majority of the segments of the other three television programs were locally produced, making them what public access television should be; that is, local and indigenous. The data in Tables 13 and 14 clearly indicate the local nature and concern of *Iranian Television of Dallas, Seema Television,* and *Iranian Television of Texas*. For example, the percentages of locally produced programs are substantially higher. Moreover, there is the added category of "coverage of local events," with substantial time allocation. Additionally, there is a shift from the heavy
use of imported music videos to musical performances which predominantly featured local artists, often teenagers.

Another interesting finding was the total absence of critical discourse related to life in the United States and consumer culture. However, as discussed earlier, on two occasions, Iranian Television of Dallas had implicit critical discourse. Perhaps this was due to the involvement of leftist volunteers.

Finally, Naficy (1993c) asserted that the commercially driven nature of Iranian television in the U.S. made it vulnerable to manipulation by the economically affluent monarchists and to politicization of the content. As indicated earlier, only Pars Television and Seema Television had commercials; the percentages of overt political content of these two program series were 15.48% and 0.24%, respectively. While the numbers for Pars Television support Naficy's assertion, the numbers for Seema Television reject his assertion. Thus, nothing conclusive can be stated in this regard.

However, a stronger correlation may exist between the commercial nature of Iranian television and the entertainment content. Among the four program series, Pars Television and Seema Television had commercials and presumably generated some revenues through the sale of television advertising. Table 13 shows that Pars Television had a total of 58.15% time allocated to entertainment--music videos and musical performances--whereas Seema
Television had 37.98% allocated to entertainment content. In contrast, noncommercial Iranian Television of Dallas and Iranian Television of Texas had 22.49% and 27.70% entertainment content, respectively. Clearly, the programs of the two commercial television series had substantially more entertainment content.

Additionally, the data show that the increase in entertainment content corresponded with a decrease in educational content. Pars Television had 12.08% and Seema Television had 0.0% educational content, while non-commercial Iranian Television of Dallas and Iranian Television of Texas had 23.7% and 12.14%, respectively. Thus, based on the sample, it can be argued that the commercial nature of Iranian television opens it up to more entertainment content at the expense of educational content.

Music Videos

In all four Iranian television program series in Dallas, substantial time was allocated to music videos. This is, in part, because music videos are a relatively inexpensive way of filling a program. Television producers often do not have to pay any fees for airing these videos. As Afkhami stated, often the only cost is the cost of purchasing a music video tape (Appendix A). There are no expenses or efforts involved in acquiring permission from the artists or the producers of the music videos. Artists have no qualms about having their music videos aired repeatedly, because it is also publicity and promotion for
them, too, and can result in increased sales of their audio cassettes and their future concerts. As Wollen (1986) has argued, music videos are a combination of ad and program, in which the images function as ad and the sound is a sample of the product that can be purchased, and, of course, the whole music video can be used as programming material. Moreover, there is an abundance of music videos since they have a marketing function before, after, and beyond television. The abundance of music videos may be due to the fact that there is more demand in Iran for music videos—and their audio cassettes—than any other form of exilic television. Furthermore, this demand is due to the fact that popular music—as opposed to classical Iranian music—is banned in Iran.

Table 13 has two separate music-related categories: musical performances and music videos. Musical performances are defined as live recordings of a singer singing or two or more singers singing, a musical band performing, a musician performing a solo recital, or a dancer's dancing accompanied by live or recorded music. Music videos differ from musical performances in the sense that they incorporate all the features of musical performances, as well as an array of special effects, images, symbols, and icons, added in post-production.12

It is futile to try to categorize music videos, be they American or Iranian, because of the intrinsic characteristics of music videos; that is, chiefly their
freedom to play with signifiers. However, in order to simplify the discussion of Iranian music videos, two broad categories are suggested.

The first broad category consists of those music videos that incorporate images, symbols, and icons which are home based; that is, those signifiers which are understood by and are traditionally dear to Iranians. For lack of better terminology, they can be called Homey music videos. These videos, in various ways, incorporate images of the following signifiers: water, waterfalls, fountains, seas and waves, rivers, greenery of all sorts, parks, wilderness, trees, green grass, flowers of all sorts, but particularly various roses, gardens,\textsuperscript{13} birds in nature and in cages, sunset and sunrise.

The Homey music videos can further be divided into two subcategories: \textbf{Melancholic} and \textbf{Upbeat} music videos. The Melancholic Homey music videos, as the name indicates, are basically low-key, solemn, somber, grieving, and sad. They are mostly about loneliness, nostalgia, longing, loss, home, distance, the pain of separation, dislocation, uprootedness, disequilibrium, and the desire for unification.\textsuperscript{14}

The Upbeat Homey music videos may use the same narratives as the Melancholic videos, but they have a positive, and uplifting spin. These videos are geared toward and induce Persian dancing quavers. Both of these types either use traditional Persian music or incorporate some of its characteristics and flavors. In both the Melancholic and Upbeat videos, the imagery and its
narrative chain move more or less along the song lines. Furthermore, the
music rhythm, beat, verse, and their lengths dictate the motion, pace, and
editing.

The second main category can be termed, Syncretic music videos. These
videos mix and match elements from both Iranian and American cultures.
They are highly influenced by the styles of American music videos. In terms
of the music, they also incorporates elements of traditional Iranian music and
American popular music. As with American music videos, there is an
emphasis on physical beauty, slender bodies, fetishization and glamorization
of body parts, fashion, makeup, and obsession with look, surface, and self.
The male singers use either American female models or American-looking
Iranian females. The performers emulate American performers and their
manners of performance. Moreover, their musical or lyrical narratives and
themes are also similar to the narratives and themes of American popular
music. They are based on personal relationships, love, lust, infatuation, and
sexual desires. The videos with female singers and dancers utilize traditional
Hollywood male gaze, thus appropriating the female performer as an object of
male desire.

The Syncretic videos, similar to postmodern American videos, show
diminished use of narrative structure, cause and effect, time and space. Thus,
rather than conveying a story, the images invoke feelings, emotions, ideas,
impressions, and associations. These videos, like their American counterparts, are characterized by aggressive and exaggerated camera angles, wide-angle shots, rapid zooms, tumultuous montage, fast editing, and some pastiche.

The above categories and descriptions are in no way either exclusive or inclusive. Music videos, because of their free form and the freedom to combine and experiment with signifiers, are intrinsically uncategorizable and seldom have formal boundaries. Postmodern music video texts and music video genres are in general characterized by their incessant change and unformulatability. Thus, all observations are inevitably broad and tentative.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Two types of issues are examined in this study. The first are directly related to the case study of Iranian television in Dallas. In this regard, microhistory and narrowcasting strategies of an immigrant public access teletime are examined. The second issue involves macro-issues pointed out in the introductory chapter which are relevant to immigrants and minorities, including Iranian immigrants. These macro-issues are not directly tied to the televisual activities of Iranians in Dallas, but rather they are intended to highlight the areas that lack research, to raise questions, and to encourage discourse of various related topics.

In regard to Iranian television of Dallas, this thesis examined four television program series—Pars Television, Iranian Television of Dallas, Seema Television, and Iranian Television of Texas—and analyzed their programming. The four television program series were produced by three single individuals with the help of volunteers. Because these programs were produced by three individual producers, it is reasonable to assume that their personalities and views dominated the discourse of the programs. In the case of Iranian Television of Dallas and Iranian Television of Texas, the producer
also frequently appeared in the programs as the host, and consequently dominated the screen.

Two of the program series, Pars television and Seema Television, aired commercials and generated revenue through the sale of commercials. The results of program analysis in chapter 4 indicated a correlation between commercial nature of the Iranian diasporic television and the amount of entertainment content. The data showed that Pars Television and Seema Television had more time allocated to entertainment content with less time given to educational programs.

The results of the program analysis also indicated the local nature of Iranian Television of Dallas, Seema Television, and Iranian Television of Texas. The overwhelming majority of the above program series were produced locally, and substantial time was allocated to the coverage of local events. Additionally, the programming shifted from a heavy use of music videos and musical performances imported from Los Angeles to musical performances showcasing local artists and talents. The three program series also had locally produced children's segments. Having these children's segments further strengthens their local nature and indicates the concern the Iranian community has in regard to transmitting its cultural heritage to the next generation. Of course, to what extent the children's segments are effective in terms of helping to transmit the Iranian culture remains to be
seen. This study has not attempted to answer questions about the degree of effectiveness of the children's segments, or for that matter any of the programs.

The results of this study are consistent with Naficy's (1993c) assertion that Iranian immigrants in the United States are moving from political activity to cultural activity. While the earliest television program, Pars Television, was suffused with overt pro-monarchist overt political content, there was not a significant amount of such content in the latter three access program series. (This study was not designed to examine latent political content.) Program analysis of the latter three series indicates a concern with the local Iranian community, its events, and the next generation of Iranian-Americans. The results are also consistent with Naficy's observation that the depoliticization of Iranian television, along with an emphasis on Iranian community in the United States is an indication that the Iranian community is moving from the liminality phase to the syncretism phase. Furthermore, the significant gradual decrease in time allocated to melancholic poetry can be interpreted as a sign of moving from celibacy liminality to celebratory liminality and syncretism.

All the four program series exclusively utilized the magazine format. They were also all in the Persian language. Furthermore, all four programs were anchored with images, sounds, icons, and symbols of Iranian culture minus its Islamic aspects, indicating an attempt to censor Islam, Islamic
culture, and Islamic discourses. Whether we try to refute or liberate ourselves from it, the Islamic culture is the prime influence and an integral part of Iranian culture. If culture is considered a living organism, cutting out some dimensions of it amounts to cutting out parts and organs of a living organism. Now the question is whether Iranian culture, separated from its Islamic components, can be strong enough to withstand the hegemonic force of the consumer culture so masterfully disseminated by the "big" media.

In this sense, the discourses of a heterogeneous Iranian community in Dallas have been made homogeneous and monovocal. It is imperative for Iranian immigrant media to follow a pluralistic model and avoid overt and covert monopolization of the Iranian community's discourses. Given the low population of Iranians in the DFW area as well as in the United States generally, any approach other than a pluralistic approach is divisive and continues to splinter the Iranian community, is counterproductive to the preservation of Iranian culture and identity, and is not, by any stretch of imagination, conducive to the formation of a cohesive and harmonious community.

In terms of the features of minority media that, according to Riggins (1992), encourage assimilation of immigrants and minorities, Iranian television programs used the magazine genre borrowed from mainstream television and attempted to create the professional look, sound, editing,
scheduling, and promotion based on the conventions of mainstream television. Additionally, the exclusive use of generic and professional Western attire—for example, two or three piece suits—by the hosts/hostesses, experts, interviewers, and interviewees can be considered to help facilitate assimilation. Furthermore, the lack of any content critical of life in the United States and consumer culture could prime the viewers toward an acceptance of the dominant social values and norms.

Iranian televisual activities also exhibited features that may counter assimilation. Generally, Iranian culture was promoted in a positive manner. The Persian language, as a potent symbol of collective Iranian identity, was used exclusively—except on a few occasions—thus utilizing the prestige associated with a television program to validate the language and, in the process, to validate Iranian culture. Moreover, the coverage of local Iranian events helped to compensate for the lack of coverage received from the dominant local media, thus helping to maintain a symbolic Iranian community vibrant with events, activities, and celebrations. However, there were no significant indications of promoting Iranian businesses, except media or entertainment related businesses and ventures.

As argued by Subervi-Velez (1986) and Riggins (1992), minority media, including Iranian television, function both to preserve minority culture and to facilitate assimilation into the dominant culture. Although minority media
function both ways, the outcome is not always equal. By utilizing the features of the minority media, which help the cause of preservation, and by being watchful of the features that facilitate unproblematic assimilation, the minority media can tip the scale in favor of cultural preservation, at least for the short run. Whatever degree of assimilation is needed--and some is needed--must be cautiously and selectively acquired. It is prudent always to be aware of the cultural inventories of the self, the Iranian community, and society at large.

Despite the shortcomings and difficulties, Iranian televisual activities in Dallas have helped the cause of cultural preservation and community formation. By giving the Iranians ethnically specific information and entertainment on television, they have helped to construct an "electronic community" (Gillespie, 1989) for the geographically dispersed Iranian immigrants who, otherwise might lose contact with their cultural heritage. Iranian television programs have helped in exposing the Iranian community and specially Iranian-American youngsters to the Persian language and some aspects of Iranian culture.

For minorities and immigrants, television can function in two ways: first, as a means of transmitting the indigenous culture; second, as a means of neutralizing the transmission of the dominant culture and sensibilities. Iranian television programs have been more involved and successful with the first
function, while showing no attempt at utilizing the second function. For example, Iranian Television of Texas can attempt to educate its viewers in the strategies used by the big media to assimilate the immigrants and minorities; or it can analyze current issues related to Iranian culture or the so-called Third World cultures and the manner in which big media handles those issues.

In general, Iranian Television of Texas can contribute greatly to the preservation of Iranian culture by trying to demystify the operations of the mass media as related to assimilation and homogenization. However, it would be naive to place exaggerated hope in immigrant/minority television, because the real power resides with those who own, operate, and use the mass media.

Of course, Iranian television in Dallas could not have existed without the availability of public access television, although the two Iranian producers complained about dealing with the cable companies. As it was argued in the introduction, in the face of the relaxing of antitrust laws, which has resulted in the control of most of the media by a small number of media conglomerates, it is crucial to leave some televisual space for indigenous television. Public access television provides this space, albeit minimally.

The first 3 Iranian television series combined lasted less than three years. The major contributing factor in their demise was financial problems. Currently, in Dallas, access television programs cannot run commercials, although they can credit sponsors and indirectly promote them. Allowing
access programs the right to solicit, air, and generate revenues by selling commercial time would to a large extent resolve this impediment. This simple and progressive solution, implemented in some public access organizations such as those in Austin, would help to raise the odds of public access television's ever becoming a viable means of nurturing indigenous television and, by extension, a viable means of preserving diversity.

Furthermore, by allowing access programs to engage in politics if they so desire, the arena of political diversity could also be enhanced. Of course, there must be appropriate regulations to ensure that political programs observe the general norms of civility and prudence. In order successfully to implement these two changes, the management structure of public access organizations overseeing the daily operations have to be modified and expanded. This expansion of management structure and personnel can simply be founded by charging the access producers a percentage of their revenues.

The other set of topics brought up in the introduction are the macro-issues of parameters set by society in order to channel social interactions and cultural activities, pluralism in society, the state's multicultural strategies, and the concepts of "melting pot," and "stew pot."

In terms of parameters set by society, for example in the United States, corporate capitalism and consumer culture exert enormous influence on the production and reproduction of culture. All the Iranian programs on the
International Channel Network are commercially driven and are dependent on finding commercial sponsors. By promoting the commercial interest of the sponsors, these programs inevitably and inadvertently promote corporate capitalism and consumer culture. Another example of a parameter is the U.S. foreign policy in regard to the immigrants' country of origin. The policy toward Iran has a real influence on what direction and orientation the cultural activities of Iranian immigrants can take.

In terms of pluralism in society, that is, the degree to which a state and its dominant culture are willing to accommodate or tolerate different minority cultures, what is tolerated in the United States are "harmless differences," or what are considered "harmless" aspects of a culture. Consequently, the Iranian televisual activities consist of singing, dancing, preservation of Persian language, and so on. But there is an almost total absence of any critical political or cultural discourse. When there is any politics, it is wrapped in the political subjectivity of the dominant segments of society.

It is also important to distinguish between real accommodation and rhetorical accommodation. On the surface, the mass media claim to be in favor of multiculturalism and respect for all cultures. But at a deeper level and quite subtly, the mass media undermine the institutions and value systems of non-Eurocentric cultures (Powers, 1984; Said, 1981; Shohat & Stam, 1994). This contradiction must be understood by minorities and immigrants in
its entirety. It must also be recognized that despite this contradiction, the United States is one of the most pluralistic countries, if not the most pluralistic country in the world. The existence of so many minority and immigrant media, including International Channel Network, exilic television, and public access television attests to the degree of pluralism in the U.S.

Furthermore, the state's degree of pluralism is not the same for all minorities and immigrants. For example, given the intense adversarial relationship between the U.S. government and the Iranian government, it is reasonable to assume that Iranian immigrants face less cultural latitude in the sense of what cultural aspects they can promote and in the sense that the state acts more decisively in curtailing what it considers not so "harmless" Iranian cultural aspects.

In terms of the state's multicultural strategies, it is reasonable to assume that in most post-industrial societies, including the United States, more than one model is at work. Although the U.S. does not subsidize Iranian immigrant media, nevertheless, by allowing the economically self-sustaining media to operate, the U.S. can benefit in at least three ways. First, as previously discussed, immigrant media have a "dual" function and help to integrate and assimilate the immigrants into the dominant culture. Second, since the immigrants and minorities in general, and Iranian immigrants in particular, are more likely to perceive the United States as "benevolent," the U.S. accrues
promotional "capital," and consequently immigrants are more likely to put
their guard down and accept the dominant sensibilities. Third, whether
subsidized or not, the immigrant media provide invaluable opportunity to keep
surveillance of immigrant group members.

Another topic discussed in chapter 1 was the melting pot concept versus
stew pot concept and multiculturalism. In the past, the melting-pot
assimilation model worked well in the United States, since previous
immigrants that came to the U.S. were mostly from European countries,
although there were some Oriental immigrants and African-Americans--
brought here by force as slaves. The earlier European immigrants came from
comparatively similar cultures and religious backgrounds, not to mention their
being of the Anglo-European race.

Furthermore, the general culture into which the earlier immigrants were
expected to melt was not as synthetic as the consumer culture is today. It is
important also to remember that, in the past, cultural industries and the media
had not been as monopolized as they are today, and they were not as
influential and elitist as they are today. Hence, the general culture was not as
synthetic as it is today. There were some innate, indigenous, and bottom to
top qualities in the prevailing cultural dynamics. Thus, the earlier immigrants
experienced less stress and faster and easier assimilation.
Today, a majority of immigrants are from developing countries with vastly different cultures from the Eurocentric culture. Today, the notion of melting pot, with its connotations of conformism and homogenization, is no longer feasible. There are many reasons for this unfeasibility. The remainder of this chapter is about some of the most obvious reasons that readily come to mind, and about why multiculturalism and the stew-pot concept are more progressive and feasible for today.

First, today's version of the melting pot is heavily based on and influenced by consumer culture. Although consumer culture makes use of some qualities intrinsic to all human beings—for example, the pleasure of consumption and "positional consumption"—it takes these characteristics to the extreme, to the point of exploitation. And thus, in time, it will create a sort of societal indigestion. One look at the unsolvable problems of America—for example, white and blue-collar crime, disintegration of family, teen pregnancy, drugs, problems endemic to the elderly, and so forth—indicates the imbalance of emphasis put on individualism and self at the expense of the collective. These cultural values of individualism and the importance of the self are at the core of consumer culture and are heavily promoted by the media. Thus, today's melting pot is anchored by values that are problematic to begin with. These values are too commercialized; they are top to bottom, and
they benefit transnational corporations (TNCs) more than they benefit society at large.

The second reason for the unfeasibility of the melting pot concept is the fact that the new immigrants are from cultures vastly different from the prevailing amalgam of Eurocentric culture and consumer culture in America. Thus, in order to submit to the melting pot assimilation model, the new immigrants must drastically change their way of life. For example, this cultural incompatibility and the pressure to conform to the new culture is the source of some of the trauma experienced by Iranian immigrants in the U.S. (Ansari, 1992, 1996; Hanassab, 1993; Tohidi, 1993).

The third reason for the unfeasibility of the melting pot concept is due to the inherent racism and discrimination built into this concept, which afflicts and fundamentally goes against the interests of the new non-European and non-Anglo immigrants and minorities. The melting pot has cultural codes, tags, labels, and binaristic hierarchies such as: superior, forward, and Anglo versus inferior, backward, and non-Anglo; emulatable, that is, Eurocentric culture versus unemulatable, that is, non-Eurocentric culture (Said, 1978; Shohat & Stam, 1994). These labels and tags have the effects of limiting potential, hence limiting actual social, economic, and political empowerment.

The fourth reason why the melting pot is not workable anymore is the very nature of the information and communication revolution. The post-
industrial/information/communication age can provide people with the means of keeping in touch with their sources of cultures and values, thus making it much harder to isolate immigrants from their sources of inspiration and their indigenous cultures and, consequently, harder to homogenize them. Furthermore, the new wave of immigrants, although mostly from the developing countries, have higher levels of education, skills, and professionalism as compared to the earlier European immigrants (Naficy, 1993c, p. 3). The higher level of education and knowledge also makes it harder to homogenize them.

A more workable and feasible concept for the exigencies of the late 20th century and the 21st century is variously called multiculturalism, stew-pot, or salad bowl. In this configuration, as Wilson and Gutierrez (1995) defined it, “each group retains its individual identity while maintaining and contributing its distinctive flavor to those of other groups and absorbing some of the flavors of other groups” (p. 7; also see JanMohammed & Lloyd, 1990; Shohat & Stam, 1994).

In this configuration, it is recognized that every culture has something to offer to the tapestry of America, and that the U.S. can benefit from the cultural heritage of its non-European subgroups. Additionally, it is recognized that retaining one’s cultures does not necessarily mean rejecting other cultures. Multiculturalism does not subscribe to ethnic or racial essentialism
or to ethnic nationalism. It does not advocate that one ethnicity is superior to others, as Englishness was "by marginalising, dispossessing, displacing and forgetting other ethnicities" (Hall, 1988, p. 29).

Multiculturalism is not about throwing Eurocentrism out; rather, it is about bringing other cultures in. Multiculturalism is a progressive process of mixing, matching, and enrichment. It allows for more egalitarian social relations to flourish. Thus, if implemented, multiculturalism, allows a society to be greater than the sum of its individuals and subgroups. Today, even staunch foes of multiculturalism and identity politics acknowledge that multiculturalism "has, in a word, won" (Glazer, 1997).

Now the question is when will the media truly catch up and halt their valorization of Eurocentrism? Although multiculturalism has lately become the discursive mode of the cultural industry too, the active mode of the cultural industry, especially television and the entertainment industry, is still that of homogenization and melting pot.
1- Along the same line of criticism, and as it relates specifically to film and television studies, Cooper (1989) argued:

Film and television studies, which rose twenty years ago as a rallying point for progressive, innovative and disenfranchised faculty and students in over-rigidly defined academic disciplines such as English and History, has now defined itself as a discipline, has now begun promoting itself as the bearer of privileged Truth and Insight . . . . Concerns with social and public accessibility to film and television study are curtailed on the grounds of the need to maintain professionalism . . . . Though it is certainly true that critical methodologies used in film and television research have proved invaluable . . . the problematic . . . that it is meant precisely to establish and maintain a well-defined elite . . . . The resulting danger is that the insistence on certain methods and theoretical models will be fundamentally self-serving, concerned in fact less with the social issues they claim to address than the desire to be uniquely qualified to address them (original emphasis). (pp.219-220)

2- Today, families are not as large a factor in socialization as they were in the past. Instead, the mass media are more powerful and pervasive than ever before; thus, socialization mechanisms and factors have drastically changed. One of the central functions of the media is "transmission, the socialization function of the media, which defines the society, its norms, and values, to the audience and through their portrayals and coverage assists members of the society in adopting, using, and acting on those values" (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995, p. 37; also see Dominick, 1983; Lasswell,

3- In this sense, culture is used to sustain a particular social order, with all of its ramifications in terms of who has economic and social power and who does not and should not. Eisenstadt (1992) reiterated this process of convincing:

. . . the attempt to convince members of the society that social order, in general, and the specific social order in which they live, in particular, are the "correct" ones are portrayed in the myths and symbols promulgated in all societies through various rituals and communicative situations . . . . They stress the purity of the world inside, the pollution of the world outside (Douglas 1966), and the need to remain within such boundaries. (1992, p. 69)

According to Eisenstadt the conditions necessary to sustain social order are "some patterned combination of the division of labor, the regulation of power, and the construction of trust, meaning, and legitimation" (p. 70).

4- In this paper the term Iranian is operationally defined as those individuals who were born in Iran, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliations. Moreover, the following provides a brief introduction to the country of Iran.

Iran is located in southwestern Asia and borders Caspian Sea, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Armenia to the north; Pakistan and Afghanistan to the east; Turkey and Iraq in the west; and Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman to the south. Iran covers 636,000 square miles, and its population is 58 million. It has 24 provinces, 155 cities and towns, and
numerous villages. The official language, which most people speak or write in, is Persian or Farsi. However, other languages and dialects are also prevalent among ethnic subgroups, such as Arabic, Turkish, Kurdish, and Baluchi. More than 98% of the population are Muslim. Among religious minorities are Baha'is, Armenian and Assyrian Christians, Zoroastrians, and Jews. Zoroastrianism was the religion of the majority of Iranians before their conversion to Islam in the 7th century.

Tehran is the capital of Iran and its largest city. Iran has a recorded history of 2500 years. It has a rich culture and a great heritage in architecture, crafts, and rug weaving. Iranian rugs are known globally for their designs and craftsmanship. Among Iran's agricultural crops are many kinds of vegetables and fruits, wheat, barley, rice, sugar, beets, corn, and tobacco. Among Iran's natural resources are vast oil and gas fields, iron, copper, lead, chromite, zinc, sulfur, and coal.

5- Some scholars have argued that the patterns of recent immigration to the United State relate to U.S. foreign policy in the past 50 years (Light & Bonacich, 1988; also see Naficy, 1993c, p. 3). In the case of Iran, it can be argued that the U.S. sponsored and masterminded coup-d'état and toppling of popular prime minister Musaddigh's government and the unabated support of the Shah's dictatorship led to the 1979 revolution, and the subsequent
immigration of some Iranians to the U.S. as well as other countries (for more on U.S. foreign policy toward Iran, see Bill, 1988).

6- **Aftab** (English translation is sunshine), a nonpolitical program which is aired via the International Channel Network was first aired in 1992. Naficy (1993c) has argued that Aftab is pro-Iranian government and is sponsored by the Iranian government's cultural institutions. "Aftab's narrative and nonfictional segments gave the impression of a vibrant society [in Iran] alive with children, bazaars, parks, and bustling streets" (p. 170). Because of its high quality, nonpolitical yet cultural emphasis, it quickly attracted audiences, while it became fiercely opposed and criticized by the monarchists, who called for boycotting the businesses that advertised on this program, but to no avail (p. 80). Aftab has a magazine format, a 2-hour time slot, and includes commentary by its host on cultural topics, dramatic and satirical serials, portions of feature films, animation, and children programming. Currently, Aftab is aired on the International Channel Network from 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. in Dallas and its suburbs of Plano, Richardson, Garland, and Mesquite (Cable Guide, January 1997).

7- The International Channel Network was created in early 1990. The ICN is a multilingual and multicultural network offering programs via satellite to major metropolitan cable operators. The programs on this network are mostly produced and imported from "home countries." For example, 100% of
Korean and 70% of Japanese programs are imported from Korea and Japan, respectively (Naficy, 1993c, p. 68). However, there are programs which are produced in the U.S. by immigrant communities and producers. Except for Aftab, all other Iranian programs aired on this network are produced by Iranian immigrants in the United States. In 1992, the ICN claimed to reach 13 million households. The network's promotional material boasts to cable operators and advertisers that ICN "delivers a loyal, upscale audience with a concentration of households headed by a professional or independent businessperson . . . which have a higher level of disposable income than the U.S. population as a whole" (Naficy, 1993c, pp. 68-69). Indeed, the International Channel Network is another step in the diversification and democratization of communication. However, Naficy noted that "because the exilic supertexts [that is programs by different ethnic minorities] are nested within an ethnic flow, viewers are constantly made aware of their own minority status as an audience in exile" (1993c, p. 94). The International Channel Network features an array of ethnic programs, such as Chinese, Arabic, Persian, French, Israeli, Asian Indian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Polish. (Los Angeles Times, 1993; Cable Guide, Jan. 1997).

8- There is a rumor circulated by many Iranian immigrants that the reason the Iranian Jews in the U.S. are economically much better off than other
Iranian immigrants is that, before the 1979 revolution, Israeli secret service had informed the Iranian Jews that the Shah's regime was about to collapse and that it was best to get out as soon as possible. This information, however, was kept in the Jewish community. Thus, the Iranian Jews, with this forewarning, were able to convert their assets into dollars before the Iranian money was devalued due to instability brought about by the revolution and the subsequent chaos.

9- In my own observation, I have seen many Iranians with high school, college, and even graduate degrees working, seemingly permanently, as cab drivers, waiters. In general, I have observed a discrepancy between educational achievement and the availability of appropriate employment and/or professional attainment among the Iranian immigrants in the DFW area, causing some of these immigrants to be dissatisfied and complain about the apparent lack of opportunity. Moreover, many Iranians feel that they face continuing discrimination due to the Iranian revolution, the hostage crisis, and the Middle East crises. Said (1981) has shown how the news media have traditionally portrayed Middle East crises in a one-sided and negative way. It is reasonable to assume that such negative representations only increase the discrimination against Iranians and Middle Easterners.

10- It is important to distinguish between real accommodation and rhetoric accommodation. On the surface, the mass media claims to be in favor
of multiculturalism and respect for all cultures. On the other hand, at a deeper level and quite subtly, they undermine the institutions and value systems of non-Eurocentric cultures (Powers, 1984; Said, 1981). This contradiction must be understood by minorities in its entirety.

11- In the interview (Appendix B), Afkhami stated that *Iranian Television of Dallas* was established in January/February of 1989, with the first program being aired in March 1989. However, based on the dates recorded on the programs, the first program was aired in March 1990. This discrepancy in the dates should not be taken as a sign of disingenuousness, but rather a simple mistake in recalling dates.

12- Although Iranian popular music is becoming more and more Americanized and Westernized in some respects, there are still noteworthy distinctions. Generally speaking, in American popular music, the music is the most important element. The second important element seems to be the voice or vocals, and the third element is the lyrics. This particular hierarchy of elements has marketing function. The music is the most abstract element, the most ambiguous element. This emphasis on the most abstract element keeps the popular musical products marketable to more consumers. That is why the music industry has and does promote the musical element. The lyrics are often sung in an ambiguous and incomprehensible manner in order to take the lyrics out of their specificity, thus again to make the product marketable to a wider
population and indeed to a global population. Some may argue that these are the postmodern features of popular music. It may be so; however, the music industry finds it lucrative and productive in terms of sales, thus promoting it heavily to the point of influencing musical taste. In Iranian music this hierarchy is different. The most important element is the lyrics; that is, the poetry. The second important element is the voice, while the third important element is the music. The importance placed on the lyrics most likely has to do with the fact that poetry is the most pervasive and profound form of Iranian artistic expression.

13- Garden is a potent symbol in Persian life. The term paradise in English is derived from the Old Persian word for garden--Pairidaeza. In a sense the garden, symbolically, refers to the pleasures of settled life. And the ultimate settled life is in paradise, which in Islamic cosmology is the promised destination for the righteous. Paradise and, by way of symbolism, the garden signify the place or the condition of complete and perfect happiness, beauty, love, and delight.

14- Incidentally, the mentioned concepts, emotions, and adjectives are not exclusive to Iranian immigrants' melancholic state of mind. They are generic in Iranian music and poetry.

15- One impediment to preservation and maintenance of indigenous culture has to do with the prevalence and ubiquity of the consumer culture.
Due to its commercial bases, the mass media incessantly encourage "positional consumption," often targeting the susceptible and suggestible young population. In order to participate in this endless cycle of consumption, individuals have to work harder and for more hours, resulting in fewer hours left for other important matters such as family or cultural maintenance.

16- In 1910, of the U.S. population, 14.7% were immigrants, mostly from European countries. In 1970 foreign-born residents accounted for a record low of 4.7% of the U.S. population. By 1990 this number had increased to 7.9% of the population. Of these numbers, 21.7% were from Mexico. Other nations in the top 10 were the Philippines, 4.6%; Canada, 3.8%; Cuba, 3.7%; Germany, 3.6%; England, 3.2%; Italy, 2.9%; Korea, 2.9%; Vietnam, 2.7%; and China, 2.7% (Wilson & Gutierrez, 1995, p. 11). In 1996 immigrants accounted for 9.3% of the population (LaGesse, 1997).

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW WITH

ALI TAJBAKHSH
This interview with Ali Tajbakhsh was conducted in September 1996 at his office. The taped interview lasted about 2 hours and was conducted in Persian. The content was then transcribed and translated into Englished by the author. Currently, Ali Tajbakhsh owns and operates Iranzamin Radio in Dallas which he established in 1992. Iranzamin Radio operates 24 hours a day on an FM side band, and shares programs (as a network) with similar Iranian radio operations in Atlanta and Las Vegas.

Karimi: Would you talk about when and how you started producing television programs for Iranians in Dallas?

Tajbakhsh: In November or December of 1984, I started thinking about producing television program for Iranians in Dallas. With one of my friends, we contacted some of the TV stations in the area. The rates were very high, in the range of $3000-4000 per hour and at very odd times such as 1:00 a.m. or 2:00 a.m.. Well, this was not feasible for us. Then I contacted the Heritage Cable Company of Dallas. We were told that our programs could be aired on an open channel for $50 per hour. And we could air our programs on public access channel free of charge. Then, I contacted Jam-e Jam and Iranian televisions in Los Angeles. They agreed to provide me with their programs free of charge. I just had to pay the postage. Now we had access to programs that were new or at most 1 week old. So I established Pars television. I still needed to edit these programs coming from California. Because it was
difficult to reserve editing and production equipment at the cable access, I did my editing at a newly opened post production company called U-Edit. The cost of editing was $50 per hour.

We had a number of problems: Producing television programs is difficult and time consuming, much more difficult than producing radio programs; there was the financial problems; personnel problems, because everybody was nonprofessional volunteers. Despite all these problems we continued for over a year. One of our biggest problems was that in order to air our programs in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex we had to deal with many different cable companies, which meant lots of time and leg work and expenses for duplicating the tapes; getting whatever available times they would give us, which meant our programs were being aired at different and odd times.

Karimi: What were your motivations and objectives for establishing Iranian access television?

Tajbakhsh My objectives were cultural. Mainly to preserve our Persian language for the younger generations in the U.S. I was the first Iranian that had a Persian language weekly magazine in this area. That was in 1980. It was called Pars-Nameh, and was sent to different parts of the world. So preservation of language, culture, and tradition were my objectives.

Karimi: Did you have any background in television before 1984?
Tajbakhsh: Before the revolution, I used to write television and radio programs for the Iranian national television. But I had never produced anything. Therefore, I did not have technical expertise. However, I have the eye for it. I can tell whether a program is done professionally or not. My educational background is in international economics. That's what my master degree is in. In Iran, I used to teach in the department of communication sciences in the area of international marketing. I have written two books. I used to write for one of Tehran's major newspapers, and I used to edited several academic journals.

Karimi: In how many of the suburbs did you air your programs?

Tajbakhsh: Because of the problems I mentioned before, we only aired our programs in Dallas and few months in Plano. Because our programs were full of new music and music videos, I think many Iranians watched our programs in Dallas and were very supportive, but not supportive in helping us or helping us financially.

Karimi: How long were your weekly programs?

Tajbakhsh: One hour a week. We would pay the cable company $50 to air our 1-hour program on the open channel every Sundays at 11:00 a.m. and at 7:00 p.m. And the same programs were aired on Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. and Thursdays at 5:00 p.m. on the public access channels.

Karimi: Did you have any repeat programs?
Tajbakhsh: No. All of the programs were new and produced weekly.

Karimi: Did you have any locally originated programming?

Tajbakhsh: Yes, we did. We introduced many local Iranian artists to the Iranian community in Dallas.

Karimi: So you used cable access studio and equipment?

Tajbakhsh: We borrowed cameras from cable access and rented [editing] equipment from U-Edit, but we never used cable access studios, mainly because it was difficult to get good studio time. So we did all of our locally produced programs or program segments on location. Generally speaking, we were not welcomed by the cable access people. It was odd for them to see Iranians who wanted to produce their own programs here in the U.S. We were faced with indirect cultural resistance. The problem of hostages was still fresh in their minds. So they would give us odd times and no cooperation. For example, the cable company in Plano did not want to give us any time, telling us there were no open time slots. So once I had to tape all their access programs to show them that there were open time slots available. Even explaining to them that we are not supporters of the Islamic government of Iran had no effect. At the same time we could not tell them that we were actively opposing the government in Iran, because then we would be considered a political organization and automatically ineligible to use public access.
Karimi: How many volunteers helped with your efforts?

Tajbakhsh: Five volunteers and myself.

Karimi: Did you have any idea how many people watched your programs?

Tajbakhsh: No. We had no way of ascertaining that. By the way, there was an Iranian in San Antonio, and I used to sent some of my programs for him to air them at the city's cable access.

Karimi: Ultimately, what caused you to discontinue your televisual activities through Dallas cable access?

Tajbakhsh: First, I couldn't continue paying for expenses out of my own pocket. After a while just paying for blank video tapes could add up and be considerable expense. On the average it would cost us $200-300 to produce 1-hour of program weekly. Second, Iranians would not help us in our efforts. Third, we didn't know how many household regularly viewed our programs, and whether it was worth the time and effort we were putting into it. And back then there were not as many Iranians in this area as there are now.

Karimi: What is your opinion of the present Iranian Television of Texas?

Tajbakhsh: Well, the airing of their programs is not consistent. For example, in Plano and Richardson they are using a channel which belongs to NASA. Whenever NASA has no programs, Iranians are able to air their programs. Sometimes it's once every few months. Another thing is that their programs are often repeat programs. Some of their programs [music videos] are 3-4
years old. They buy them from Iranian supermarkets and use them in their programs.

Karimi: Thank you for your time.
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW WITH

BEHROOZ AFKHAMİ
The following interview with Behrooz Afkhami, producer of the Iranian Television of Dallas was conducted in English in August 1996 at his home.

The taped interview lasted about 3 hours.

Karimi: Would you talk about when and how the Iranian Television of Dallas was established and what were the motivating reasons?

Afkhami: Creation of Iranian television, first effort was in 1989, with the realization that there was a need for a community [Iranian] television in Dallas. January/February 1989, I established a nonprofit organization by the name of International Cultures United. Within the framework of ICU, I contacted cable access of Dallas in order to produce and broadcast television programs in Farsi for the Iranian community.

After going through the required training, we produced our first program for the Persian newyear Norooz in March 1989. It was a 1-hour program that was shown only in Dallas. Following this first program, we produced a 30-minute program every other week. One of our challenges from the onset was, and still is, that the program produced in Dallas could not simultaneously be aired to the whole Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. So we would broadcast the first program in Dallas and in the meantime work on the second program.

When the first program came back, we would send it to Arlington. By this time, we would play the second program in Dallas. When the first program
came back from Arlington, we would send it to Plano, and send the second program to Arlington and so on.

Karimi: Why didn't you make multiple copies and at least show the same program in the same week all over the Metroplex?

Afkhami: Because we did not have the budget to acquire multiple blank tapes to copy our programs on eight or nine tapes and distribute them to eight or nine cities. Financially it was a challenge. Logistically it was a challenge. We weren't set up to do that. But we are doing it now. So at any given week every city had a different program. And when people asked each other 'Did you see the program last week?,' they soon realized that they had seen different programs altogether. So it was a funny situation and a confusing situation.

Well, in any case, after about a year we stopped our operation. There were different reasons that caused us to stop production. One reason was that I, myself, wanted to go back to school and finish my master's in telecommunication. And since I was the organizer and motivator of the volunteers, after me there was nobody to continue the operation. The other reason is that we had several committees. For example, a committee for sports programs, one committee for children programs, one for cultural programs, and so on. So it turned out that we spent a lot of time discussing and arguing about what to do and how to do it. And we could not finish our 30-minute program on time.
Karimi: So because of your organizational structure, all the decisions were made by committees, and this structure backfired and delayed the completion of the programs?

Afkhami: Well, yes. Each committee had a two to five members, and one of them was the member of that committee. So decisions had to be reached within the committee. And sometimes committees would interfere with each others' work. And the final outcome had to be approved by the heads of all the committees, the central committee. Some of these committee members were leftist and student activists.

Karimi: What was your role and title?

Afkhami: I was the producer and a member of the central committee.

Karimi: How many members did the central committee have?

Afkhami: Usually four or five.

Karimi: Could you override the decisions of the central committee?

Afkhami: I had one vote, but since I had established the organization and I was responsible to the access cable, sometimes I would override the decisions of the central committee.

Karimi: What type of programs did your organization produce?

Afkhami: Our emphasis was on educational programs. Our volunteers were mostly political. I, myself, am not political. I am more a cultural activist. But the volunteers wanted to teach history, literature, and poetry. I wanted to
produce entertaining programs. They wanted to teach. So our programs became boring, and we lost viewers. Let me explain something; my goal is not to produce television programs and always be and stay in television.

Establishing the Iranian television is a vehicle for getting the Iranian community together in the Metroplex and preserving our culture.

Let me get back to the original subject which was the committees that played a negative role and caused us to stop production. I remember the situation got to a point where several of the committee members resigned and even accused me of wanting to dominate. They not only resigned but also started bad mouthing me in the community.

Karimi: Was that the end? Causing the whole thing to fall apart?

Afkhami: No, I still kept it going for another few months, just myself and a few other people around me.

Karimi: Can you summarize all the reasons causing you to stop your operation?

Afkhami: Well, the whole thing was very shaky. I wanted to go back to school. We had the problems with the committees. We were not getting any financial support from the Iranian community, because the programs were boring and we were losing viewers. There was a lack of experience and lack of volunteers. Because the committee members were mostly leftist, the pro-
Shah people did not want to volunteer or help financially. So that was another problem.

Karimi: Did you get programs or programming material from Los Angeles or other access producers?

Afkhami: Only music videos.

Karimi: Did you have to pay any fees for using them?

Afkhami: Paid the price of the tapes which ranged from $15-40 or just borrowed the tapes from friends.

Karimi: Was there and are there any rivalries and competition among your access television, Parastoo magazine, Pars Radio, and Iranzamin Radio?

Afkhami: Well, there is no competition since we don't compete for advertisers. If anything, it is competition in terms of name recognition. In fact, there is more cooperation than competition, they advertise us, we advertise them.

Karimi: How long in advance did you have to submit your programs to the cable company?

Afkhami: One week.

Karimi: How many hours a week could you have used the Dallas community television's studio facilities?

Afkhami: Two times a month and each time 3-4 hours.
Karimi: How much would you say was the cost of producing a 1-hour program?

Afkhami: $100-150.

Karimi: In how many cities did you air your programs?

Afkhami: Six cities.

Karimi: Did you ever have to repeat any of your programs because you did not have a new program?

Afkhami: We always repeated the same program at least two times.

Karimi: A personal question. Did you have any experience in television production before producing access programs?

Afkhami: No.

Karimi: Thank you for your time.
APPENDIX C

SECOND INTERVIEW WITH

BEHROOZ AFKHAMII
The second interview with Behrooz Afkhami, producer of the Iranian Television of Texas, was conducted in October 1996 at the Iranian Cultural Center in Richardson, a north Dallas suburb. This taped interview was conducted in English and lasted about 2 and a half hours.

Karimi: When did you start producing Iranian access programs again?


Karimi: What made you decide to start producing Iranian access programs again?

Afkhami: Since I had finished my master's degree, I had the time, or I made the time to start producing programs again. At that time I met this gentleman who was producing programs in Austin. He was interested in bringing his programs to Dallas. It started out with, the conversation was about him producing programs in Austin and just adding something to it from Dallas to make it customized for Dallas. And he would send me the tapes, and I would distribute here. My answer was 'Well that's not too bad; I can handle that, and I don't have to spend much time.' The first 10 or 12 programs was that way. We would fax him some information about Dallas, and he would have somebody read that addressing the audience in Dallas and adding whatever else he had to make a tape and sending it to me.

Karimi: Did he also change his (Austin) logo and graphics to Dallas logo and graphics?
Afkhami: Yes, he did everything. The name of his program was *Seema*. And I would sent him some money for tape expense and so on.

Karimi: How often did you receive programs?

Afkhami: One program every couple of weeks. That relationship didn't last for a long time because of a couple of problems. One was the problem of distance—writing things for him from here, then sending him the information, then him sending more programs. The second and more important problem was that, for me, the television program was not the goal. For me it was the means to reach another goal. And the goal I was after was to promote the Iranian culture, to get the word out about the Iranian community here. Even to this day, I am using the television program for this goal. So there was a difference of philosophy. He was trying to find ways to make a living through producing programs. He was not concerned about what my ideas were.

Karimi: Would you elaborate on how he was planning to make a living from producing access programs?

Afkhami: In Austin it is little bit different from here. You can have advertising. And he had a camera and was doing weddings. So he was making a living, *Bokhoro Namir* thing (translation: enough to just survive).

Karimi: So his profession was making videos.

Afkhami: In Iran he was a producer. He was an older man, educated in Iran, very different from me; our personalities were very different.
Karimi: Since his motivation was to make a living, did you pay him any fees?

Afkhami: Yeah, I paid him. I paid him like $50 a tape.

Karimi: Was that including the cost of 3/4 inch blank tape?

Afkhami: Yeah. So he paid $20 for the tape.

Karimi: That's not much money.

Afkhami: No, it wasn't much for him. It was a lot for me. The thing about it is that he didn't do that much extra work, because 90% of the program was what he was already doing for Austin. It's just he added 5 minutes for Dallas, say 'Hi to the people of Dallas, we are coming to you from Austin,' and he slapped that at the beginning of the tape and sent it to me. Anyway, finally we parted. Well, we're still friends. Now he is doing his programs in Houston. And the people from Austin call me and want me to send my programs to Austin. We're talking about that right now. So after that I started to produce the programs myself.

Karimi: Did you go through access training?

Afkhami: Yeah, I went back through the training. And started producing programs. First 30-minute programs, and eventually we started 1-hour programs. I got very active. The volunteers got active. They said, 'Let's go for 1-hour a week. It was like the chicken and the egg. We have always had this problem to this day--that we want more people to watch us and to help us. But they argue that the program has to be very good and every week, very
regular, so that people can watch you every week. And then we will help you. And my point is, how am I going to get to that point. With what resources am I going to produce very high quality, weekly, and regular programs for months and months until people say 'Now we are going to help you.' I need help to make the quality better; people want to wait till quality gets better before they help me. So it's a lost cause. It's like trying to grow something; you know you have to feed it to make it grow and feed it and grow. You can't say I am not going to feed this tree until it gives me fruit, then I'll see if I can give it some water. This is my point.

Karimi: Did you ever have to air repeat programs?

Afkhami: Well, there were repeat programs by design. We never said we are going to produce a program every week. Our goal was to produce a program every other week. Even sometimes we missed that. Because there is always lots of problems when you're doing access. First, you have to produce the program, you know you have to reserve the studio, you have to line up all the technical people, you have to plan the program. Then you have to edit the program in another day, in most cases. Then you have to take the program to make copies. Then you have to take these copies to them [to different cable companies in the Metroplex]. And you have to do all of these in time to make different cable companies' deadlines. Assuming you do all of these. And then the cable company screws up, saying the tape didn't run. Because cable
company's access environment is not a professional environment. It's not like ABC or Channel 8 where the news comes on time always. The cable company treats access television like unwanted step-child.Usually, they have one person responsible to for the whole area, to run all access programs. And their play system is not manned. This person programs the tapes to run at certain time. If something happens, the tape jams or anything, it's not monitored to make sure things don't happen.

Karimi: Has ever something like that happened to you?

Afkhami: Many, many, many occasions, when we have bent backward to get the tape to them on time, and it's not played on time. And then the next day people call us and complain that they're sick and tired of waiting for the program that wasn't shown. and then the cable company's answer is "sorry, we do the best that we can." That's what their answer is to us, because we're not paying them for air time. Or they give us times that is not good. For example, Arlington Telecable is giving us 7:00 a.m. Friday morning. Who is going to watch us at that time? And when I explain this to them their answer is 'Well, if anybody wants to watch it bad enough they would record it.'

Karimi: Is it the same in Dallas too?

Afkhami: No, in Dallas it's better. Dallas cable is run by a nonprofit organization funded by the cable company, City of Dallas, and the different fees members pay them.
Karimi: Who are the members?

Afkhami: Producers, like us. *Dallas Community Television* has staff and has many channels. So it is better.

Karimi: Is that because *Dallas Community Television* deals with the cable company rather than individual producers?

Afkhami: Yeah. Well, because there is more money. There is more commitment to access television.

Karimi: It is harder for the cable company to wear down *Dallas Community Television* than it is to wear down individual producers.

Afkhami: Yeah.

Karimi: Getting back to the frequency of your programs. At the beginning you produced half an hour programs every 2 weeks, and later 1-hour every two weeks?

Afkhami: Yeah. The best case scenario is that we produce 1-hour of program every 2 weeks, and show that twice, once a week.

Karimi: What is the average cost of producing 1-hour program?

Afkhami: We have two types of programs. One is produced in the studio. The average cost to produce and air is $40 for each tape. And one tape for each cable company in the Metroplex. And the cost of transportation and gas. So $45-50 is the cost for one city.

Karimi: To how many cities do take your tapes?
Afkhami: We have 14 cities [in the Metroplex].

Karimi: So your cost is $45 multiplied by 14?

Afkhami: The way it works out is that one cable company will cover more than one city. Let me simplify it for you. Right now I have to do eight tapes.

Karimi: What is the second type of programs you produce?

Afkhami: In some cases I have somebody else go shoot something for me on location, and I pay them. No everybody works voluntarily.

Karimi: What kind of fee is involved for something like that?

Afkhami: I usually pay something like $100, depending on how long they're going to be there. I have an American guy that helps me, and I pay him, sometimes $35 and sometimes $45.

Karimi: Is that per hour?

Afkhami: No, each time. Depending on the period.

Karimi: Who pays the expenses?

Afkhami: We don't have advertisers. But we have had some sponsors. We can't have advertisers at access TV. The most we can say is 'thank you so and so sponsor,' at the end. So we get $50 here, $50 there from our sponsors. Sometimes, somebody wants us to say something in our program, and they pay us a little bit. For example, a hair dressing shop wanted to hire somebody to cut hair for them. We showed a picture of their shop and said they're looking for somebody.
Karimi: Is this not advertising?

Afkhimi: No, it's not advertising. It's considered you know like community service. And not all sponsors pay us money. For example, we have the *Parastoo* magazine and radio stations [the two Iranian stations] among our sponsors at the end of each programs. But they never pay us anything; instead, they advertise our schedule.

Karimi: In our first interview you said that the organizational structure of Iranian access television was based on a committee structure. There was a committee that decided what the programs should be about. And that this type of structure caused a lot of problem, and delays. Would you talk about what type of organizational structure you have now.

Afkhimi: Now we have technical people that have gone through the training. Production people. They get the studio ready, run the cameras, sound, and everything. I come up with the programs: what music video to play, what the portions of the program should be. I conceptualize the program. And I have people that, members of the community, that give input on issues. But as far as what goes over the air, I decide, just because I can't find anybody else to do it.

Karimi: How many volunteers do you have now that work on the programs?

Afkhimi: I would say, probably, 13 or 14 people.

Karimi: What is your guess in regard to your audience size?
Afkhami: I would say, probably, less than 2,000. I mean 2,000 households.

Karimi: I have heard that Dallas Community Television has a video competition every year. Can you talk about that?

Afkhami: Every year different cable companies come together and have a access competition. They give an award called Crystal Award.

Karimi: For how many years have they had this award?

Afkhami: I think they have done this for about 8 years. One year we were finalist. And this year [1995 competition took place in 1996] we won the award.

Karimi: Did you have to enter a program or is the competition based on overall production output, quality, etc.?

Afkhami: No, you have to enter a program. I had to type everything we said in Farsi into English.

Karimi: How many years have you participated in the competition?

Afkhami: Well, we entered twice. One time we became a finalist. This time we won it.

Karimi: How many programs were entered into the competition?

Afkhami: Well, the way they do this is that they have different categories. They have categories for religious, art, entertainment, educational, eight or nine categories.

Karimi: How many entries each categories had?
Afkhami: I don't know. The total number was 130. There were 130 programs.

Karimi: In what category was your program?

Afkhami: We were in art and entertainment. I don't remember; we were in art and culture category, maybe.

Karimi: How many entries were in that category?

Afkhami: I am not sure, maybe 12 or 13.

Karimi: Several years ago, Mr. Tajbakhsh who now owns and runs Iranzamin Radio in Dallas, produced access programs. Had you ever seen his programs?

Afkhami: No, I have never seen his programs.

Karimi: Have you asked him to help you with your programs?

Afkhami: Yeah, he gave me some of his tapes, but actually I haven't seen them yet. He's got his hands full with his radio.

Karimi: He used to get his programs from California. Have you thought about establishing cooperation with Iranian stations in Los Angeles?

Afkhami: Yeah, but the problem is that most of those programs, they have either political point of view, which in our nonprofit organization don't fit, or there are commercials in them and we have to take them out. Plus, we want to do something for the community. Our goal is not just to have a program to provide entertainment. Our goal is to bring the community together. Just bringing a program from somewhere else doesn't serve our goal.

Karimi: Do you send your programs to any city outside of the Metroplex?
Afkhani: We send them to Houston. We send them to San Antonio. But not on regular bases. They call us and say, you know, 'can you send us some programs?'

Karimi: One last question. Where do you see the Iranian access television of Dallas in the next few years?

Afkhani: [Laugh] I think until such time that there is a strong economic base to support a television, I think we are not going to a viable television, because it's so hard and there are many problems with production, with playback, the cable companies don't cooperate. Until we have enough money in the community to support a program that goes on the air, and you don't have to have cable to get it. And it goes on the air, say, at 10:00 Sunday every week, and everybody knows about it and everybody tunes to it on a commercial channel; that is the only viable solution in my opinion.

Karimi: Thank you for your time.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


