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# Assimilation patterns of Iranian immigrants in the Bay Area

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ASSIMILATION PATTERNS OF IRANIAN  
IMMIGRANTS IN THE BAY AREA

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Sociology  
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

by

Firozeh Aghdassi

December, 1994

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## ABSTRACT

### ASSIMILATION PATTERNS OF IRANIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE BAY AREA

by Firozeh Aghdassi

This study describes the assimilation patterns of Iranian immigrants and the degree to which they have been assimilated. Although Iranian immigration to the United States started in 1950, it was after the 1979 revolution that Iranians emigrated to the United States in substantial numbers. This study is based upon information in existing theory (notably, Gordon's theory), as well as a survey questionnaire developed, administered and evaluated for the purpose of this study.

It is generally recognized in the literature on assimilation that levels of education and income, as well as types of occupation, influence the process of assimilation. Findings indicate that selected variables have partially affected the assimilation process of Iranian immigrants. The same is true with regard to the duration of an immigrant's residency in terms of both structural and cultural assimilation.



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## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

In moving from one culture to another, an immigrant's sphere of social participation is narrowed. Immigrants detach themselves from many of the social roles they performed in the source culture. In the source culture, immigrants form small, primary group memberships. In these small groups, immigrants migrate to the new society (Rogg, 1974). Immigration into the host culture always presents assimilation problems for the immigrant. The problems caused by changes in the immigrant's life pattern affect the ability to successfully assimilate. More than simply a change in physical locations, adjustment to a new culture is also required.

The assimilation of migrants--their complete absorption into the new society and culture to the point of invisibility--usually takes generations. Integration or participation in the host community without the loss of ethnic identity, however, can be a much shorter process. Such integration frequently happens within the newcomer's lifetime. Many factors enter into the migrant's success in coping with a new environment. In this research, an attempt is made to study those factors that accelerate Iranian assimilation into the United States. The most influential factors in Iranian assimilation seem to be social, educational and economic in nature.

#### Statement of the Problem

Immigration has been an integral dynamic in industrial societies. The impact of immigrants on American social, economic, and political

institutions and structures has been even more significant than for other nations. This study addresses Iranian ethnic groups in the United States and the patterns of their assimilation into American culture. Before any research can proceed, it is necessary to clarify the questions involved. For example, what factors facilitate Iranian assimilation into American culture? Does their social-economic background help them assimilate faster? Does length of residency facilitate Iranian assimilation patterns? Have they assimilated into American culture? Is there any similarity between Iranian assimilation patterns and assimilation patterns of other ethnic groups?

#### Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are to gather information about the assimilation of Iranians into American culture, to study selected assimilation theories and to gather useful information to better understand Iranians as an ethnic group.

#### Significance of the Study

The results of this study will suggest how selected variables may be related to the assimilation of Iranian immigrants. The results of this study will provide a better understanding of Iranians in the United States and how Iranians interact within the host society. It is hoped this study will contribute to a better understanding of the assimilation patterns of Iranians within American culture. In so doing, we hope to contribute to our understanding of the larger process of immigration in industrial societies in general and the United States in particular.



## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The study of assimilation became a major part of sociology several decades ago and continues as an area of interest in the study of minority or ethnic groups. Due to interest in the problem of diverse cultures in the United States, a series of concepts and terms have developed to describe the process through which cultural differences between groups are gradually reduced to a common culture.

The terms more commonly used to describe this process are assimilation, integration, absorption, acculturation, accommodation and others which have become part of the general social science conceptual vocabulary.

#### History of Assimilation Theories

The Latin root of the term assimilate is assimilare, which means to make similar. There are many definitions of this term, but the overall meaning involves relinquishing one's cultural identity and moving into the larger society of the new host culture. Assimilation refers to the complete merging of groups or individuals with separate cultures and identification into one group with a common culture and identity (Lampe, 1975).

In most sociological usage, assimilation may refer to both the one-way absorption of an individual or group into another group and the mutual absorption or blending of divergent cultures. Assimilation is similar to acculturation, in which a culture is modified through contact with one or more cultures, but assimilation involves the complete elimination of cultural differences and differentiating group identifications.

Interest in the study of assimilation prompted the development of a series of concepts and terms that became an integral part of the general social science vocabulary. The concept of assimilation received a great deal of attention and was used by sociologists in the early 20th century in reference to immigrant groups in the United States. The idea of assimilation is widely used to interpret the integration of immigrants and minorities into American society. The concept, however, has been defined in a variety of ways.

Although there is general agreement about its importance, particularly in the study of race relations, there is unfortunately no corresponding agreement concerning its specific meaning (Gordon, 1964, p. 61). Park and Burgess (1924) in their classic definition, define assimilation as a

process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in common cultural life (p. 735).

Thus, assimilation is defined as a uni-directional individual or group process, requiring value and identity change. According to Park and Burgess, assimilation implies thorough transformation of the personality, a transformation that takes place gradually under the influence of concrete, intimate social contacts.

The speed and degree of this process is affected not only by the desire and ability of the minority group, but, as has been pointed out by Schermerhorn (1970) and Berry (1965, p. 20), by dominant groups who may or may not encourage or permit assimilation.

More recently, theories that identified several systems of assimilation were developed to interpret the integration of immigrants and minorities into American society. Gordon (1964, p. 85) maintains that there are three basic theories of assimilation to which all of the other theories of assimilation can be reduced. These three are Anglo-Saxon conformity, melting pot, and cultural pluralism.

### Anglo-Saxon Conformity

According to the Anglo-Saxon conformity theory, English cultural ideology is the standard to which all immigrant groups should yield. This ideology has been present since American colonial times. Most American founders, including Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Washington, were convinced of the detrimental effects large numbers of immigrants would have on American institutions. During the mid-19th century, groups such as the American Party regarded all foreigners with suspicion because they were not "Americans" (Gordon, 1964, p. 93).

Gordon (1964, p. 103) points out that care must be taken not to confuse Anglo conformity with racism. The motivating force behind Anglo conformity may be the belief in the cultural superiority of Anglo-Saxon institutions, not the racial superiority of Anglo-Saxon individuals.

Based on this strong belief in the superiority of American institutions, as translated from their Anglo-Saxon predecessors, the Anglo-conformist believes it is acceptable that "newcomers should be expected to adjust accordingly" (Salinas, 1981, p. 28). In other words, the superiority of American institutions is so obvious to the Anglo conformists that they expect all other groups to recognize and accept this superiority. Anglo-Saxon

conformity postulates that immigrants divest themselves of their own cultural attitudes and traditions, after which they should adopt the way of life the oldest Anglo-Saxon settlers followed (Mayo-Smith, 1895; Myrdal, 1944; Ross, 1914).

### Melting Pot Theory

The Melting Pot theory holds that new immigrants merge with native-born Americans to create a new American nationality (Zangwill, 1909). The term "melting pot" is now so common a part of our vocabulary that it is hard to believe it was coined by Israel Zangwill a writer, who used it as the title of a 1906 play. The melting pot theory emphasizes that all the world's races and cultures should blend together to form a new and better race. In this new race, the individuality of races, nations, and religions would be lost, transmuted into a noble new compound (Glazer, 1953, p. 401).

The melting pot theory posits that members of the society blend together culturally and biologically to form a new society with a unique culture. One of the reasons for the theory's popularity was that the majority of early immigrants originated from northern and western Europe. The cultural and physical distinctions between the new immigrants and Anglo-Saxon stock were not so great. However, later immigration brought ethnic groups that had quite apparent cultural and physical differences. The melting pot theory was not able to explain why members of the society with diverse cultural backgrounds would not blend together to form a new race. Thus, the theory of the multiple melting pot was developed.

The multiple melting pot idea is somewhere between the melting pot theory and cultural pluralism. One of several popular theories, the multiple

melting pot theory was first advanced by Ruby Joe Reeves Kennedy (1944) and popularized by Will Herberg (1955). According to the multiple melting pot theory, old immigrant groups were collapsing, but three super-ethnic groups based on religion (Protestant, Catholic and Jewish) were replacing them.

The "race relations cycle" theory proposed by Park (1950) was one of the first major theories of assimilation and may be classified as a melting pot theory under Gordon's scheme. The race relations cycle theory suggests that there are four stages to this cycle: contact, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation among different racial and cultural groups in interaction (Park, 1913, p. 150).

Park pointed out that the assimilation process occurs through these four stages. In the contact stage, individuals from different groups come together. This contact leads to competition and conflict among the groups. Park believed that in order to survive, the two groups must eventually reach an accommodation stage. The accommodation stage is an unstable condition that occurs rapidly, wherein adjustments to the fundamental aspects of the social order take place. Assimilation, the last stage, is gradual, "a process of interpenetration and fusion" (Park & Burgess, 1924, p. 735) where social groups tend to blend and merge.

The race relations cycle maintains, in the basic melting pot assumption, that the eventual assimilation of groups into a common culture is "apparently progressive and irreversible" (Park, 1950, p. 150). According to this theory, immigrants are considered assimilated when they acquire "the language and the social ritual of the native community and can participate,

without encountering prejudice, in the common life, economic life, and political life" (Park, 1930, p. 281).

### Cultural Pluralism

During the 20th century (particularly since World War II), the mosaic of subcultures in the United States has given rise to the concept of cultural pluralism. The concept was articulated earliest by John Dewey in 1916. In 1924, however, Horace Kallen brought the concept of cultural pluralism to prominence. He opposed the melting pot theory, advocating that immigrants should be encouraged to develop their institutions and ways of life, thus contributing to the diversity of American life.

Cultural pluralism is often viewed as the co-existence between groups. The theory contends that, after a period of adjustment, different groups will live side by side. Cultural pluralism sees each group retaining its own unique way of life, then participating as one of many groups in society. The presumed goal of the cultural pluralists is to maintain enough sub-societal separation to guarantee a continuance of the ethnic cultural tradition and the existence of a group without interfering with responsibilities to American civic life (Gordon, 1964, p. 158).

In relation to cultural assimilation, another social science approach has been developed under the influence of S. N. Eisenstadt (1955) and Milton Gordon, who hypothesize two kinds of assimilation, cultural assimilation, or acculturation, which involves the process of an immigrant group learning the manners and the style of a new society, and structural assimilation (or simply assimilation), in which the members of the immigrant group relate to

members of other groups, particularly on intimate levels of friendship and family formation without regard to ethnic differences (Greeley, 1969, p. 6).

Eisenstadt and Gordon suggest that acculturation is taking place among immigrant groups--acculturation in the sense of cultural rather than structural assimilation. The Irish, Polish, Jews, Armenians, Romanians, Greeks, and so on, wear the same kind of clothes, read the same magazines, watch the same television shows, perform the same kind of jobs, and share similar political and social values. Yet they still seek intimate friends and marriage partners from their own ethnic groups.

#### Eisenstadt's Theory

Eisenstadt's approach to the assimilation theory is based on four phases through which the absorption of immigrants into the host country takes place. First, immigrants must acquire various skills within the society (language, technical skills, etc.). Second, they must perform a host of new roles. Third, they must rebuild their identities by trying new values in relation to the new roles required. Finally, immigrants must participate in society. No longer can exclusive participation in their own social system exist, nor can they participate solely in spheres of the larger social system of their new country (Eisenstadt, 1955, p. 4f).

Eisenstadt believed that the process of absorption, from the point of view of an individual immigrant's behavior, entails learning new roles, transformation of primary group values, and an extension of participation beyond the primary group in the main spheres of the social system. Only so far as immigrants are able to successfully cope with these processes are their

concepts of self, status, and hierarchy of values formed into a coherent system. When this occurs, the immigrant is able to become a fully-functioning member of the new society.

Eisenstadt shows that, historically, three main indices have been used to determine when the immigrant is fully absorbed into the new society: (1) acculturation, (2) satisfactory and integral personal adjustment of the immigrant, and (3) the complete dispersion of immigrants as a group within the main institutional sphere of society (1955, p. 11). Gordon calls these first two indices measuring absorption (behavioral or cultural assimilation) and the third measuring integration (structural assimilation).

#### Gordon's Theory

Another theorist who has had an important influence on race/ethnic relations theory was Milton Gordon. He achieved influence through the multi-dimensional model of assimilation he presented in his book, *Assimilation in American Life*. The theory of assimilation that Gordon presented in his 1964 work has been adopted and modified by many researchers. Perhaps the most innovative aspect of his work is his division of the assimilation process into seven particular stages. Assimilation is not a single social process but rather consists of a number of different sub-processes or dimensions.

According to Gordon (1964), the following seven major steps generally occur in the process of assimilation: (1) cultural or behavioral assimilation, (2) structural assimilation, (3) intermarriage, (4) identificational assimilation, (5) attitude receptional assimilation, (6) behavioral receptional assimilation, and



(7) civic assimilation. Cultural or behavioral assimilation refers to changes in the cultural patterns of those indigenous to the racial or ethnic group with regard to the patterns of the host society.

Cultural assimilation (acculturation) refers to changes in cultural patterns (dress, language, modes of action, and other day-to-day norms of the culture) to those of the host society. Cultural assimilation (synonymous with acculturation in anthropology and social science) is likely to be the first of the types of assimilation to occur when a minority group arrives. Cultural assimilation takes place even when the other types of assimilation have not occurred. Cultural assimilation appears to have special importance, Gordon points out. To him, it is uniquely important, because it can greatly facilitate or impede progress in all the other areas of assimilation. However, as previously mentioned, being acculturated does not lead automatically to any other type of assimilation.

Structural assimilation refers to large-scale entrance of the immigrant into cliques, clubs, and institutions of the host society, on a primary group level (Gordon, 1964, p. 71). Jerry Rose (1971) elaborated on Milton Gordon's treatment of assimilation when he wrote that,

Structurally, assimilation has occurred when people from an ethnic group have been fully accepted as equal participants in the general social life of the society, one in which there is not a differential distribution of the roles and statuses to members of different ethnic groups. The measure of structural assimilation is the ability of ethnic group members to move freely through the society, joining clubs, marrying and selecting places of residence without any hindrance because of their ethnic names or their known ethnic backgrounds (p. 267).

Once structural assimilation has occurred, either simultaneously with or subsequent to cultural assimilation, all other types of assimilation will

naturally follow. Structural assimilation, rather than acculturation, is seen to be the keystone in the arch of assimilation (1964, p. 81).

If there is one key type, or stage, in the overall process of assimilation, Gordon indicates that it is probably structural assimilation. Structural assimilation, more than any other type, leads to, or at least is conducive to, progressing in all the rest. Gordon implies that the processes of acculturation and assimilation are a combination of Anglo-Saxon conformity, the melting pot, and pluralism.

In addition to cultural and structural assimilation, which occur at different rates, Gordon presents five other ways of measuring assimilation. The first is group intermarriage or amalgamation. This is a process in which large-scale intermarriage between the ethnic group and the host society occurs. Amalgamation is viewed as an aspect of the overall assimilation process (1964, pp. 70-71). In Gordon's view, marital assimilation is synonymous with amalgamation.

Identificational assimilation refers to identification with the host group. The root sense of peoplehood or ethnicity changes from the ethnic group to the host society, i.e., individuals begin to think of themselves as part of the host society and not as members of the ethnic group. Identificational assimilation refers to the degree to which minority group members think of themselves as American in the United States.

The attitude receptional assimilation process refers to the absence of prejudice on behalf of the host society. Behavioral receptional assimilation is the absence of discrimination by the host society. These two are perhaps more closely related than any other types of measuring assimilation. Civic

assimilation is the absence of value and power conflict between the host society and the ethnic/racial group.

### Portes' Theory

Alejandro Portes (1975) identified three types of assimilation: (1) cultural, which entails the adoption of the dominant group's language, value orientation, consumption patterns, and self-identities; (2) structural, which he defined as positions attained by individuals in the occupational, social income, and educational hierarchies; and (3) communal, which Portes regarded as entrance into associations with the dominant culture's primary group.

By focusing on structural variables, such as occupation, Portes clarified the assimilation model. He also maintained that race, class, form of reception, and finality of immigration movement were important factors in studies of minority group assimilation. According to Portes, social mobility and ethnicity are compatible. He hypothesized that immigrant families may maintain original identities and values, and at the same time they are occupationally successful.

Portes' study (1969) of Cuban refugee families in Milwaukee illustrates his thinking on assimilation. In this study, Portes found that integration was strongly influenced by relative level of present socioeconomic rewards. He noted that wealthy, educated and powerful people, whose economic position was challenged by the revolution, left Cuba. Portes concludes that,

Together with a strong attachment to their past identities and values, most Cubans brought qualities that have proven useful in their adaptation to United States society, among them a high level of educational attainment, occupational skills in demand in this country,

and a "middle class" ethic and style of life generally similar to that shared by the established sectors of American society ( p. 507).

#### Related Literature Review on Iranian Assimilation

The study of immigrant assimilation into American society has received much attention during the last 50 years. Scholarly articles and books on recent immigrant groups in the United States, for instance, include studies on Koreans (Light, 1984), Filipinos (Card, 1984), Chinese (Wong, 1988), Mexicans (Portes, 1981), and Cubans (Portes & Bach, 1980).

There are very few studies on Iranian immigrants to the United States other than unpublished master theses and doctoral dissertations. Among these studies, a few doctoral dissertations authored by Iranians have attempted to describe basic characteristics of Iranian adaptation in the United States. These studies examine the migration process of Iranians and the problems relating to their settlement in the United States.

One of the earliest studies on Iranian immigration was done by Abdolmaboud Ansari (1974). He interviewed 98 middle-class professionals who were permanent residents in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. His major finding was that most Iranians lived in small and isolated families. The solidarity, or "we" feeling, which has been observed among many prior immigrant groups, did not exist among Iranians. Therefore, an Iranian community had not developed due to a lack of social cohesiveness and feelings of mutual dependency and obligation among Iranians. Since the Ansari dissertation, there have been changes in the direction of assimilation of the Iranian population.

In terms of the process of assimilation, Barati-Marani (1981) used the assimilation model of sociologist Milton Gordon (1964) and studied 71 first-generation Iranian immigrants. He found that Iranians living in Los Angeles and San Diego experienced high levels of structural assimilation (large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs and institutions of the host culture) and behavioral receptional assimilation (lack of host society prejudice). At the same time, low levels of cultural, behavioral, and identification assimilation prevailed.

Barati-Marani investigated the effect of a number of variables on the assimilation of the Iranians studied, including educational background, age upon entry into the United States, length of residency, number of children, religion, income, and proficiency in English. His research found no significant correlation between length of residency in the United States and total assimilation, nor between English proficiency and assimilation. Gender was not found to be a significant influence. A respondent's marriage to an American had no relationship to intentions to stay in the United States and assimilation. Barati-Marani concluded that a negative feeling toward cultural and identificational assimilation with American society was quite strong among Iranians, while acceptance of structural and behavioral adaptation was common.

Following this research, Mohsen Douraghy (1981) gathered and analyzed two sets of data regarding the "push" factor which encouraged emigrants to move from Iran to the United States, and the "pull" factor which contributed to immigration of Iranians to the United States. He found

the main push factors to be political, occupational and religious, while the main pull factor was the attraction of relatives who had emigrated earlier.

Gilanshah (1983) discussed the development of community among Iranians of the Minneapolis twin cities area. She concluded that a two-centered Iranian ethnic community was taking shape. These two ethnic communities consisted of an Iranian-American and a student colony. The Iranian-American community obeyed the same general laws as other "hyphenated" American groups (Gilanshah, 1987). The student colony was composed of members who did not see themselves as Iranian-American.

Gilanshah's major findings were that females were more community-oriented than males; students had stronger community orientations than non-students; and singles were more community-oriented than married interviewees.

Diane Hoffman (1986) examined the process of cultural adaptation from a culture learning perspective. She looked at the role of cultural symbols in facilitating acculturation and culture acquisition. It is suggested that different adaptive responses to American culture are linked to individual variations in culture learning strategies and to the particular form of self-culture relation experienced by individuals. Hoffman has analyzed Iranian-American communication patterns in school settings and Iranian gender relations in the process of culture adaptation and learning. Themes of Iranian community development (as differentiated from full-culture adaptation or assimilation) were found to revolve around a learning process oriented toward surface level adaptation and integration, cultural eclecticism, maintenance of a strong Iranian identity, and rejection of an ethnic role in

American mainstream society. The process of culture learning at the individual level is described as a function of perception, abstraction, evaluation and an incorporation of symbolically encoded cultural meanings.

Ali Kamali (1986) studied the adjustment process of Iranian students to American society. His aim was to identify a process through which persons undergo varying degrees of change in their attitudes and perceptions toward their surrounding environments and in their social interactions with Americans. Kamali found that a strong link exists between the social interactional patterns prevalent in the host society and a favorable attitude of the immigrant toward the surrounding environment.

It was also observed that demographic characteristics do not play a determining role in the adjustment process; however, marital status seemed to be the single most important factor in this process. Unmarried individuals scored higher on the adjustment scale than married respondents.

In short, the migration of Iranians to the United States has increased since 1975 and so have the problems of assimilation and adjustment to the new culture. Research shows that the pull factors for Iranians are educational and occupational opportunities, as well as the desire to be close to their relatives. In recent years, the political pressure at home has added another push factor for Iranians coming to the United States.

### Theoretical Framework

In this study, the concept of assimilation is broken down into cultural assimilation and structural assimilation. The concept of assimilation is derived from Gordon's conceptual model on assimilation, which will assist

us in understanding the extent of assimilation of Iranian immigrants in the Bay Area.

Gordon has maintained that assimilation of ethnic groups is a multidimensional phenomenon, consisting of seven subprocesses. From these subprocesses, cultural, structural, and marital assimilation are related but are analytically separate subprocesses (Gordon, 1964, p. 71). The two types of assimilation that will be used as dependent variables in this study are "cultural" and "structural" assimilation, which are the first two subprocesses of Gordon's assimilation theory.

Cultural or behavioral assimilation is a single subprocess through which the members of the ethnic groups acquire the values, norms, beliefs, language, and behaviors of the dominant group in society (Yetman, 1985, p. 225). Gordon (1964) argued that there are existing terms for some of the particular assimilation subprocesses. For instance, cultural or behavioral assimilation has already been defined as acculturation. Portes (1975) also identified this type of assimilation as cultural assimilation, which entails the adoption of the dominant group's language and value orientation.

Structural (or social) assimilation is a process that "refers to patterns of social interaction among individuals of different ethnic background" (Yetman, 1985, p. 225). According to Gordon, structural assimilation takes place on two levels, primary and secondary. Primary structural assimilation involves personal relationships that are warm, intimate, personal, spontaneous and emotional and occur in friendships and family situations which involve reciprocal visiting (Yetman, 1985, p. 225).



In secondary structural assimilation, on the other hand, members in the organization have different, rather than common, goals and values and the relationships are neither personal nor intimate. Thus, secondary structural assimilation refers to the ethnic integration of settings characterized by impersonal secondary relationships which are formal such as the job, school, organizations, and public recreation.

According to Gordon (1964, p. 125), for a group to completely assimilate, it must first enter the primary groups and institutions of the dominant society. Education could be considered a foundation for entrance to the primary group.

Occupation and income were assumed to be other important indicators for measuring an immigrant's incorporation. The extent and quality of an immigrant's incorporation into the economy of the receiving country contributed significantly to the immigrant's assimilation.

### Hypotheses

The main purpose of the present study was to examine the influence of a series of factors or dimensions of assimilation on Iranian immigrants who were living in the Bay Area. Major theoretical considerations were examined and guided the analysis of this study. Based upon Gordon's theory of assimilation, the following two hypotheses were generated. The first hypothesis consisted of two parts a and b as follows:

- a) The higher the education, income, and occupational levels of Iranian immigrants, the higher the degree of cultural assimilation.

- b) The higher the education, income, and occupational levels of Iranian immigrants, the higher the degree of structural assimilation.

Studies of immigrant groups have generally shown that immigrants with higher educations and higher occupational achievements are better assimilated. Among Cubans in West New York in 1968, Rogg (1974, p. 133) found that well-educated Cubans were more likely to recognize the need to assimilate than poorly-educated Cubans. In the same study, Rogg contended that the higher the former class background, the better the knowledge of English, the greater the preference for reading English newspapers and, therefore, the greater the acculturation.

Education per se is widely assumed to bear an important relationship to assimilation and is held to be a force for acculturation or cultural assimilation and structural assimilation. Education also has been one of the main agents in socializing immigrants into American life. It is through education that values are inculcated and English is taught. Education obtained in the United States is a very important factor in acculturation, providing an immigrant with the necessary skills to acculturate and an avenue of social mobility (Weinstock, 1964, p. 334). Weinstock's study showed that those who had some education in the United States would acculturate (show cultural assimilation) faster than those who had no such education. Therefore, education obtained in the United States is an important factor in assimilation and also could be considered a foundation for entrance to the mainstream group.

Income and occupation also play an important part in the assimilation process of most ethnic groups in the United States. In a study of the role of cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty in acculturation, Padilla (1980, p. 77) found that acculturation was positively related to income for a sample of Mexican-Americans. Occupation can also be a major link between the immigrants and the dominant society when the former are surrounded by Americans and successfully learn new roles, attitudes, and values in the United States. Weinstock (1963) argued that persons who hold high occupational status or show upward occupational mobility were those who most rapidly and smoothly acculturated (cultural assimilation) within the new society. Vander (1972, pp. 277-80) found that groups at higher educational, income, and occupational levels tend to have greater access to means of upward mobility, which lends itself to a higher rate of assimilation. The second hypothesis consisted of part a and b as follows:

- a) The longer the residency of Iranian immigrants in the United States, the greater the cultural assimilation.
- b) The longer the residency of Iranian immigrants in the United States the greater the structural assimilation.

Rogg (1974) found that the longer Cubans had lived in the United States, the greater their assimilation, as reflected in their knowledge of English and their interest in becoming United States citizens. It was anticipated that Iranian immigrants who had stayed in the United States for a longer period of time would therefore be more culturally and structurally

assimilated. It was assumed that, as time passes, familiarity with the new language and culture would tend to increase and in turn help the immigrants assimilate faster.

Length of time is an important variable influencing socioeconomic achievement and, in turn, assimilation. Duncan and Lieberman, on the basis of a study of residential patterns of ethnic groups in Chicago for the years 1930 and 1950, found substantial support for the hypothesis that there exists "a positive correlation between assimilation and the length of time that the immigrant group has been in the United States" (1958, p. 364).

## CHAPTER III

### SETTING : PRESENCE OF IRANIANS IN THE UNITED STATES

Iranian immigration to the United States is essentially a post-World War II phenomenon which can be divided into two phases. The first phase begins after World War II and extends until the Iranian revolution (1950-1979); the second phase starts during and after the Iranian revolution and is still continuing. Most immigration to the United States occurred before the revolution of 1979, during a period of apparent political and economic prosperity in Iran. Many Iranian immigrants entered the United States as students and then stayed in the United States. Others were trained in Iran or elsewhere and came to the United States to begin careers. Factors that have contributed to Iranian emigration are primarily economic, educational, and political.

According to *Forbes* magazine, almost one million Iranians are living in the United States, and, of this population, some 400,000 are in California (December 12, 1988). The Immigration and Naturalization Service indicated that, during the peak decades of emigration to the United States, only 130 people of Iranian national origin are known to have entered in the years 1842-1903. From 1904 to 1925, Iranian arrivals were too few to warrant a separate breakdown in the immigration statistics.

The annual reports of the Commissioner General of Immigration list 780 Iranian immigrants during the years 1925-1932 (statistics are lacking for 1933-1944), while in 1945 there were 82 listed immigrants. Therefore, annual arrivals during the depression and war years probably did not exceed 82.

Starting in 1945, emigration from Iran rose steadily and by 1966 had exceeded 1,000 per year to the United State, presumably. The United States Immigration and Naturalization Service stated that there were 5,861 Iranian immigrants admitted to the United States from 1968 to 1978. Table 1 reflects the growth in the number of immigrant and non-immigrant Iranians present in the United States.

Table 1

Iranian Immigrants and Non-immigrants Admitted to the United States, 1950-1989.

Year	Number of Immigrants	Number of Non-immigrants
1950	245	644
1955	219	1,113
1960	429	3,705
1965	804	5,954
1970	2,411	14,475
1975	2,337	35,088
1980	10,410	NA
1983	11,163	22,084
1984	11,131	44,629
1985	12,327	57,831
1986	12,031	42,561
1987	10,323	29,950
1988	9,846	23,882
1989	21,243	26,859

Sources: *Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (1958-1989 Eds).

NA=Not available Non-immigrant=Student, visitor, different visas

The main reason for Iranians going abroad in the 1960s and 1970s was their desire for higher education. A severe lack of educational facilities in Iran led many students to attend United States universities. Between 1966 and 1976, about 27 percent of Iranian immigrants were students who adjusted their status to that of permanent resident (Thernstrom, 1980; p. 521). As Ansari (1974) stated, higher education increases the opportunity for better jobs and access to higher social status. In recent years, a large proportion of Iranian immigrants have been students. According to Gilanshah (1987), as many as 85 percent of the immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s were single men.

Another factor for emigration was the country's economic situation. Because of limited job opportunities and lower salaries in Iran in comparison with those in the United States, some Iranians left Iran and came to the United States. With the accelerated growth of the Iranian economy in the early 1970s, this ceased to be the case. The relative rates of inflation during the 1970s made it quicker to earn sufficient income in Iran and to spend it in the United States. Because of this, many well-off Iranians emigrated to United States.

The other important factor was the political condition in Iran. The political climate since the 1950s and the desire for greater political freedom and security in the United States led Iranians to emigrate. The political turmoil in Iran, which began in 1978 and ended a year later with the demise of the Pahlavi dynasty, was responsible for a large exodus of Iranians to the United States, predominantly from the middle and upper classes.

Since the revolution in Iran, many Iranian families, singers, artists, intellectuals, professionals, medical doctors, and businessmen have

immigrated to the United States. Sizeable contingents of these groups left Iran because of the social and political turmoil and immigrated through kinship networks and friends who had already settled in America since 1974.

The 1980 United States census collected information on the size and geographic distribution of more than 120 ancestry (or national origin) groups. Based on this census, the Iranian ethnic groups comprised less than 0.1 percent of the total United States population that year. According to the geographical distribution by Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), which reflects state distributions of ancestry groups, five of the top ten SMSAs with the largest concentrations of Iranians were in California.

California is one of the most attractive locations for Iranian immigrants. Especially, the climate of southern California is similar to Tehran, the capital of Iran. As a result, the largest Iranian community United States is found in California, where 33 percent of all Iranian permanent residents live. New York follows with 15 percent (Thernstrom, Orlov & Handlin, 1984, p. 523), while the third largest Iranian community is in the area which combines the district of Columbia, Virginia and Maryland with 6.1 percent of the total. Within California, Los Angeles/Long Beach was listed as the foremost Iranian center, with 21.1 percent of the nation's Iranian population. San Francisco/Oakland ranked second (5.4 percent), and San Jose was ranked third (3.4 percent) (Bozorgmehr & Sabagh, 1988, p. 25). On the whole, Iranians residing in the United States are well educated and economically well off. They represent the ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity that has long been characteristic of Iran (Lorentz & Wertime, 1980, p. 521).



## CHAPTER IV

### METHODS

This chapter provides information regarding the methodological procedures used in this study. The research design is identified and the procedures for subject selection, instrumentation, and data collection are described. Finally, the limitations of this study are discussed and summarized.

#### Research Design

Survey research attempts to discover the relative incidence, distribution, and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables (Kerlinger, 1973). This study utilized a survey in which Iranian immigrants who reside in the Bay Area were asked to respond to various questions relating to the assimilation process, with regard to their own experiences.

#### Respondent Selection

The data for this study were obtained from numbers of the Iranian population residing in the Bay Area. As an official list of Iranian immigrants was not made available by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), a random sampling of the population was not possible. Thus, the sample under study has been selected through convenience sampling or snowball methods. A convenience sample was utilized in the present study. In this sampling technique, the investigator asks the first participant to refer friends to the study, who in turn are asked to recruit others and so on (Woods & Catanzaro, 1988, p. 107). About 100 questionnaires were distributed and mailed to Iranian immigrants through various agencies, friends, relatives and students.

To broaden the sample somewhat, the distribution of surveys was made in a variety of locations: churches, various associations, and other Iranian gatherings. In each case, a self-addressed stamped envelope accompanied the questionnaire in order to facilitate its return. The criterion used for the inclusion of subjects in the study was that they be Iranians who migrated to the United States and lived in the Bay Area. The sample selection procedure required approximately two months beginning in March 1992 and ending in June 1992.

It should be mentioned that, because of the lack of descriptive data on demographic characteristics for the whole Iranian population in the Bay Area, any comparison between the chosen sample and the larger population in the Bay Area would not be possible. Moreover, due to a small sample size ( $n=33$ ) the use of inferential statistics for the purpose of generalization is ruled out. The sample used in this analysis consists of 33 of the 100 questionnaires distributed among Iranian immigrants and the response rate was 33%. The majority of respondents were married (45%), while the remainder were single (36%), divorced (15%), and separated (3%).

#### Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

The demographic characteristics of the sample under study will be presented here in order to give some information regarding age, gender, education, occupation, income, and length of residency distributions.

##### Age Distribution

As Table 2 indicates, the modal age is 32 years old. A minor modal age occurs at age 34. These two categories represent the highest numbers in

Table 2, and account for 28 percent of total respondents. The average age of the respondents was 35.27 years old ranging from 24 to 49.

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage by Age

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
24	1	3
30	2	6
31	1	3
32	5	16
33	2	6
34	4	12
35	2	6
36	1	3
37	2	6
38	2	6
39	2	6
40	2	6
41	1	3
42	2	6
43	1	3
47	1	3
48	1	3
49	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Gender Distribution

Table 3 shows the gender distribution of the sample; the sample is comprised of 19 males (58%) and 14 females (42%). The ratio selection of gender appeared to be more-or-less random.

Table 3

#### Frequency and Percentage by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	14	42
Male	19	58
Total	33	100%

### Educational Status

Data on educational levels achieved by the respondents are presented in Table 4. The vast majority of respondents have received their higher education in the United States. According to a study by Bozorgmehr and Sabagh (1988), the educational achievement of Iranians is remarkable. According to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, between 1970-80, about 23 percent of Iranians had a graduate university education in the United States as compared to 12.5 percent of other foreign-born residents and 7.5 percent for natives American. It may be that Iranians who came to the United States for higher education stayed in this country after the Iranian revolution. It is also possible that those who did not complete their higher education

returned to Iran, thus leaving the most highly educated behind in the United States (Bozorgmehr & Sabagh, 1988, p. 25).

Table 4  
Frequency and Percentage by Education

<u>Educational Level by Degree</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Bachelor's Degree	11	34
Master's Degree	17	52
Ph. D or Higher	5	14
Total	33	100.%

#### Occupational Status

As Table 5 shows, about 64 percent of the Iranian respondents hold a professional occupational status, whereas the rest of the respondents (46%) hold white-collar positions in the work force. Professional occupations include physicians, professors, ministers, engineers, and CPAs. White-collar positions includes nurses, teachers, pharmacists, clerical workers, reporters, proprietors, managers, salesmen, computer programmers, and social workers. Blue-collar positions include manual workers (skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled). "Other" includes the unemployed and the non-employed (students, homemakers, and retired persons). None of the respondents in this study were in the blue collar or the "other" category, skewing some results.

Table 5  
Frequency and Percentage by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Professional	21	64
White-Collar	12	46
Blue-Collar	0	0
Other	0	0
Total	33	100%

#### Income

Table 6 represents the frequency and percentage by income. As might be expected, the high occupational statuses held by the respondents translate into higher incomes. The median income of the respondents is \$44,500. The modal income is \$34,500. About 30% of the respondents' annual incomes range from \$30,000 to \$39,000, while 17% of the respondents' incomes range between \$50,000 and \$59,000. Also, 17% of the respondents' income range between \$40,000 and \$49,000. Another significant percentage is those with yearly incomes between \$80,000 and \$89,000, totalling 10% of the sample. It should be mentioned that, due to Iranian ethnic and cultural characteristics (mistrust and insecurity), these findings could be viewed as a lack of Iranian willingness to answer questions about their incomes.

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage by Income

Income Range	Frequency	Percentage
1) \$ 10,000 to 19,000	1	3
2) \$ 20,000 to 29,000	3	9
3) \$ 30,000 to 39,000	9	26
4) \$ 40,000 to 49,000	5	16
5) \$ 50,000 to 59,000	5	16
6) \$ 60,000 to 69,000	1	3
7) \$ 70,000 to 79,000	2	6
8) \$ 80,000 to 89,000	3	9
9) \$ 90,000 to 99,000	0	0
10) \$100,000 or above	1	3
11) No answer	3	9
Total	33	100%

Length of Residency in the U. S.

Table 7 represents the respondents' period of residency in the United States. About 32% of the respondents have lived in the United States for 13 years and 28% have lived for about 3.5 years. The median length of the respondent's residency in the United States was 8.5 years. The modal length of the respondent's residency in the United states was 12.5 years.

Table 7

Frequency and Percentage by Length of Residency

Length of Residency	Frequency	Percentage
2-6 years	9	28
7-10 years	8	24
11-14 years	10	32
15-18 years	5	13
19-22 years	1	3
Total	33	100%

## Statistical Procedure

The methods of analysis used in this study were factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. Factor analysis was used to summarize the interrelationships among the variables to aid in conceptualization. In general, factor loading is a measure of the degree of generalizability between each variable and each factor. The single most distinctive characteristic of principle-component factor analysis is its data-reduction capacity.

Factor analysis techniques enable us to see whether some underlying patterns of relationship exist so that the data may be rearranged or reduced to a smaller set of factors or components that may be taken as source variables accounting for the observed interrelations in the data (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenne, & Bent, 1975, p. 469). When we use the factor analysis, even though the Likert scale items may be scored discretely (e.g., 1, 2, 3, or 4), the



final scale score is continuous. The factor loadings serve as weight and are continuously measured (Baily, 1987, p. 388).

Multiple regression analysis was used to study the linear relationship between a set of independent variables and a dependent variable. Some of the components of the regression equation that are used in this analysis are the unstandardized and standardized regression coefficients, the standard error, and the  $R^2$  or proportion of variance explained.

Another statistic used in this study is the squared multiple correlation. That correlation explains the proportion of variance of the dependent variable accounted for by the cumulative effects of the independent variables. The statistical package used to process the data was the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

#### Instrumentation

The purpose of this study was to consider the effect of selected variables on the assimilation patterns of Iranians in the Bay Area. To collect the necessary data, a structured questionnaire consisting of 22 items was developed. The questionnaire was constructed based on the model of assimilation, and contained pre-coded questions. Items were extracted by the researcher and were reviewed by thesis committee members. The committee was asked to screen items for clarity and relevance, and to make suggestions to strengthen the questionnaire.

To test the feasibility of the questionnaire, a pilot study was undertaken. Four men and three women were asked to participate in the pilot study. The participants were chosen from the researcher's Iranian friends. They were asked to give their perceptions concerning the content

and the length of the questionnaire. Their critiques were used prior to sending out the questionnaire for the study.

The questionnaire consisted of several parts, including questions relating to the education of the respondents, respondents' job satisfaction, and friendships, language proficiency, and cultural traits. Finally, the last part assessed demographic characteristics of the respondents: occupation, age, gender, and length of residency in the United States. These questionnaire items were scored on a Likert scale (Appendix C).

#### Problem of Sampling and Data Collection

Lack of scholarly attention to the Iranian community in the United States is considered a reason that few studies have been conducted on Iranians. This lack becomes more acute when it is contrasted with the multiplicity and frequency of scholarly articles and books on other recent ethnic and immigrant groups in the United States

These studies clearly demonstrate a shortage of information regarding Iranian emigration to the United States. Other factors affecting the lack of scholarly research on Iranians in the United States include practical difficulties of doing research among them and the impact of American and Iranian mutual images and attitudes.

#### Mistrust

A traditional mistrust of outsiders may have had an influence on the results, as researchers have pointed out (Gilanshah, 1983). Iranian society, like the Moroccan (Eickelman, 1976; Rosen, 1979) and Lebanese society

(Gilsenan, 1976), is both hierarchical and socially mobile, with social interaction influenced by economic class and personal-familial status.

In Iran there exists a kind of unconventional social mobility enabling clever persons to raise their status by manipulating other people within the context of social interaction. One of the best examples in recent history of someone who accomplished such a feat was a semi-illiterate peasant who ultimately became the Shah of Iran, or Reza Shah (1877-1944).

The combination of hierarchy and social mobility engenders the development of a series of authoritarian relationships, or patron-client relationships of obligation and servitude, to raise or guard one's status. Conversely, one could fall out of favor with a person of power and lose one's higher status within the community. These factors have created a situation in which people are often distrustful of others and suspicious in their behavior. One must take care to protect oneself and one's family of social situations where potentially powerful persons could create contexts of domination and subordination (Pliskin, 1987, p. 51).

Gilanshah (1983) writes that,

in order to understand them [Iranians] it is necessary to know their family background, as well as friends. It is usually possible to study them only if introduced to them through friends (p. 87).

Mistrust has often been cited as an important feature of Iranian society (Binder, 1962; Zonis, 1971). If we consider mistrust from the standpoint of communication, we see that what we term as mistrust is better thought of as an index of relative communicative maladroitness, i.e., the person whom we

read as being mistrustful is in fact unable to interpret the actions of another to his or her own satisfaction (Beeman, 1976, p. 38).

### Insecurity

The negative political climate that has been created for Iranians who come to the United States is another problem confronting researchers. Persons approached in the Iranian community regarded the research with a great deal of suspicion and mistrust. Potential respondents wanted to know what the purpose of the research was going to be, who sponsored the research, and especially whether any harm could come to them if they were to provide information.

Due to the prevailing Iranian political situation, the fear of possible harm on the part of immigrant Iranians may well be justified. Because of circumstances in Iran, individuals in the United States could easily suspect many legitimate researchers. As there are Iranians in America who represent the government of the late Shah, as well as agents of the revolutionary government, many of the individuals approached were understandably afraid to give information.

It could be dangerous for Iranian immigrants to communicate with people about their past lives during the revolution in Iran. These people are afraid that such activities could have serious implications for themselves, as well as for their relatives remaining in Iran. Iranians living in the United States are also afraid to discuss any matters of a personal nature with strangers because of their fear of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Immigrants who have not established residency, renewed an

expired visa or met official INS definitions for "legal" residence in the United States fear reprisal from the INS.

The nature of the Iranian community itself can be regarded as a source of further difficulty in conducting research. The community lacks any well-defined geographic centers, even where there are relatively dense concentrations of Iranians. Another reason for difficulty is that the Iranian immigrant image is a complex one. Iranians do not fit the image of the typical immigrant who is socially and economically disadvantaged. In both Iranian and American minds, there is the idea that Iranians already have money, a signal of their social success; therefore, they do not demonstrate a need for social recognition in mainstream society.

#### Operationalization of Variables

In this section, the operationalization of the theoretical variables derived from Gordon's model of assimilation is discussed. The two types of assimilation that have been chosen from Gordon's theory for this study are cultural assimilation and structural assimilation. In this study, five factors were developed for cultural and structural assimilation. Three structural assimilation factors, and two cultural ones are involved.

#### Dependent Variables

##### Cultural Assimilation

Cultural assimilation includes two dimensions: English proficiency and Iranian cultural values. English Proficiency consists of three variables which measure the respondent's ability to speak, write, and read English. The questions measuring English proficiency variable are as follows: How well do

you speak English? How well do you write English? How well do you read English. The response categories for these three questions were: (1) Not at all, (2) Fair, (3) Well, and (4) Very Well. In order to create the composite English proficiency scale, all three questions were combined by using factor loadings.

The most widely accepted definition of cultural assimilation refers to the change from one set of cultural traits to another, often that of a dominant group. In this study, Iranian cultural values consist of three items and the focus was on the change from Iranian to American cultural traits. In order to illustrate this change, information was obtained from the respondents through the following questions: How often do you watch Iranian Television? How often do you carry out Iranian traditional celebration? The response categories for these two questions were: (1) Never; (2) Occasionally; (3) Frequently; and (4) Always. Also the respondents were asked the question; do you think Iranian culture, history, and morals should be taught to your children? The response categories were as follows: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Moderately Disagree; (3) Moderately Agree; and (4) Strongly Agree. These three variables are combined by using factor loadings to create an Iranian cultural values scale.

### Structural Assimilation

The structural assimilation variable is operationalized by creating the following three factors: Job satisfaction, equal treatment, and friendship. Job satisfaction is composed of four variables. Each question inquires about the respondent's job satisfaction in different situations. The questions include: My salary is the same as that of an American (if other qualifications are the same)? I am very content with my job in the United States? My co-workers

are friendly and enjoyable? My job is interesting, stimulating, and gives me a sense of accomplishment? Response categories for the job satisfaction items were: (1) Definitely not; (2) Probably not; (3) Probably yes; and (4) Definitely yes. All four questions are combined by using factor loadings to create a structural assimilation scale.

The second dependent variable used to measure structural assimilation is equal treatment. This variable measures whether the respondents perceive themselves as equal to Americans or not equal at all. It also allows examination of the orientation of respondents toward structural assimilation. This variable has only one single indicator and the following question was asked: Most American accept me as their equal? This item had the following Likert-scale type as response categories: (1) Definitely not; (2) Probably not; (3) Probably yes; and (4) Definitely yes. Since the variable had a single indicator, the composite scale was not created.

The third variable which measures the degree of respondent interaction with Americans is as follow: How often have you invited American to your home in the past year? this variable also has one single indicator. The score assigned the value of integration. Integration represents the extent to which there is actual integration between respondents and Americans, i.e., frequency of interaction. The response categories include (1) Never, (2) 1 to 3 times, (3) 4 to 6 times, (4) 7 to 9 times, and (5) 10 or more times.

#### Independent Variables

The independent variables used in this study are education, income, present occupation in the United States, and length of residency in the United States.

### Education (EDR)

Education is categorized into eleven levels. For each level, a number showing the number of years that respondents have spent receiving their education has been assigned. The levels are Elementary (1-6 years), Secondary (7-9 years), High school graduate (10-12 years), Technical Degree (13,14 years), some College (13,14 years), Bachelor (13-16 years), Master (17,18 years), Ph.D (19-21 years), post Ph.D (22-24 years), M.D (17-20 years), and Law degree (17-19 years). The average level of education in this sample is 17 years, indicating that most of the respondents have a high level of education.

### Present Occupation (POCC)

Occupational status scores represent the relative ranking of specific occupations based on a standard scale score of the United States Census Bureau's 1970 occupational classifications (Treiman, 1977, p. 292). Occupational scores for the sample range from 47 (clerical worker) to 78 (university instructor). The average weighted occupational score for the respondents was 62.5.

### Income (DOLARR)

For the measurement of income, present yearly income was considered, and was categorized into ten levels. The median income of the respondents was \$35,500.

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (1) \$10,000 to \$19,000 | (6) \$60,000 to \$69,000 |
| (2) \$20,000 to \$29,000 | (7) \$70,000 to \$79,000 |
| (3) \$30,000 to \$39,000 | (8) \$80,000 to \$89,000 |
| (4) \$40,000 to \$49,000 | (9) \$90,000 to \$99,000 |
| (5) \$50,000 to \$59,000 | (10) \$100,00 or above   |



### Length of Residency (LONGUSR)

Length of residency was included as a proxy for assimilation experiences among immigrants. Length of residency was operationalized by asking the year in which respondents arrived in United States. The average length that respondents had resided in the United States was 10 years.

### Control Variables

Age, gender, and socioeconomic status were viewed as control variables. The average age of the respondents was 36 years. The age of the respondents ranged from 24 to 49 years old. For gender, a dummy variable, coded 1 for men and 0 for female, was created. Dummy variables are most commonly used when a researcher wishes to insert a nominal-scale variable into a regression equation. From the sample size of 33 respondents, 58% (19 cases) were male, and 42% (14 cases) were female.

The socioeconomic variable was created by assigning weights to the variables education, income, and present occupation in order to test the second hypothesis. In order to obtain weights, or factor scores, factor analysis was conducted. Factor analysis provided weights for education (.365), income (.477), and present occupation (.491). The correlation coefficient matrix of all variables used in this study is listed in Table 11 (Appendix A).

## CHAPTER V

### FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

In this chapter the results of factor analysis and regression analysis are presented. Factor analysis was used to create composite scales for English proficiency, Iranian cultural values and Job satisfaction. Moreover regression analysis was conducted to test two sets of hypotheses.

#### Factor Analysis

##### Cultural Assimilation

The following two scales were created for cultural assimilation through factor analysis: English proficiency and Iranian cultural values.

##### English Proficiency (ENGLISH)

The first composite scale for cultural assimilation is English proficiency. Table 8 shows the results of the factor analysis. The Table indicates that three variable (SPEKENG, WRITENG, and READENG) had high factor loadings (.935, .922 and .877 respectively).

Table 8

##### Factor Analysis for English Proficiency (ENGLISH)

Variables	Factor Loading	Communality
How well respondents speak English (SPEKENG)	.935	.874
How well respondents write English (WRITENG)	.922	.851
How well respondents read English (READENG)	.877	.769

It means that the correlation of these variables with the factor English proficiency as an indicator of the dependent variable is high. As the final communality estimates range from .769 READENG to .874 for SPEKENG, this indicates a high correlation between the variables. There is a large eigen-value (2.49) that represents the amount of variance (83%) explained by the first axis. Expectedly, only one factor is extracted, which is an ample summary of data for our purposes. The second eigen-value is only .335.

#### Iranian Cultural Values (IRANIAN)

The second composite scale for cultural assimilation is Iranian cultural values, consisting of three items. As illustrated in Table 9, the Iranian cultural values factor has a large loading for celebrating Iranian customs (IRANCUST) .710 and relatively large loadings for teaching Iranian culture to their children (CULTURE) .696, and watching Iranian Television (IRANTV) .652. This result indicates quantitative relationships between the variables and the factor.

Table 9

#### Factor Analysis for Iranian Cultural Values (IRANIAN)

Variables	Factor Loading	Communality
Watching Iranian T.V. (IRANTV)	.652	.425
Celebrating Iranian traditional customs (IRANCUST)	.710	.505
Iranian culture, history, and morals should be taught to your children (CULTURE)	.696	.484

The eigen-value (1.41) accounts for (47%) of the standardized variance, since the second eigen-value is only .823. Expectedly, the final communality estimates show that all the variables are well accounted for by one component, with final communality estimates ranging from .425 for IRANTV to .484 for CULTURE.

### Structural Assimilation

Factor analysis was used to create a composite scale for job satisfaction which is one of three dimensions of structural assimilation.

#### Job Satisfaction (JOBSAT)

As illustrated in Table 10, job satisfaction has large positive loadings for all four variables. The highest factor loading is .957 for respondents' satisfaction with their jobs (CONWJ). The next factor loading is .872 for a sense of accomplishment respondents have with their jobs (JINTRES). The third factor loading is .797 for respondents' sense of enjoyment in respect to their interaction with their co-workers (COWORK), and the last factor loading is .758 for the salary (SALSOCC). Factor loadings reflect quantitative relationships between each variable and the factor. The further the factor loading is from zero, the more one can generalize from that factor to the variable.

The final communality estimates range from .575 for SALSOCC to .917 for CONWJ. There is one large eigen-value (2.89) which accounts for 72 percent of standardized variance. One factor is retained on the basis of the "eigen-value greater than one" rule since the second eigen-value is only .598.

Table 10

Factor Analysis for Job Satisfaction (JOBSAT)

Variables	Factor Loading	Communality
My salary is the same as that of an American (SALSOCC)	.758	.575
I am very content with my job in the U.S.(CONWJ)	.957	.917
My job is interesting, stimulating, and gives me a sense of accomplishment (JINTRES)	.872	.761
My co-workers are friendly and enjoyable (COWORK)	.797	.636

Equal Treatment and Friendship (EQUAL) & (INVITA)

As described in methodology chapter the variables equal treatment and friendship have a single indicator.

## Regression Analysis

Data Analysis for the First Hypothesis

A regression analysis was carried out to explore the relationship between cultural assimilation and structural assimilation as related to the independent variables education (EDR), present occupation (POCC), and income (DOLARR). This was done to test the first hypothesis (Appendix B, figure 1).

English Proficiency (ENGLISH)

In order to examine the extent of support for the first hypothesis, English proficiency (ENGLISH) was used as an indicator of cultural

assimilation. It was assumed that the higher the English proficiency score, the higher the degree of cultural assimilation. Table 12 (next page) presents the results of a regression analysis for the dependent variable English proficiency, and independent variables education, present occupation, and income, while controlling for gender (SEX), age (OLD), and length of residency (LONGUSR) in the United States. The most important variable affecting English proficiency was education ( $B = .384$ ,  $p = .045$ ) at the probability level .05.

Existence of this relationship reveals that respondents with high educational backgrounds were more likely to be culturally assimilated. The other two variables, present occupation ( $B = .318$ ,  $p = .123$ ), and income ( $B = -.216$ ,  $p = .333$ ) have no impact on English proficiency. However, when correlation between present occupation and English proficiency was examined, there was a significant relationship ( $r = .464$ ,  $p = .009$ ). Taking into account the other variables included in the model, the relationship between present occupation and English proficiency disappeared. The effect of present occupation on English proficiency became insignificant, partially because its effect was suppressed by its relationship with income ( $r = .472$ ,  $p = .008$ ).

These findings revealed no relationship between independent variables, present occupation, income, and the dependent variable English proficiency. It means that the higher income and high present occupational level of the respondents have no impact on their cultural assimilation. These results partially support the portion of the first hypothesis suggesting that the higher the education of immigrants, the higher the level of cultural assimilation.

Table 12

Regression Analysis for Cultural Assimilation of English Proficiency (ENGLISH)

Variables	<u>b</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE(b)</u>	<u>p</u>
INTERCEPT	1.960	---	4.17	.641
OLD	-.080	-.228	.062	.169
SEX	.726	.186	.757	.347
LONGUSR	.049	.118	.081	.547
EDR	.424	.384	.200	.045*
POCC	.065	.318	.040	.123
DOLARR	-.195	-.216	.197	.333
<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup> = .394				

\* p < .05      SE(b) = Standard Error for b      p = Probability  
b = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
R<sup>2</sup> = R-square      B = Standardized Regression Coefficient

Variables age (B = -.228, p = .169), length of residency (B = .118, p = .547) and gender (B = .186, p = .347) did not prove statistically significant. In other words, age, gender and length of residency did not have any apparent effect on cultural assimilation. The proportion of variation, R-square (R<sup>2</sup>), explained by the cumulative effect of independent variables, was .39. That is to say, 39 percent of variation in English proficiency was explained by gender,

age, length of residency, education, present occupation, and income, operating jointly.

#### Iranian Cultural Values (IRANIAN)

Iranian cultural values were considered as an indicator of cultural assimilation in order to examine the extent of support for the first hypothesis. The result of regression analysis using Iranian cultural values as the indicator of cultural assimilation is presented in Table 13 (next page). As Table 13 shows, there was no relationship between the dependent variable Iranian cultural values and the following independent variables: Education ( $B = -.010$ ,  $p = .958$ ), present occupation ( $B = .062$ ,  $p = .767$ ), and income ( $B = .112$ ,  $p = .627$ ).

These results imply that respondents with higher educational backgrounds, higher present occupational levels, and higher incomes were eager to keep their cultural values, such as celebrating Iranian traditional customs, transmitting their history and morals to their children and watching Iranian Television. Overall, scores or results did not prove significantly related to Iranian cultural values. This aspect of the first hypothesis was therefore not supported.

The two variables length of residency ( $B = -.479$ ,  $p = .036$ ), and gender ( $B = -.531$ ,  $p = .015$ ) show statistical significance. These variables exhibit a negative relationship with Iranian cultural values. This evidence indicates that males were more culturally assimilated than females, and the longer immigrants stay in the United States, the higher would be their level of cultural assimilation.



Table 13

Regression Analysis for Cultural Assimilation of Iranian Cultural Values (IRANIAN)

Variables	<u>b</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE(b)</u>	<u>p</u>
INTERCEPT	14.7	---	4.19	.002
OLD	-.055	-.154	.060	.368
SEX	-2.10	-.531	.792	.015*
LONGUSR	-.202	-.479	.089	.036*
EDR	-.011	-.010	.227	.958
POCC	.013	.062	.043	.767
DOLARR	.104	.112	.210	.627

R<sup>2</sup> = .453

\* p < .05.      SE(b) = Standard Error for b      p = Probability  
b = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
R<sup>2</sup> = R-square      B = Standardized Regression Coefficient

The proportion of variation, R-square (R<sup>2</sup>), explained by the cumulative effect of independent variables, was .45, i.e., 45 percent of variation in the variable Iranian cultural values was explained by gender, age, length of residency, education, present occupation, and income operating jointly.

Job Satisfaction (JOBSAT)

Job satisfaction, as a measure of structural assimilation, was examined in order to determine the extent of support for the first hypothesis. According

to the first hypothesis, immigrants who were highly educated have higher occupational levels, and higher incomes were predicted to be satisfied with their job and, in turn, structurally assimilated. Table 14 contains regression results for the relationship between job satisfaction and education, present occupation, and income.

The variables education ( $B = .296$ ,  $p = .385$ ), income ( $B = .079$ ,  $p = .913$ ), and present occupation ( $B = -.012$ ,  $p = .975$ ) had no significant effects on job satisfaction. When correlations between education and job satisfaction, present occupation and job satisfaction, and income and job satisfaction were examined, statistically significant relationships were not found. It indicates job satisfaction is not related to the resources (i.e., education, occupation and income) that respondents possess.

The other variable, gender was slightly significant ( $B = -6.20$ ,  $p = .086$ ). This means that female respondents were slightly more satisfied with their jobs in the United States than were their male counterparts in the survey. As the association was negative, we can conclude that female respondents were more structurally assimilated than male respondents. The variables age ( $B = .149$ ,  $p = .649$ ) and length of residency in the United States ( $B = -.176$ ,  $p = .619$ ) had no impact on job satisfaction. Thus, this set of predictors had no effect on the dependent variable in the regression analysis.

R-square ( $R^2$ ) explains the proportion of variance of the dependent variables which was accounted for by the cumulative effects of the independent variables. This measure indicates that 35 percent of variation in job satisfaction has been explained by gender, age, length of residency, education, present occupation, and income operating jointly. Job satisfaction

was not significantly related to the set of independent variables listed above. Consequently, this dimension of the first hypothesis was not confirmed.

Table 14

Regression Analysis for Structural Assimilation of Job Satisfaction (JOBSAT)

Variables	<u>b</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE(b)</u>	<u>p</u>
INTERCEPT	2.59	---	10.8	.816
OLD	.098	.146	.209	.649
SEX	-4.93	-6.20	2.56	.086
LONGUSR	-.139	-.176	.271	.619
EDR	.625	.296	.685	.385
POCC	-.005	-.012	.166	.975
DOLARR	.079	.045	.709	.913
<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup> = .353				

SE(b) = Standard Error for b                      p = Probability  
b = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
R<sup>2</sup> = R-square                      B = Standardized Regression Coefficient

Equal Treatment (EQUAL)

Equal treatment was used as a measure of structural assimilation, in order to determine the extent of support for the first hypothesis. Table 15

displays the regression results for equal treatment (EQUAL), education (EDR), present occupation (POCC), and income (DOLLAR).

As illustrated in Table 15, equal treatment, was significantly related to the independent variable income ( $\underline{B} = -.593$ ,  $\underline{p} = .007$ ) at the probability level of (.01). Present occupation was significant ( $\underline{B} = .499$ ,  $\underline{p} = .024$ ) at the probability level of (.05). However, the effect of education was not significant ( $\underline{B} = .139$ ,  $\underline{p} = .403$ ). Thus, the independent variable, present occupation had an impact on equal treatment.

Table 15

Regression Analysis for Structural Assimilation of Equal Treatment (EQUAL)

Variables	$\underline{b}$	$\underline{B}$	$\underline{SE(b)}$	$\underline{p}$
INTERCEPT	-.155	---	1.65	.926
OLD	.028	.203	.029	.332
SEX	-.704	-.461	.269	.017*
LONGUSR	-.026	-.160	.027	.347
EDR	.060	.139	.070	.403
POCC	.040	.499	.016	.024*
DOLLARR	-.210	-.593	.069	.007**
$\underline{R^2} = .608$				

\*  $\underline{p} < .05$        $\underline{SE(b)}$  = Standard Error for b       $\underline{p}$  = Probability  
 \*\*  $\underline{p} < .01$        $\underline{b}$  = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
 $\underline{R^2}$  = R-square       $\underline{B}$  = Standardized Regression Coefficient

This result indicates that the higher the occupational level of the respondents, the higher their structural assimilation. This finding also implies that respondents with higher occupational levels believed that Americans see them as equals. The other independent variable, income, was strongly significant at the probability level of .01, but the association was negative, which means that the respondents with lower income feel more equally treated like Americans than respondents with higher incomes. Thus, this dimension of the first hypothesis has been partially confirmed.

The effect of the variables age ( $B = .203$ ,  $p = .332$ ) and length of residency in the United States ( $B = -.160$ ,  $p = .347$ ) were not statistically significant, but the effect of gender ( $B = -.461$ ,  $p = .017$ ) was significant at the probability level of .01. This means that female respondents were more structurally assimilated than male respondents; they were more likely believe therefore that they are more equally treated than do males.

The proportion of variation R-square ( $R^2$ ) explained by the cumulative effect of the independent variables was .60. This means 60 percent of variation in equal treatment was explained by gender, age, length of residency, education, present occupation, and income operating jointly.

#### Friendship (INVITA)

Friendship was developed to measure structural assimilation and to examine the extent of support for the first hypothesis. The result of regression analysis for friendship (INVITA), education (EDR), present occupation (POCC), and income (DOLLAR) is presented in Table 16.

The variable income ( $\underline{B} = .401$ ,  $\underline{p} = .086$ ) was almost significant and had some effect on the friendship index. Variables present occupation ( $\underline{B} = -.149$ ,  $\underline{p} = .464$ ) and education ( $\underline{B} = -.056$ ,  $\underline{p} = .760$ ) had no significant impact. That is to say, respondents with high income levels were structurally assimilated, while level of present occupation and educational level appeared to have little effect on respondents' structural assimilation. In other words, respondents with higher incomes are more likely to invite Americans to their homes than respondents with lower income levels.

Table 16

Regression Analysis for Structural Assimilation of Friendship (INVITA)

Variables	$\underline{b}$	$\underline{B}$	$\underline{SE(b)}$	$\underline{p}$
INTERCEPT	7.01	---	2.80	.020
OLD	-.070	-.304	.042	.109
SEX	-1.04	-.407	.510	.053
LONGUSR	-.015	-.055	.054	.775
EDR	-.041	-.056	.135	.760
POCC	-.020	-.149	.027	.464
DOLARR	.238	.401	.133	.086
$\underline{R}^2 = .339$				

$\underline{SE(b)}$  = Standard Error for b       $\underline{p}$  = Probability

$\underline{b}$  = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient

$\underline{R}^2$  = R-square       $\underline{B}$  = Standardized Regression Coefficient

The effects of variables age ( $\underline{B} = -.304, p = .109$ ) and length of residency in the United States ( $\underline{B} = -.055, p = .775$ ) did not prove statistically significant, but the impact of gender ( $\underline{B} = -.407, p = .053$ ) was significant at the probability level .05. This finding indicates that female respondents were more structurally assimilated than male respondents and more eager to socialize with Americans. The proportion of variation R-square ( $\underline{R}^2$ ) explained by the cumulative effect of independent variables was .34, that is 34 percent of the variation in friendship was explained by variables gender, age, length of residency, education, present occupation, and income operating jointly.

#### Data Analysis for the Second Hypothesis

Regression analysis was carried out to explore the relationship between cultural and structural assimilation and length of residency in order to test for the second hypothesis (Appendix B, figure 2).

#### English Proficiency (ENGLISH)

English proficiency as a measure of cultural assimilation was examined to determine the extent of support for the second hypothesis. It was assumed that the greater the English proficiency, the higher the degree of cultural assimilation. Table 17 presents the results of regression analysis for English proficiency (ENGLISH) and length of residency (LONGUSR). The test for the effect of the independent variable length of residency ( $\underline{B} = -.059, p = .748$ ) on cultural assimilation index, English proficiency, was not statistically significant.

This indicates that the duration of respondent's residency in the United States has no effect on their English proficiency (structural assimilation). It means that even if the respondents stay in the United States for a long period of time, their residency would not affect their proficiency in the English language. However, the variable socioeconomic status, which was a combination index of occupation, education and income, was almost statistically significant ( $\underline{B} = .410$ ,  $\underline{p} = .053$ ) at the probability level .05.

Table 17

Regression Analysis for Cultural Assimilation of English Proficiency (ENGLISH)

Variables	<u>b</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE(b)</u>	<u>p</u>
INTERCEPT	6.47	---	3.68	.091
OLD	-.052	-.148	.063	.417
SEX	.685	.176	.762	.377
LONGUSR	-.024	-.059	.075	.748
SES	.145	.410	.071	.053
<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup> = .276				

SE(b) =Standard Error for b      p =Probability  
b = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
R<sup>2</sup> = R-square      B =Standardized Coefficient

This finding suggests that socioeconomic status has an impact on English language proficiency. This means that immigrants with high



socioeconomic backgrounds were more proficient in English. Other variables, such as age ( $B = -.148$ ,  $p = .417$ ) and gender ( $B = .176$ ,  $p = .337$ ), were not statistically significant. The age and gender of the respondents appears not to have had any impact on English proficiency. The proportion of the variation, R-square ( $R^2$ ), explained by the cumulative effect of independent variables, was .27; that is, 27 percent of the variation in English proficiency was explained by gender, age, length of residency, and socioeconomic status operating jointly.

#### Iranian Cultural Values (IRANIAN)

The measure of Iranian cultural values was developed to analyze cultural assimilation in order to examine the amount of support for the second hypothesis. Table 18 shows the result of regression analysis for Iranian cultural values (IRANIAN) and length of residency (LONGUSR). According to the second hypothesis, the longer respondents stay in the United States, the greater the degree of their cultural assimilation.

As the results indicate, the length of residency ( $B = -.657$ ,  $p = .019$ ) had an impact on the cultural assimilation index, and was statistically significant at the probability level .01. Therefore, retention of Iranian cultural values was predicted by length of residency, and in the expected direction (positive). This means that cultural assimilation was influenced positively by the amount of time the respondents spent in the United States.

This result indicates that the longer the respondents' duration of stay in the United States, the more culturally assimilated they would be. In other words, respondents with shorter durations of stay in the United States

practiced more Iranian traditional customs, were more in contact with their culture and morals, and watched Iranian television more often.

The variable gender ( $\underline{B} = -.511$ ,  $\underline{p} = .006$ ) was also significant at the probability level of .01, though the association was not positive. Because this association was not positive, it implies that male respondents are more culturally assimilated than female respondents.

Table 18

Regression Analysis for Cultural Assimilation of Iranian Cultural Values (IRANIAN)

Variables	$\underline{b}$	$\underline{B}$	$\underline{SE(b)}$	$\underline{p}$
INTERCEPT	14.3	---	3.27	.000
OLD	-.062	-.174	.055	.272
SEX	-2.03	-.511	.668	.006**
LONGUSR	-.181	-.657	.071	.019*
SES	.036	.099	.065	.577
$\underline{R}^2 = .448$				

\*  $\underline{p} < .05$ . \*\*  $\underline{p} < .01$      $\underline{SE(b)}$  = Standard Error for b     $\underline{p}$  = Probability  
 $\underline{b}$  = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
 $\underline{R}^2$  = R-square     $\underline{B}$  = Standardized Coefficient

The socioeconomic status variable ( $\underline{B} = .099$ ,  $\underline{p} = .577$ ) was not statistically significant. The proportion of variance explained by R-square ( $\underline{R}^2$ ) was .44, that is, 44 percent of variation in Iranian cultural values was

explained by the variables gender, age, length of residency, and socioeconomic status operating jointly.

### Job Satisfaction (JOBSAT)

Job satisfaction was examined as a measure of structural assimilation to determine the extent of support for the second hypothesis. Job satisfaction was hypothesized as an indicator of assimilation. That is, the higher one's job satisfaction, the greater the amount of structural assimilation. Table 19 presents the results of regression analysis for job satisfaction (JOBSAT) and length of residency (LONGUSR).

Table 19

### Regression Analysis for Structural Assimilation of Job Satisfaction (JOBSAT)

Variables	<u>b</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE(b)</u>	<u>p</u>
INTERCEPT	3.96	---	9.93	.697
OLD	.176	.262	.160	.296
SEX	-4.29	-.577	1.99	.054
LONGUSR	-.038	-.048	.207	.856
SES	.151	.223	.187	.435
<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup> = .303				

SE(b) = Standard Error for b      p = Probability  
b = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
R<sup>2</sup> = R-square      B = Standardized Coefficient

Length of residency ( $\underline{B} = -.048$ ,  $\underline{p} = .856$ ) had no effect on job satisfaction. Therefore, the length of a respondent's stay in the United States has no impact on job satisfaction. Thus, the data do not support this aspect of the second hypothesis. As Table 19 shows, however, gender ( $\underline{B} = -.577$ ,  $\underline{p} = .054$ ) had a significant effect on job satisfaction. A strong negative relationship between gender and job satisfaction at the probability level .05, meant that female respondents were more satisfied with their jobs in the United States and more structurally assimilated than were males.

The variables age ( $\underline{B} = .262$ ,  $\underline{p} = .296$ ) and socioeconomic status ( $\underline{B} = .223$ ,  $\underline{p} = .435$ ) had no impacts on job satisfaction. The proportion of variation (R-square) explained by the cumulative effect of the independent variables was  $\underline{R}^2$  equal to .30. That is, 30 percent of the variation in job satisfaction was explained by gender, age, length of residency, and socioeconomic status operating jointly.

#### Equal Treatment (EQUAL)

Equal treatment was a measure of structural assimilation. Equal treatment was a positive indicator of structural assimilation. The greater the equal treatment, the higher the level of structural assimilation. Table 20 contains the regression analysis results for equal treatment (EQUAL) and length of residency (LONGUSR). Length of residency ( $\underline{B} = -.360$ ,  $\underline{p} = .064$ ) was almost significant, but the direction of the association was negative.

This finding revealed that the longer the respondents stayed in the United States, the less structurally assimilated they became. However, the respondents who spent less time in the United States were more structurally

assimilated. It means that the respondents who stay in the United States for a short period feel they are more equally treated as American than those respondents who stay for a longer period of time in the United States.

Table 20

Regression Analysis for Structural Assimilation of Equal Treatment (EQUAL)

Variables	<u>b</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE(b)</u>	<u>p</u>
INTERCEPT	1.36	---	1.77	.451
OLD	.041	.302	.032	.209
SEX	-.863	-.567	.314	.012*
LONGUSR	-.058	-.360	.029	.064
SES	.027	.200	.033	.410

R<sup>2</sup> = .375

\* p < .05.      SE(b) = Standard Error for b      p = Probability  
b = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
R<sup>2</sup> = R-square      B = Standardized Coefficient

The effect of gender (B = -.56, p = .012) was statistically significant at the .01 probability level, but the association was negative. This means that the female respondents were more structurally assimilated than males. Age (B = .302, p = .209) and socioeconomic status (B = .200, p = .410) had no impact on the dependent variable. The proportion of variation (R-square) explained by the cumulative effect of the independent variables was .37. That is, 37

percent of variation in equal treatment was explained by gender, age, length of residency, and socioeconomic status, operating jointly.

### Friendship (INVITA)

Friendship was assigned to measure structural assimilation in order to examine the amount of support for the second hypothesis. Friendship was a positive indicator of structural assimilation. The higher the score on friendship, the greater the degree of structural assimilation.

Table 21

### Regression Analysis for Structural Assimilation of Friendship (INVITA)

Variables	<u>b</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>SE(b)</u>	<u>p</u>
INTERCEPT	6.07	---	2.43	.019
OLD	-.082	-.362	.041	.057
SEX	-.819	-.321	.502	.115
LONGUSR	.024	.088	.049	.633
SES	-.000	-.000	.047	.984
<u>R</u> <sup>2</sup> = .238				

SE(b) = Standard Error for b      p = Probability  
b = Unstandardized Regression Coefficient  
R<sup>2</sup> = R-square      B = Standardized Coefficient

The results of regression analysis for friendship (INVITA) and length of residency (LONGUSR) are presented in Table 21. As is shown, length of residency was not significant ( $B = .088$ ,  $p = .633$ ). These data did not support the part of the second hypothesis suggesting that the longer the stay in United States, the greater the structural assimilation. Age ( $B = -.362$ ,  $p = .057$ ) was significant at the .05 probability level. The association was negative, however, indicating that the younger the respondent, the higher the level of structural assimilation. In other words, younger respondents were more eager to invite Americans to their homes than older respondents. The variables gender ( $B = -.321$ ,  $p = .115$ ), and socioeconomic status ( $B = .001$ ,  $p = .984$ ) did not have any effect on friendship.

The proportion of variation ( $R^2$ ) explained by the cumulative effect of independent variables was .23. That is, 23 percent of variation in friendship was explained by the variables gender, age, length of residency, and socioeconomic status, operating jointly.

## CHAPTER VI

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this research was to identify patterns of Iranian assimilation in the Bay Area. While the sample in this investigation and the results generated are not representative of all Iranian immigrants, they do offer some illumination and suggest areas for further study. As a multi-dimensional phenomenon, the assimilation process of foreign immigrants takes different forms. Such a process is not appropriately dealt with as a fixed condition, as it results from the interaction of many factors operating throughout time.

In this study, theoretical constructs and measures of assimilation reflect Gordon's specification of two classifications of assimilation. The first classification is cultural assimilation or change in the cultural patterns of immigrants or ethnic groups (such as language and celebration of events) to the patterns of the host society. The second is structural assimilation, or acceptance of foreign group members into the cliques, kinship relations, and other primary associations of the dominant sectors of the society.

In this study, two dimensions (English proficiency and adherence to Iranian cultural values) of cultural assimilation and three dimensions (job satisfaction, equal treatment, and friendship) of structural assimilation were constructed as dependent variables to test two sets of hypotheses.

#### First Hypothesis

The first hypothesis asserted that education as an independent variable has a strong relationship with English language proficiency. All other variables relating to English proficiency and Iranian cultural values



however, were found insignificant except the effects of gender and length of residence on Iranian cultural values. The first hypothesis (the higher the education, income and occupational level of Iranian immigrants, the higher the degree of cultural assimilation) was therefore, partially supported.

This finding revealed that education has a significant positive impact on the English proficiency of the respondents. The higher the respondent's education, the greater the person's proficiency in English (used as an indicator of cultural assimilation), and, in turn, the higher the level of cultural assimilation. Education, as a powerful assimilative force, mitigates linguistic and cultural barriers that impede access to broader social circles. This result is consistent with other studies revealing that education has played a very important part in the assimilation process of most ethnic groups in the United States (Alba & Chamlin, 1983, p. 242).

Occupation as the other independent variable did not show any significant effect on English proficiency; occupation therefore does not appear to be an indicator of cultural assimilation. As some jobs require less language proficiency than others, the degree of English proficiency is not strictly tied to occupational type or level. Most of the Iranian respondents reported employment in organizations not requiring English skills, with technical competency rather than language proficiency as deciding factor.

Income does not appear correlated with English proficiency. Lack of support for income is also related to the variable of occupation. It is possible, as previously stated, for respondents to earn high incomes without fluency in English. It is also possible that immigrants brought wealth with them from Iran, again, a factor independent of English proficiency.

Table 13 reveals that education, occupation and income as independent variables are not closely related with Iranian cultural values (watching Iranian T.V., celebrating Iranian traditional customs, and teaching Iranian culture to children). This suggests that Iranian immigrants may retain their cultural values regardless of education, occupation and income. This may also be a function of cultural identity and pride.

Gender as a control variable shows an impact on one dimension of cultural assimilation. On the basis of respondents' answers, males show a higher rate of cultural assimilation than females. This finding is consistent with the characteristics of Iranian culture, which is hierarchical in nature. The traditional role of the Iranian female is to raise children and manage the household, keeping the family together and providing or arranging for the comfort and general well-being of each member. It is possible that the respondents follow their traditional family patterns, as Iranian females have less interaction with Americans than male respondents. Iranian females therefore, would probably be less exposed to American culture and as a result be less assimilated than males.

Length of residency was associated with adherence to Iranian cultural values. Results showed that the longer the immigrant's stay in the United States, the greater the acceptance of the dominant society's cultural values. Age does not appear correlated with cultural assimilation, although the sample here is limited to a relatively young group. Had the age spread of the sample been broader, we might well have seen different results, as it is natural to expect that the older a person gets, the less likely assimilation becomes.

Three structural assimilation dimensions were constructed in order to measure the first hypothesis. Structural assimilation dimensions include job satisfaction (whether the respondents are satisfied with their jobs), equal treatment (whether the respondents perceive themselves as equal to Americans), and friendship (personal friendships with Americans). It has been hypothesized that the higher the education, occupation, and income of the respondents, the greater the structural assimilation. This dimension indicates respondents' acceptance into cliques, kinship relations and other primary groups in American society.

Tables 14, 15, and 16 show the regression results for these three dimensions. Despite the role that education plays in the cultural assimilation of different ethnic groups in the United States, aspects of structural assimilation (job satisfaction, equal treatment, and friendship) do not appear determined by level of education. The most plausible interpretation for lack of support for job satisfaction, equal treatment, and friendship is that job satisfaction is not based on educational achievement but on one's intrinsic satisfaction. In other words, the education, occupation and income may not determine one's job satisfaction, as job objectivities may not be aligned with one's intrinsic goals and values.

Equal treatment also did not appear correlated with educational achievement. It seems that one's educational level does not guarantee one's perception of equality. This may be due to the fact that other factors such as family history, networks of connections, friends and self image, also play a role in respondents' perceptions of equality. Education was not significantly related to

friendship (as an indicator for structural assimilation). Higher levels of education do not necessarily lead one to become friends with Americans. The result of our survey may be colored by the fact that many of the respondents work in the field of computer sciences, an area that minimizes interpersonal communication, thereby affecting their lack of interaction with Americans.

Occupation was the other independent variable used to test whether respondents with higher occupational levels were prone to structural assimilation. Occupational rank shows a strong association with equal treatment. The positive association of occupational rank with equal treatment suggests that those respondents with a higher occupational levels are more likely to believe that they are treated equally by Americans and, consequently, are structurally assimilated. Occupation, however, was not significant in determining two dimensions of structural assimilation (job satisfaction and friendship). As stated with regard to cultural assimilation, job satisfaction is intrinsic in nature, meaning that occupation could not accurately serve as the exclusive test for job satisfaction. A respondent may have a "high" occupational level but not be satisfied, because the job does not meet intrinsic values and aspirations.

Friendship was another dimension of structural assimilation that does not appear determined by one's occupation. Respondents may have close working relations with Americans on the job, but they do not necessary choose close friends from among Americans.

Income was the third independent variable that was assumed to have an impact on the degree of structural assimilation. Income was associated

with two aspects of structural assimilation: friendship and equal treatment. Income has the strongest relationship with friendship--respondents with higher incomes were more eager to invite Americans to their homes to socialize. Income facilitates the assimilation of the immigrants. It gives them the economic power to satisfy their economic needs and help them to be accepted into the material culture of the United States.

The association between income and equal treatment was significant but not in a predicted direction. The results show that the higher the income, the lower the structural assimilation. It is possible that although a respondent's income facilitates entrance into the dominant society, equal treatment does not necessarily follow. Income, however, is not associated with job satisfaction. Lack of support for job satisfaction as mentioned before could be explained by the fact that job satisfaction is based on one's desire and motivation to work rather than one's occupation or the income itself.

Gender shows a great impact on structural assimilation. Female respondents report greater job satisfaction, perception of equality and social contacts with Americans. This finding is paradoxical in the context of our expectation that the patriarchal nature of Iranian society would impede the cultural and social assimilation of females to a greater degree than that of males. This finding might be understood in the context of Iranian immigrant women's dual role in the United States. This dual role includes full-time work due to economic necessity, in addition to the traditional role of housekeeping and child care at home.

Age shows no impact on structural assimilation. This findings runs counter to the conclusions of other studies showing that younger immigrants

seem to adopt American attitudes and cultural values more quickly than older immigrants. As mentioned above, this apparent contradiction could be a function of the narrow age spread of our sample.

In short, the only strong association evidenced by our data here were: education with English-language proficiency, occupation with equal treatment (or perception thereof) and income with equal treatment and friendship.

### Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis is based on the assumption that Iranian immigrants who have stayed longer in the United States are better assimilated culturally and structurally. It was assumed that, as time passes, familiarity with the new culture and language tends to increase. This, in turn, helps immigrants to culturally and structurally assimilate.

Tables 17 and 18 represent the regression analyses of the cultural assimilation factors, English proficiency and adherence to Iranian cultural values. Findings provide some support for the relationship between the duration of stay and degree of (Iranian cultural values) cultural assimilation. The results suggest that the longer the immigrant's residency in the United States, the higher the level of cultural assimilation. It means that Iranians gradually adapt American culture and teach their children American values as they live longer in the United States.

Our data suggest, however, that length of residence has a negative influence on English proficiency. The results may indicate that Iranian immigrants have more contact with members of their own community

rather than Americans and speak their own language except at the work place and on other limited occasions.

The finding presented in Table 20 shows that there is a significant relationship between equal treatment (as a measure of structural assimilation) and length of residence. Equal treatment shows a strong negative relationship with length of residency. Our data suggests that the longer an immigrant stays in the United States, the less the immigrant perceives himself or herself as equal to Americans. This result supports the competition hypothesis that immigrants who enter the host society obtain more awareness of their racial and cultural differences as time passes.

Length of residency does not show any association with two other structural factors, job satisfaction and friendship. Job satisfaction does not appear determined by length of residency, as the intrinsic goals and values of the immigrants, which do contribute to job satisfaction, do not seem to change with duration of stay in the United States. Lack of association between friendship and length of residency suggests that immigrants' choice of friends is not dependent on how long they stay. This choice might depend on other factors such as common interests and individual needs.

In short, these findings clearly demonstrate that length of residency has an impact on one aspect of structural (equal treatment) and on one aspect of cultural (Iranian cultural values) assimilation.

#### Limitations of the Study

Caution should be taken in generalizing from the results of this study. Because time was limited, research was restricted to a questionnaire survey to

which only 33 persons responded. This study was also limited by the independent variables chosen for the study and the frame of reference (theory of assimilation) which delineated the study's parameters.

### Summary

The assimilation process of immigrants to a new culture is a multidimensional phenomenon. It is multidimensional in that education, income, occupation, and length of residency affect an immigrant's ability to assimilate. The data presented and analyzed in this study examine the relationship among the aforementioned factors, which were regarded as indicators in the assimilation patterns of Iranian immigrants into American culture. It has been suggested that there is a slight correlation between the selected variables examined in this study and the degree of assimilation of Iranian immigrants.

In this study, different theories of assimilation have been reviewed, but only Gordon's theory has been applied. The findings based on Gordon's theory of cultural and structural assimilation support some dimensions of the first hypothesis, suggesting that education, occupation, and income positively affect assimilation. The second hypothesis appeared partially confirmed, showing that duration of immigrants' residency influenced their assimilation in the areas of equal treatment and Iranian cultural values.

Total confirmation of the hypotheses, however, could not be achieved. Participant subjectivity, mistrust of how the information in the survey might adversely affect them, and incomplete responses contributed to this problem. Due to the constraints imposed by sample size and the necessity of using the



snowball method, it is recommended that any further research be done on this topic to confirm or reject the conclusions drawn herein.

#### Recommendation for Future Studies

The following recommendations are made with the hope that they would benefit researchers who are interested in studying Iranian assimilation.

1) Future investigators should attempt to study the assimilation process in a dynamic fashion by conducting a longitudinal study. Through this, the pattern of change in the individuals' assimilation can be understood more comprehensively, thus providing researchers with a clear insight into the complex assimilation process.

2) It would be a good idea for researchers to collect a sample from different areas of the country and a large number of subjects. I hope in the future we have access to the information on the Iranian population in the United States in order to draw a random sample.

3) Researchers may study a difference in the assimilation process between the first generation Iranians who were born in Iran and the second generation Iranians who born in the United States.

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## Appendices



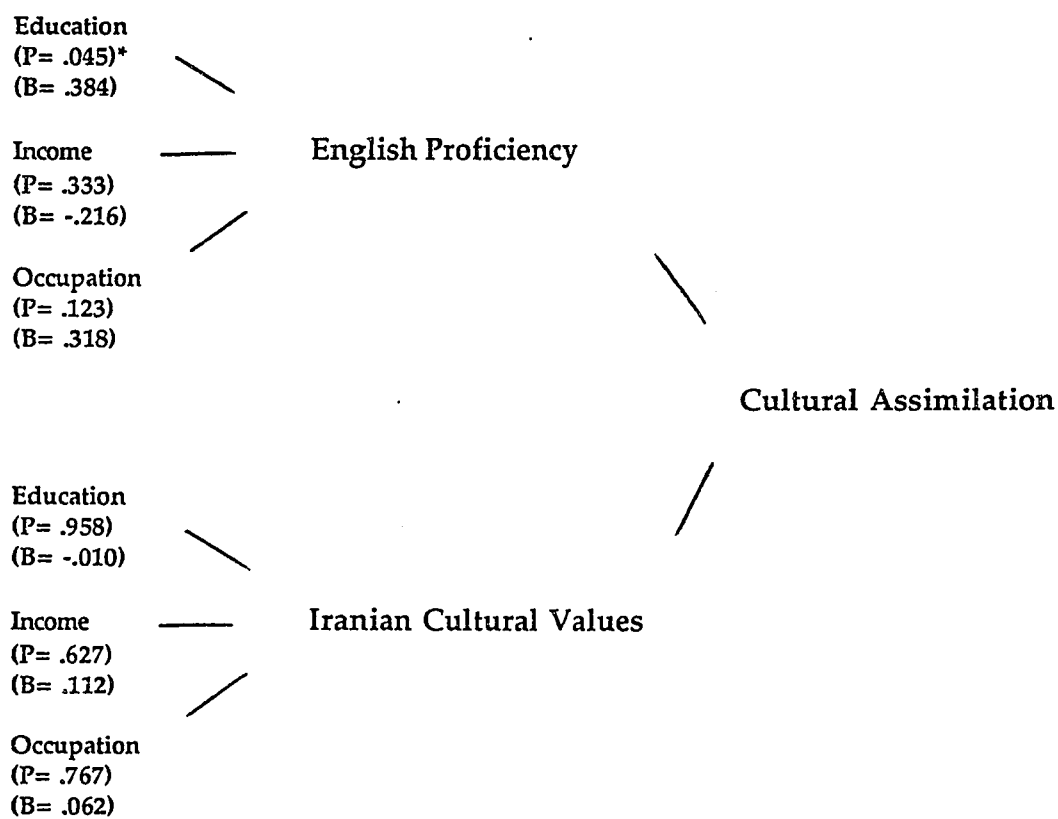
**Appendix A**  
**Correlation Coefficient Matrix Table**

TABLE 11. CORRELATION COEFFICIENT MATRIX OF THE VARIABLES USED IN THIS STUDY

	EDR	POCC	DOLARR	SES	JOBSAT	SALSOCC	COWORK	JINTRES	EQUAL	EQUALAM	INVITING	INVITA	ENGLISH	WRITENG	SPEKENG	READENG	IRANIAN	IRANTV	IRANCOST	CULTURE
EDR	1.00																			
POCC	.25	1.00																		
DOLARR	.22	.47	1.00																	
SES	.39	.97	.61	1.00																
JOBSAT	.07	-.01	-.21	-.04	1.00															
SALSOCC	.18	.07	.26	.13	.77	1.00														
COWORK	.15	-.20	-.17	-.21	.78	.50	1.00													
JINTRES	.03	-.14	-.26	-.17	.86	.54	.52	1.00												
EQUAL	.02	-.09	-.60	-.21	.47	.24	.21	.43	1.00											
EQUALAM	.02	-.09	-.60	-.21	.47	.24	.21	.43	.21	1.00										
INVITING	-.10	-.03	.21	-.00	-.25	.29	-.28	.06	.14	.14	1.00									
INVITA	-.10	-.03	.21	-.00	-.25	.29	-.28	.06	.14	.14	.18	1.00								
ENGLISH	.42	.46	.17	.47	.27	.20	.21	.30	.09	.09	-.18	-.18	1.00							
WRITENG	.43	.51	.22	.53	.32	.22	.21	.31	.08	.08	-.19	-.19	.93	1.00						
SPEKENG	.41	.36	.06	.36	.36	.23	.19	.35	.18	.18	-.17	-.17	.93	.82	1.00					
READENG	.32	.38	.17	.39	-.00	.10	.16	.13	-.02	-.02	-.12	-.12	.87	.69	.72	1.00				
IRANIAN	-.04	-.10	-.23	-.12	.11	.00	.03	-.12	.21	.21	.00	.00	-.36	-.36	-.37	-.24	1.00			
IRANTV	-.07	-.32	-.14	-.31	-.22	-.11	.11	-.16	-.05	-.05	.07	.07	-.49	-.45	-.60	-.29	.66	1.00		
IRANCOST	.00	.07	-.14	.05	.38	.13	.01	.02	.38	.38	.06	.06	-.22	-.20	-.21	-.19	.80	.20	1.00	
CULTURE	-.05	.00	-.25	-.02	-.29	-.09	-.04	-.31	.01	.01	-.00	-.00	.02	-.07	.08	-.08	.54	.18	.23	1.00

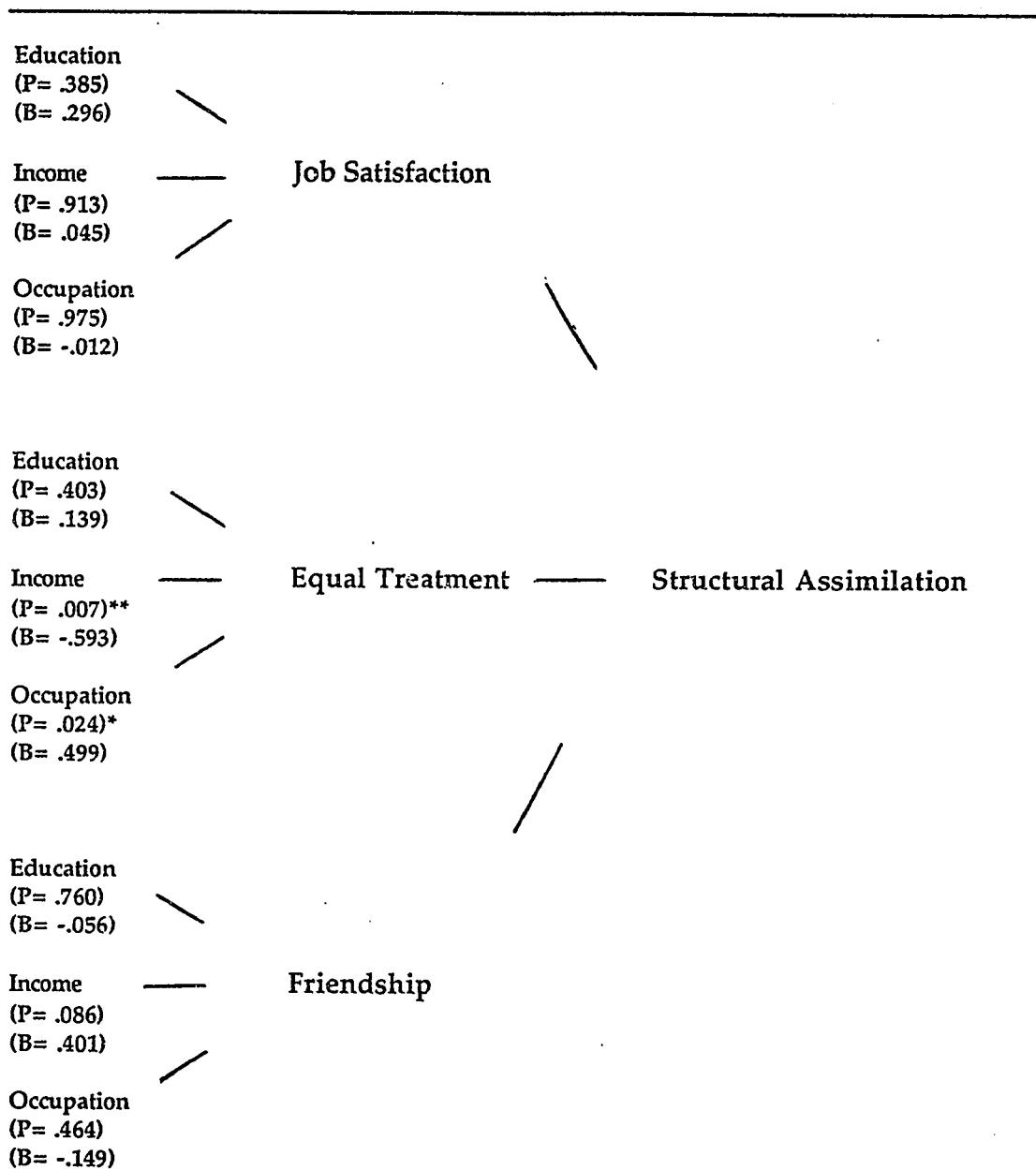
**Appendix B**  
**Figures**

**Figure 1** Directional relationship between structural and cultural assimilation and their indicators for the first hypothesis.



\*p<.05

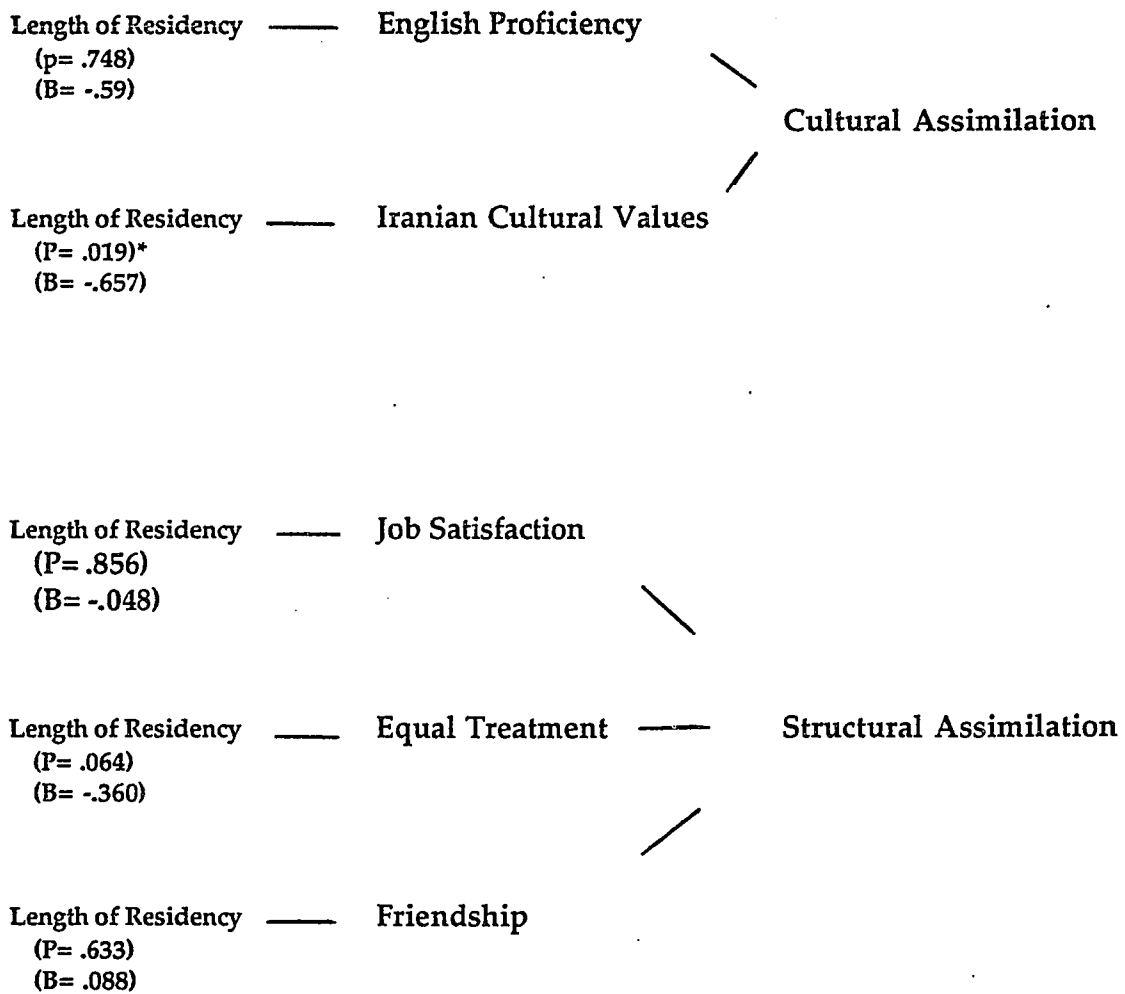
Figure 1. Continued



\*p&lt;.05

\*\*p&lt;.01

**Figure 2** Directional relationship between structural and cultural assimilation and their indicators for the second hypothesis.




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\* $p < .05$

**Appendix C**  
**Questionnaire**

Please use the following chart to answer question #1 regarding your educational accomplishments, years you have spent to receive your degree, and the place you have obtained your highest degree.

a) Elementary	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	g) Master	17, 18...
b) Secondary	7, 8, 9	h) Ph.D	19, 20, 21...
c) High School	10, 11, 12...	i) Post Ph.D	22, 23, 24..
d) Technical Degree	13, 14...	j) M.D	13, 14, 15, 16,
e) Some College	13, 14...	k) Law Degree	17, 18, 19, 20...
f) Bachelor	13, 14, 15, 16...		

1. What is the highest educational degree which you have achieved?

Degree/Title\_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you have spent to receive your degree\_\_\_\_\_

Place where you have obtained your degree\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate on the scale how much you agree or disagree with these various statements. Please check those that apply to you.

	(1) Definitely <u>Yes</u>	(2) Probably <u>Yes</u>	(0) Not Sure <u>Not Sure</u>	(3) Probably <u>No</u>	(4) Definitel <u>No</u>
2. My salary is the same as that of an American. (if all other qualifications are the same)	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
3. I am very content with my job in the U.S.	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
4. My job is interesting, stimulating, and gives me a sense of accomplishment.	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
5. My co-workers are friendly and enjoyable.	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
6. Most Americans accept me as their equal.	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----



Please answer the followings question. Do not include the business-related invitations.

7. How often have you invited Americans to your home in the past year ?

- |           |           |               |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| 1) Never  | 3) 4 to 6 | 5) 10 or more |
| 2) 1 to 3 | 4) 7 to 9 |               |

The next questions are about your language proficiency and cultural traits. Please check those that apply to you.

	(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)
	<u>Very well</u>	<u>Well</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Not at all</u>
8. How well do you speak English ?	-----	---	---	---
9. How well do you write English?	-----	---	---	---
10. How well do you read English?	-----	---	---	---

11. How often do you watch Iranian T.V.?

- 1) Never
- 2) Occasionally
- 3) Frequently
- 4) Always

12. How often do you carry out Iranian traditional celebrations (e.g., Norooz)?

- 1) Never
- 2) Occasionally
- 3) Frequently
- 4) Always

13. Do you think Iranian culture, history, and morals should be taught to your children?

- 1) Strongly Disagree
- 2) Moderately agree
- 3) Undecided
- 4) Moderately Agree
- 5) Strongly Agree

To finish, I would like to ask you some general questions. Please circle one.

14. Sex:           (1)                   (0)  
                  a) Male            b) Female

15. Where were you born?

- a) Iran\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)  
b) United States\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)  
c) Other\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

16. How old are you? \_\_\_\_\_ years.

17. What is your current marital status?

- (1) a) Single           (4) d) Separated  
(2) b) Married       (5) e) Widowed  
(3) c) Divorced     (6) f) Other

18. What is your immigration status?

- (1) a) Permanent resident:       (3) c) Visitor  
(2) b) Naturalized citizen:       (4) d) Other\_\_\_\_\_
- (Please specify)

19. How long have you been a resident in the U.S.? \_\_\_\_\_

20. What year did you leave Iran? \_\_\_\_\_

21. What is your present occupation in the U.S.?

Type of occupation \_\_\_\_\_ (Please specify)

Title/Position \_\_\_\_\_ When did you start? \_\_\_\_\_ Year

22. How much is your estimated yearly total income in the U.S.?

(DOLLAR)

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) a) \$ 10,000 to 19,000 | (6) f) \$ 60,000 to 69,000  |
| (2) b) \$ 20,000 to 29,000 | (7) g) \$ 70,000 to 79,000  |
| (3) c) \$ 30,000 to 39,000 | (8) h) \$ 80,000 to 89,000  |
| (4) d) \$ 40,000 to 49,000 | (9) i) \$ 90,000 to 99,000  |
| (5) e) \$ 50,000 to 59,000 | (10) j) \$ 100,000 or above |

**Appendix D**  
**Cover Letter**

Dear respondent:

My name is Firozeh Aghdassi, and I am a graduate student in sociology at San Jose State University. I would like to obtain your help in answering the questions to the survey I have enclosed.

The purpose of the survey is to determine levels of Iranian assimilation in the Bay Area. I hope the results of this study will increase Iranians' understanding of their own assimilation patterns as an ethnic group and, help facilitate the interrelationship between them and other ethnic groups in the Bay Area.

Attached is a questionnaire that should take only 15 minutes of your time for completion. Please take a few minutes to answer the questionnaire. I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience. You should understand that your participation is voluntary and that choosing not to participate in this study, or in any part of this study, will not affect your relations with San Jose State University. Please do not identify yourself on the questionnaire itself or on the return envelope. Your consent to participate is your completion and mailing of the questionnaire. The results of this study may be published, and any information that could result in your identification will remain confidential.

If you have any concerns about this study, you can reach me at (408)923-7244. If you have questions or complaints about research subjects' rights, or in the event of a research-related injury, please contact Serena Stanford, Ph.D., Associate Academic Vice President for graduate studies and research, at (408)924-2480.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Firozeh Aghdassi  
Candidate for the M.A. in Sociology  
S.J.S.U