Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of Anthropology

DIFFERENT IRANIAN TOURIST EXPERIENCES IN TURKEY CASE STUDIES: ISTANBUL, ANTALYA, KONYA

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Ph.D Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

HASHEMI MOGHADDAM, Amir. Different Iranian Tourist Experiences in Turkey, Case Studies: Istanbul, Antalya, Konya, Ph.D Dissertatıon, Ankara, 2021.

Every year, more than two million Iranian tourists travel to different cities in Turkey. In these different destinations, they gain different experiences. However, since no serious research has been done on them so far -except journalism reports-, little is known about their experiences. Therefore, understanding the experiences of Iranian tourists in various destinations in Turkey was the aim of this dissertation. To do this, the three destinations of Istanbul, Antalya and Konya were selected as case studies. The research methods were ethnography (especially with techniques such as participant observation and deep interview) and documentary analysis (especially in the study of Iranian travelogues to Turkey). Theories of "Long-distance Nationalism" (Anderson. 1992) and the "Social Drama" (Turner, 1969) were more widely used to examine this issue.

The findings show that Iranian tourists generally travel to Turkey to gain cultural and social freedoms, and that consuming parts of Iranian culture that are neglected in Iran itself (such as Iranian pop music or Iranian Sufism) is one of their special experiences in Turkey. In these experiences, nationalism is seen in various ways among the speech and behavior of Iranian tourists. This distance from the control of the Iranian government and the experience of the forbidden or neglected Iranian culture creates a liminal atmosphere which, although violates the rules of the structure of the official culture in Iran, has its own structure.

The dissertation concludes with the claim that Iranians' travel to Turkey can be expressed in terms of tourism in voluntary and short-term exile.

Keywords:

Iranian tourists, Turkish destinations, Iranian culture, Iranian long-distance nationalism, voluntary exile, tourism in the third destination, cultural resistance tactics.

TURKISH ABSTRACT (ÖZET)

HASHEMI MOGHADDAM, Amir. İranlı Turistlerin Türkiye'deki Farkli Deneyimleri: İstanbul, Antalya, Konya Örnekleri, Doktora tezi, Ankara, 2021.

Her yıl iki milyondan fazla İranlı turist Türkiye'nin farklı şehirlerine seyahat etmektedir. Bu farklı destinasyonlarda farklı deneyimler kazanıyorlar. Bununla birlikte, şu ana kadar onlar hakkında ciddi bir araştırma yapılmadığı için, deneyimleri hakkında çok az şey biliniyor. Bu nedenle, İranlı turistlerin Türkiye'deki çeşitli destinasyonlardaki deneyimlerini anlamak bu tezin amacı olmuştur. Bunu yapmak için, vaka çalışmaları olarak İstanbul, Antalya ve Konya olmak üzere üç destinasyon seçilmiştir. Araştırma yöntemleri etnografi (özellikle katılımcı gözlem ve mülakat tekniklerle) ve belgesel analiz (özellikle İranlilarin Türkiye seyahatnameleri üzerine çalışma) idi. Uzak milliyetçilik (Anderson. 1992) ve geçiş süreci (Turner, 1969) teorileri bu konuyu incelemek için daha yaygın olarak kullanıldı.

Bulgular, İranlı turistlerin genellikle kültürel ve sosyal özgürlükler kazanmak için Türkiye'ye gittiğini ve İran'dakı İran kültürünün ihmal edilen kısımlarını (İran pop müziği veya İran Sufizmi gibi) tüketmenin Türkiye'de özel deneyimlerinden biri olduğunu gösteriyor. Bu deneyimlerde milliyetçilik, İranlı turistlerin konuşma ve davranışlarında çeşitli şekillerde görülmektedir. İran hükümetinin kontrolünden ve yasaklanmış ya da ihmal edilmiş İran kültürünün deneyiminden olan bu uzaklık, İran'dakı resmi kültür yapısının kurallarını ihlal etse de kendine has bir yapısı olan anti-yapısal bir atmosfer yaratmaktadır.

Bu tez, İranlıların Türkiye'ye seyahatlerinin gönüllü ve kısa süreli sürgünlerde turizm çerçevesinden ifade edilebileceği iddiasıyla sonuçlanıyor.

Anahtar Sözlükler:

İranlı turistler, Türkiye destinasyonları, İran kültürü, İran uzak milliyetçiliği, gönüllü kısa süreli sürgünü, üçüncü destinasyonda turizm, kültürel direniş

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INTRODUCTION

Every year, many tourists travel from Iran to neighboring countries. Due to the low value of Iran's currency against the dollar, it is difficult for Iranians to travel to more distant locations, such as Europe. On the other hand, other than Iraq, where the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran provides opportunities for travel due to the presence of Shiite holy sites (for example, the annual presence of millions of Iranians at the Arbain ceremony of Imam Hussein in Iraq, is possible with the same Iranian government assistance), other neighboring countries still have obstacles that limit Iranian travel. Eastern neighbors (such as Afghanistan and Pakistan) do not have the security for travel (or, in true speech, tourists do not feel safe there); The Arab countries of the Persian Gulf do not have good political relations with Iran; and northwestern countries (Azerbaijan and Armenia) need visas. Meanwhile, Turkey is a special destination that has enough security, does not require visas from Iranian tourists, is a much cheaper destination than European countries, and has various commercial, historical, cultural and social attractions. Therefore, more than two million Iranian tourists travel to this country every year.

However, some of the Iranian authorities do not view Iranian travel to Turkey very positively and consider Turkey a destination for non-Islamic entertainment. Four years ago, during a private conversation between the researcher and an Iranian conservative about Iranian tourists in Turkey, he said to the researcher: "Ninety percent of Iranians who go to Turkey are there for dirty work." On the other hand, despite the presence of millions of Iranian tourists in Turkey, only four scientific articles (Nikjoo and Ketabi. 2015; Ozturk et al. 2017; Seyfi, Hall and Kuhzady. 2018; Etemaddar, Thyne & Insch 2018) have been written about them so far, and those were more interested in understanding the level of satisfaction of Iranian tourists from traveling to Turkey and the rest are journalistic and unscientific reports. So, the spark of the question became clear in the author's mind; What do all these Iranians who travel to Turkey every year experience in Turkey?

Like many other anthropological studies, the researcher did not formulate a hypothesis for this question. However, there are many assumptions in this regard, which generally

originate from the same journalistic reports and untested analysis, and the reason for the Iranians' travel to Turkey is gaining freedom, which causes the Iranians in Turkey to engage in behaviors that are not allowed in Islam. I must admit that these assumptions inadvertently remained active in the corner of my mind. However, in order to find a scientific answer to the question, I tried to focus more on the experiences of Iranian tourists in Turkey. Experience, unlike behavior, is not only derived from the appearance of an action, but more is the interpretation of a person's description of the action they perform (Turner, 1986). In other words, the researcher tries to gain a deep understanding of what the interviewee says about their behavior through phenomenology.

Study of tourist experience is a vast area that has had its various aspects investigated by different disciplines. Although a major part of these studies with marketing goals try to measure the satisfaction of tourists from their experiences, social sciences like sociology, psychology and anthropology have also paid attention to this topic. In fact, this is an interesting topic for anthropological studies. Anthropologists are curious to know how tourists perceive their travel, destination, attractions etc. So, this is different from tourist behavior studies. While the visible tourist actions are important in tourist behavior studies, in tourist experience studies (according to Bruner (1986: 5)'s explanation about experience), the tourist's perception their activities are more important. So, the anthropologist tries to find this perception by interpreting tourist expressions about their touristic experiences (although the amount of anthropological studies on tourist experiences is very little and these little studies focused on Western tourist experiences).

So, I tried to look at Iranian tourists in Turkey with such a view, and to do so, I chose three cities as a case study: Istanbul, where most Iranians go, and although shopping is their main activity in this city, visiting historical sites, ship tours, concerts of Iranian singers and some other activities are also performed in this city. Antalya, which is mostly visited for its services in the Uall[1] hotels and entertainment, but rafting tours, shopping, concerts of Iranian singers, ship tours, etc. are also seen in their activities. And finally, the city of Konya, which is a special destination for Iranians due to the

1. Or Uall means Ultra All Service Hotels.

Persian poet Rumi, and in addition to visiting the Rumi's tomb, participating in Sufi ceremonies and Sema, participating in Iranian traditional and mystics concerts, participating in the lectures of famous Iranian Rumi scholars and professors of Persian language and literature, etc. are the other activities done in Konya. So, the experiences gained from such extensive activities will be varied.

Regarding a lot of factors (i.e. the tourist's sociocultural and economic situation, their motivation and expectation, destination and etc.), there are a lot of kinds of tourist experiences (i.e. shopping, backpacking, camping, museum visiting, sun bathing and etc.), but some scholars (i.e. Cohen. 1979; Uriely. 1997; Park and Santos. 2016) for better analyses, categorized the tourist experiences in bigger types (i.e. recreation, diversionary, seeking authenticity and etc.).

The assumption in the Iranian formal media about travel to Turkey inadvertently led the researcher to the conclusion that many Iranian tourists go to Turkey to gain the freedoms that are forbidden in Iran. It is true, but not completely. Only some of these freedoms, as the Iranian media and some Iranian officials believe, contradict their interpretation of Islam (for example, drinking alcohol or not wearing the Islamic hijab for women). Instead, a significant part of the freedoms that attract Iranian tourists to Turkey is related to the consumption of Iranian culture. That is, Iranians come to Turkey to experience parts of Iranian culture that are banned or neglected in Iran itself. Attending Sufi ceremonies and doing Sema, meeting with great Iranian traditional musicians and prominent Iranian Rumi scholars (in Konya), attending concerts of Iranian pop singers who immigrated to the United States and are known in Iran as "Los Angeles singers", holding some ancient Iranian traditions such as "Charshanbe Souri", Nowruz and "Sizdah Be Dar" in Istanbul and Antalya (although these traditions are held in Iran, but the rulers seek to limit and distort them), some parts of Iranian culture are either completely illegal in Iran or face many obstacles. But Iranian tourists can experience them freely and without restrictions in Turkey.

This consumption of Iranian culture in Turkey, in addition to comparing the more advanced and better conditions of Turkey compared to Iran, raises questions for Iranian tourists about the current situation in their country. In many cases, they harbor the nostalgic memories of Iran before the 1979 revolution, which was more developed than

Turkey (and, of course, the tourists exaggerate sometimes), because of the backwardness of their country in recent years. These questions, on the one hand, provoke their nationalist sentiments and, on the other hand, highlight their ethnocentric views. Both are accompanied by criticism of the current Iranian government. On the one hand, they criticize the government for ignoring the culture and civilization of ancient Iran and opposing freedoms that are not necessarily in conflict with Islam, and in this way, it does not attract tourists as Turkey does. So, this forces Iranians to travel to Turkey to obtain and experience Iranian culture. On the other hand, in some interviews, Iranians pointed that they are smarter, more civilized, and more cultured than the Turks, and that they could have been much more successful and advanced than Turks if the Iranian government had lifted the restrictions. In the fourth section, it is argued that nationalism and ethnocentrism is behind most of the experiences of Iranian tourists in Turkey.

If, like researchers (ie Ingram, Caruana and McCabe. 2017; Park and Santos. 2016) who categorize travel experiences into three groups (before, during and after the travel), Iranians' travel to Turkey is be categorized in the same way, undoubtedly, the most important experiences after their travel to Turkey is rethinking the situation in Iran and the reasons for Iran's backwardness. Iranians who traveled to the Ottoman lands (and, of course, Europe) in the late Qajar period (1789-1925), started rethinking their relationship with Iran and its government after returning to their lands, and that eventually led to constitutionalism. The researcher therefore argues that Iranians' travel to Turkey is likely to have vast consequences for the future. This intellectual transition of Iranians after their travel to Turkey is similar to the transition concept which Turner (1986) proposed, inspired by the "rite of passage" theory of Van Gennap (1960), and of course it is widely used in tourism studies.

Apart from those who travel to Turkey from Iran, there is also a group of Iranians who live in Turkey and sometimes travel to other destinations in this country, and several of them were interviewed in this study. There is also another group of Iranians who live in other countries, but because of travel restrictions to Iran (either for fear of being detained by the Iranian government or fear of being deported from their country of residence for traveling to Iran), choose Turkey as a third destination to travel and visit their families who come from Iran. We called this group of tourists as "tourists in the

third destination", which is rarely seen in another countries. A number of this group of Iranians were interviewed in all three cities surveyed.

All these findings led the researcher to choose the concept of "tourism in exile" for Iranian travel to Turkey. Forced or voluntary exile of Iranians to the Ottoman Empire became common in the late Qajar period, and the current situation of Iranians traveling to Turkey seems to be very similar to that of voluntary exiles; although for two groups of Iranians (those living in Turkey and those who come to Turkey as a third destination to visit their families) it is a more obvious form of forced exile, but for Iranian travelers to Turkey (the majority of tourists Iranians in Turkey) it is mostly short-term voluntary exile. In fact, this tourism in exile for Iranians is for the consumption of Iranian culture in exile, something similar to what Naficy (1993) examined among exiled Iranians in Los Angeles, and during this voluntary exile, Iranian tourists in Turkey show the "nationalism in exile" as narrated by Tololyan (2000) or "long-distance nationalism" as narrated by Anderson (1992). The use of culture in exile as well as the long-exile nationalism of Iranians in Turkey is argued in the fourth section and the tourism of Iranians in Turkey as a form of voluntary short-term exile is discussed in the conclusion.

CHAPTER 1: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, the most important concepts used in this thesis will be defined and explained. After that, the theories that are useful for investigating Iranian tourist experiences in Turkey, are described as well as the cause of application of these theories in this thesis.

1.1. THE IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

1.1.1. Tourism

Although tourism as a modern phenomenon is rooted in the *Grand Tours* started after the 1750's (Ryan. 2003: 3), it developed after WWII (Jafari. 2001). In 1991, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) defined tourism as:

> The act of people who travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited (cited in Gee. 1997: 5).

Tourism is multidisciplinary (Ladkin. 2011. Weiler et al. 2012) and each science studies tourism according to its theories and methods. *Anthropology of tourism* refers to the application of anthropological theories, methods and experiences to identify and study various aspects of tourism. The anthropological studies on tourism can be categorized in two groups: the studies on the hosts, who are inhabitants of destinations (i.e. Van Den Berghe and Keyes. 1984; Greenwood. 1989; Nunez. 1989; Williams. 2009; Nash. 1989; Ekoluoma. 2017) and the studies on the tourists (i.e. Graburn. 1989; Monterrubio. 2016; MacCannell. 1976); or, as Smith (1989) says, "host and guest". Because of classical subjects of anthropology, or in Graburn (2002) words, keeping the indigenous cultures from changing, anthropologists tend to focus on the first group more than on the second. But however, the anthropological studies in all aspects of tourism are increasing.

There are different classifications of tourism. For instance, regarding the relation between the source and destination of tourists, there are the three categories of domestic tourism, outbound tourism and inbound tourism. Domestic tourism involves residents of a country traveling only within the same country. Now, if these people travel to a country other than their own, it is called outbound tourism. Finally, if people from other countries travel to a country for sightseeing, it is inbound tourism in the point of view of residents of this destination country (Dos well, 2007: 22).

Furthermore, regarding the type of tourist attraction, there are various types of tourism such as religious tourism, nature tourism, coastal tourism, marine tourism, snow tourism, sports tourism, rural tourism, urban tourism, ethnic tourism, cultural tourism, etc. According to this study and other case studies, the three types of tourism that are most important are explained below.

Shopping tourism: Shopping in a destination as an attraction is a primary or secondary purpose which a lot of tourists travel for (Timothy. 2005: 43). Shopping is an important part of tourist experiences in destination (Li & Ryan. 2018: 142). Sometimes tourists travel to destination with shopping as their primary purpose, while sometimes they shop alongside another activity as a secondary or tertiary purpose. Shopping in a destination is sometimes because of a low commodity price, and other times for purchasing souvenirs. Shopping is one of the most important activities of Iranian tourists in all three of the destinations in Turkey, especially in Istanbul.

Recreation tourism: Although sometimes tourism and recreation are studied as a different phenomenon (McKercher. 1996), usually recreation is considered a branch of tourism. Recreation is related to leisure and refers to some experience and activity that lets a tourist refresh and restore themselves after a toil (Veal. 1992: 47-48). This kind of tourism usually happens in or near nature for restoring the tourist's physical and mental power (Cohen. 1979: 183). Iranian tourists spending -more or less- one week in luxury hotels in Antalya with a private seaside is an example of their recreational touristic experiences.

Cultural tourism: Cultural tourism includes an extended area of tourism attractions and activities. Heritage tourism, food tourism, dance tourism, folk tourism, museum, historical site, cultural events like festivals and even religion tourism all fall under

cultural tourism (Chen and Rahman. 2018: 153). In fact, as Smith (2003: 29) says, cultural tourism is not a special sector in tourism, but is similar to an "umbrella term for a range of tourism typologies and diverse activities which have a cultural focus". The participation of Iranian tourists in the ceremonies of Sheb-i Arous in Konya, visiting the historical sites and museums in Istanbul and Antalya and participating in the concerts in each of these destinations are examples of cultural tourism.

1.1.2. Experience

At first glance, it may seem that experience is an easily definable term. But it is really a complex concept. As Bruner (1986: 5) described, experience is not equal to behavior. Behavior is "an outside observer describing someone else's actions", while experience is more personal and is difficult to be described by an outside observer. Because of this, we talk about our experiences, while we talk about the behavior of others. But here there is a problem: if we can talk only about our own experiences, how can we study the experiences of others?

Dilthey (1976. Cited in Turner. 1986) answers by interpreting the informant's expressions, that means understanding and interpreting the methodology of hermeneutics. We understand the expressions of others on the basis of our own experiences. For Dilthey, there is a hermeneutic circle in which experience structures expressions and expressions structure experience. As he says, experience urges expression or communication with others. Humans, as social beings, like to share their learnings from experience with others (cited in Turner. 1986: 34-37).
As Fernandez (1986) writes, this expression is not just verbal, but also occurs in other forms of representation or performance like images. But because of this variety, the expression of experience is sometimes inconsistent.

Bruner (1984:7. cited in Bruner. 1986: 6) introduces another distinction. He distinguishes between life as lived (reality), life as experienced (experience), and life as told (expression). He gets help from an anthropological fieldworker to explain this. The anthropologist goes to a field that people's living are continue there (reality), but they understand the people in their own way (experience). Finally, when the anthropologist

wants to shape the results in the field-notes, diaries, lectures, articles, etc. (expression), they cannot capture the richness and complexity of their field experiences. In fact, “expressions are the peoples' articulations, formulations, and representations of their own experience” (Bruner. 1986: 9).

Also, Abraham (1986) distinguished between two kinds of experiences: *Ordinary and Extraordinary Experiences.* In simple words, ordinary experience is an experience that frequently occurs in our everyday lives, while extraordinary experience does not occur frequently in everyday life. In tourism, participating in a ceremony which is held each year once, is extraordinary, but shopping tourism if similar to our daily shopping in our home country, is an ordinary experience. This shopping can be extraordinary experience, according to its time, the commodities, the market, persons who are with us in shopping etc. The Ordinary-Extraordinary experiences is a spectrum where one side is ordinary, and the other side is extraordinary. Experiences are located between these two points; some of them closer to ordinary and some of them closer to extraordinary.

Experience relates to the perception of culture, so it must be studied by deeply investigating the relevant people. As Turner (1986: 33) claims, of all the human sciences, anthropology is most deeply rooted in the subjective experience of the informant. The anthropology of experience is rooted in Dilthey, the American pragmatists and Thoreau (Bruner. 1986: 16). Bruner (1986) explains that “the anthropology of experience deals with how individuals actually experience their culture, that is, how events are received by a consciousness” (p: 4).

Anthropology tries to understand how people experience themselves, their lives, and their culture. So, one of the differences between anthropology and the other social sciences, is trying to understand the other’s experiences from an inner perspective. But the difficulty is interpreting the field data in our conceptual framework. Against some of the other social sciences and the positivist perspective, the anthropology of experience sees people not as passives, but “as active agents in the historical process who construct their own world” (Bruner. 1986: 12). So it usually uses the phenomenological perspective to study informants (Strauss and Corbin. 1998: 11).

1.1.3. Tourist Experience:

Tourist discourse emphasizes the travel experience (Fotiou. 2010: 50). As was mentioned above, there are differences between experience and behavior concepts. So, while there are a lot of academic works on "tourist behavior" (i.e. Pearce. 1982; Pearce. 2005; Kozak and Kozak. 2016; Kozak and Decrop. 2009; Vigolo. 2017; Juvan and Dolnicar. 2016; Uriely et al. 2011; Nielsen. 2014), as Ritchie, Tung and Ritchie (2011) mention, the number of papers on "tourist experience" is fewer. While the tourist behavior is their visible –for the researcher- actions during the travel or at the destination, tourist experience consists of events perceived and expressed by a tourist. As Gnoth (2016: 337-8) defines:

> A "tourist experience" is conditioned by both destination (what is received) and perceptual factors (how it is perceived), including interest, motivational, and emotional orientation, as well as sociocultural upbringing and demographics.

Therefore, in the tourism studies, experience is studied in destination, more than the other places –like a way and road. Also, although a destination and its events and its parts are important, the tourist's understanding this destination and its events and components is more important.

Bruner (1986: 28) suggests anthropologists pay more attention to tourist experience, and he predicts that the anthropology of experience may have to take tourist experience more seriously. Anthropology of tourist experience is made by combining "anthropology of tourism" and "anthropology of experience". But of course, it does not mean that the usage of other disciplines in tourism or in experience is impossible. However, the anthropological view in both parts is highlighted.

1.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

In this thesis and because of the multidimensional characteristic of the subject, some theoretical frameworks are established. These frameworks do not contradict each other but are complementary.

1.2.1. Categorizing of Tourist Experience:

Tourists do different activities in a destination and a lot of these activities are a tourist experience. But for better analysis, it needs to be categorized in a manner. As Ritchie et al. (2011: 427) shows, a lot of studies explored tourist experience on the basis of the nature of specific types of tourism, like backpacking, heritage, historical, museum, shopping, adventure, golf, wine, urban, and dark tourism. But in this study, the Cohen (1979) typology of tourist experience modes will used to categorize Iranian tourist experiences in Turkey.

The Cohen idea is rooted in discussion between Boorstin and MacCannell. The discussion was started by Boorstin (1992 [1961]) who believed because of the multiplication, improvement and cheapening of travel facilities, these tourist experiences are diluted, contrived, and prefabricated. In other words, the tourist experience is a pseudo-event. But MacCannell (1973) critiques to Boorstin as intellectual that neglected the tourist view. MacCannell believed that tourists travel seeking authenticity.

Cohen (1979) tries to explain the different situations of Boorstin and MacCannell's views. Cohen claims that both point views only have some evidence supporting their assertions, while other evidence is neglected. So, he believes that each of these points of views are suitable for some tourists, not for all kinds of them; because "*different kinds of people may desire different modes of touristic experience, hence the tourist does not exist as a type*" (p: 180). He distinguishes between modern tourism and pilgrimage. Pilgrimage in Cohen's view is movement from periphery to cultural center, while modern tourism is movement from cultural center to periphery (p: 183). By borrowing the concept of a "center" from Eliade (1971) and Shils (1975), Cohen focuses on the individual's spiritual center in tourist experience. This center culturally or religiously is limited and controlled by the society. In Parsonian variety of functional-structuralism theory, tourism is a temporary gateway from this individual center that is dependent on an individual's biography. But tourism is not a center for individual; if it be, the person is a deviant [in her/his society] (p: 181).

Cohen recognizes 5 phenomenological typology of tourist experiences. The typology represents the "quest for center" that ranges between a modern tourist and a pilgrim. The main tourist experience modes –which are explained in the "tourist experience"

concept- are: *recreational, diversionary, experiential, experimental* and *existential*, which are ranked between the tourist who travels for more pleasure and the pilgrim who interests in quest of meaning as somebody else's center (183). So, the tourist experiences move from superficial mode to deep mode, in parallel of moving from recreational mode to existential mode. In other word, in Cohen's view, whatever tourist moves from a recreational mode to an existential mode, their experiences go from superficial to deeper.

After Cohen, Uriely's (1997) basis on the review of the sociological studies on tourist experience gives us an abstract of them. In fact, Uriely expanded upon Cohen's discussion about controversy between Boorstin and MacCannell. As he mentioned, the sociology in the 1970s studied tourism as a modern phenomenon, with two powerful trends, "*the nature of the modern tourist experience" and "the meaning of the modern tourist experience*" (pp: 982-3). In the first trend, some scholars like Barthes (1972), Turner and Lash (1975) and specially Boorstin (1964) looked at the modern tourist experience as "*trivial and superficial activity which involves a quest for contrived experience*". But the second trend which includes some scholars like MacCannell (1973), studied tourist experience "*as a meaningful modern ritual which involves a quest for the authentic*".

In the new trend, the tourist experiences were studied in two orientations: *Simulational* and *Other*. The simulational point view, focused on tourist experiences in the *hyperreal experience,* like theme parks and other contrived attractions as *typical postmodern environments*. So Uriely (1997) finds similarities between these postmodern studies and the first modern camp studies on the tourist experience, because of their emphasis on the contrived experience and attraction.

The *Other* point view, stresses on the tourist experiences in the *real* sites, especially natural and countryside destinations. Here, Uriely mentions the similarity between quest for authentic in the second modern sociological studies on tourist experience and real sites in the postmodern views. But unlike the modern studies, both standpoints of postmodernism in the study of tourist experience, accept or even sometimes complete each other, unlike the modern standpoints which rejected each other.

Some of the methodological studies on tourist experience (i.e. Ingram, Caruana and McCabe. 2017; Park and Santos. 2016), distinguish tourism related experiences in three stages:

1- Before the entrance to destination (*Pre-travel* in Park and Santos (2016) and *Prospective* in Ingram, Caruana and McCabe (2017));

2- In the destination (*During travel* in Park and Santos and *Active* in Ingram, Caruana and McCabe);

3- After travel (*Post-travel* in Park and Santos and *Reflective* in Ingram, Caruana and McCabe).

Before the travel is related to the anticipation and expectations and has influence on the experiences in the destination. Also, after travel is important, because the memories of experiences of the destination by the tourists. Park and Santos (2016) stress that the tourist experience is holistic and multi-phased. So, the tourist experiences must be investigated before and after travel. This distinguishing of tourist experiences leads us to the rites of passage.

1.2.2. Tourism as a Rite of Passage:

Because of the nature of Iranian tourist experiences –which are far away from the legal constraints and religious barriers in Iran– have freedom to experience the things that are forbidden in Iran, anthropological theories about rituals are more useful in this study[2]. Studying tourism as a ritual is one of the interesting approaches in anthropology and it has been conducted by several scholars (i.e. Wagner. 1977; Moore. 1980; Lett. 1983. Graburn. 1983). All of them were rooted in Van Gennep's and (then) Turner's theories.
In *Rites of Passage*, Arnold Van Gennep analyzed some rites like circumcision and puberty, and distinguished three phases in them: separation, transition, and incorporation. Van Gennep emphasizes two modes: the sacred and the profane in the rites of passage. Usually, the transition phase is the sacred mode which separates the

2. But excessive emphasis on the freedom of Iranians tourists in the other countries, especially in Turkey, is one of the negative point view toward these tourists.

person from their profane modes. This distinction has been used by some anthropologists working on tourism, as will be seen below.

The theory of rites of passage was expanded by Turner (1969 and 1978) more than others, especially when he used it in pilgrimage studies. In *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (1969) Turner regarding Van Gennep's book, studied the rituals in pre-industrial communities, though he suggested to the future researchers to work on the rituals in industrial societies too. But a few years later, he and Edith Turner expanded this approach to industrial societies, in their book *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978). In this book, he studied pilgrimage as a rite of passage in historical religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and especially Christianity).

Turner highlights two concepts: "social drama" and "liminality". Social drama includes structures and anti-structures, social orders, and social disorders. In social drama, social order disassembles and rebuilds again. Unlike Van Gennep's rite of passage, Turner's social drama has 4 phases: breach, crisis, redressive action and reintegration. In fact, Turner changed Van Gennep's separation phase into the two phases of breach and crisis. But in the next phase of redressive action, which corresponds to Van Gennep's Transition phase, Liminality and Communitas appear.

Liminality, which Turner borrowed and adapted from Van Gennep's liminal/transition phase (Turner. 1969: 94), is the same as the unstructured state, and those who are in liminality make and shape communitas. The attributes of this phase are "necessarily ambiguous" (p: 95). In everyday life, the position of people in the social structure is clear. But these positions can be changed, and ritual is one of the factors that can make the change. So, during the ritual period, the person does not behave within the framework of social structures and is free from them. Turner emphasizes the liminality phase more so than the other phases. This phase is less structured, so Turner placed it in contrast to structured society. The liminality positions "are neither here nor there. They are betwixt and between" (p: 95) the normal positions.

Turner referred to the persons who are in the liminality phase as being in *communitas*. He prefers this term over "community," because of his focus on the common living and equality of individuals within social relationships in the liminality periods, with the Latin *communitas* suggesting homogeneity and comradeship better (Turner. 1969: 96).

In the liminality phase, because of its anti-structured situation, the person's former statuses (caste, class, etc.) are neglected or at least diminished.

However, while participating in the rite of passage, the person passes from structures to communitas, but then again enters into the structures which are revitalized by the experience of the individual among others in communitas (p: 129). So, the liminality is not completely unstructured, but rather has structures which are different from the normal social structures.

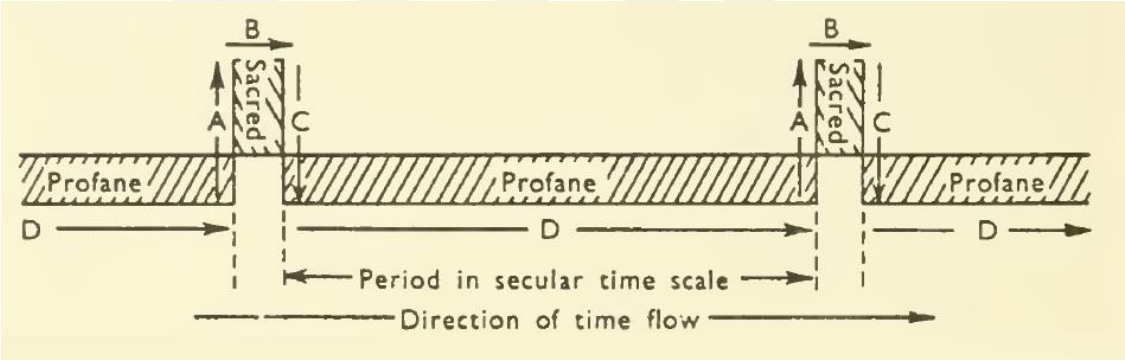
Turner was aware about differences between rituals in pre-industrial and modern societies. For instance, while in the pre-industrial societies, the rite passenger was solitary and away from the others in a limited and closed place, but in the modern societies, a pilgrim is away only from their society, not all humans. Also, while the rites of passage in the pre-industrial societies are hidden, the rites in modern societies are obvious. The hidden thing in the later societies is in the heart of pilgrim. In the pre-industrial societies, the goal of a rite was more commitment to the society, while in the modern pilgrimage is more liberation from the social structures (1978: 3-9). Of course, he reminds that there are exceptions for each of these rules.

Turner used this theory for pilgrims, but because pilgrimage is one kind of tourism (Abad et al. 2009) or is companion with it, especially in religious tourism, this is a suitable theoretical framework for exploring tourism and especially their experiences. Turner himself mentioned that today, pilgrimage is expanded by the tourism agencies (1978: 37-38). Of course, immediately he added that the expanding of pilgrimage is not only because of tourism development, but is more because of religious essays in the media, Pope and other famous religious people's attendance at the ceremony etc.

Tourists are usually in the liminal phase. They are not in their societies and the norms of the destination is different from that of their own society. They also do not have to behave in the frame of the destination's norms. According to Turner's expression, tourist neither have to behave in the norms of their society nor the norms of the destination. So, they experience things which cannot be done in their societies. Also, when he explains the similarities of Millenarian movements and tribal rituals, he mentioned sexual continence, but also reminds that sometimes sexual community as its antithesis can appear. The unlimited sexual behaviors is not only in pink tourism, but also is one of the issues in the other kinds of tourism too.

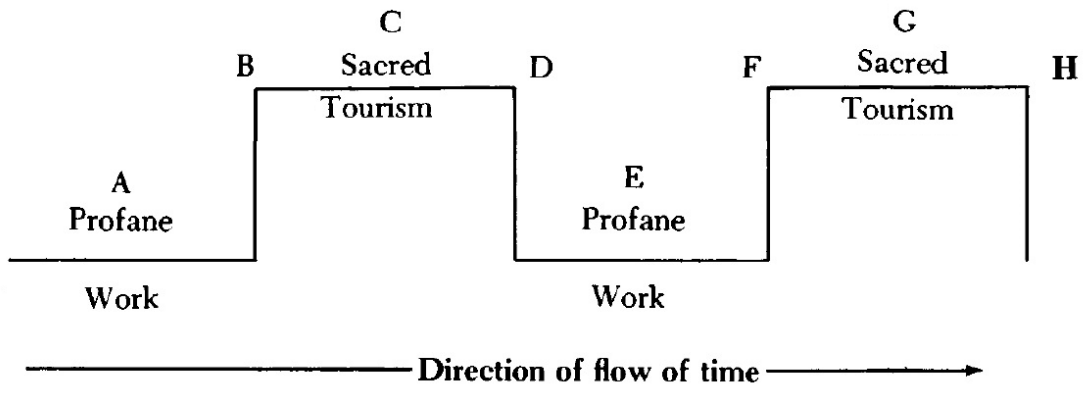
As was mentioned above, a lot of anthropologists used this theory in their studies on tourism, especially in Graburn (1983: 21)'s work. He used "*Ritual Inversion*" for his study. He believes "*Tourism is a special form of play involving travel, or getting away from "it all" (work and home), affording relaxation from tensions, and for some, the opportunity to temporarily become a nonentity, removed from a ringing telephone*" (Graburn. 1989: 22). Of course, today, not only mobile phones but dozens of communication apps such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and many more are used by tourists to keep tourists from being lost. But anyway, perhaps, Graburn predicted this that he wrote "for some".

Graburn's depiction of tourism as a ritual is helped by Leach (1961)'s article, "*Time and false noses*". In his article, Leach writes about the monotone time in the human life cycle that is "Normal-Profane". This time flows as *"day-night day-night; hot-cold hot-cold; wet-dry wet-dry"*. But with the festival rites, this is changed to "Abnormal-Sacred" and put the time out of its monotony (pp: 132-136).



The cycle of Profane-Sacred time (source: Leach. 1961: 134).

Graburn believes that tourism in secular societies is equivalent to festivals and rituals in the traditional God-fearing societies. In the traditional societies ordinary life at home and forced labor is seen as sacred and that is replaced with the extraordinary and voluntary keeping out from home and everyday life, and therefore is a criterion for passing its time. He believes it makes people happier to say *"That was the year we went to Rome"* rather than they say *"That was 1957"*. Because they describe travel and tourism as a *"Really living"*, while daily living is *"Dog life"* in their descriptions (1989: 25-26). So he changes the Leach's time cycle like below cycle:



F

low the time pattern (source: Graburn. 1989: 25).

Graburn recognizes the A phase as everyday and profane life; B phase as the separation or entrance to the ritual; C phase which is the main, as the sacred phase or tourism; and D phase as exit from ritual and reincorporation to the society. B and D are the critical and dangerous phases (this is different from Turner's four phases. Similar to Van Gennep, Graburn's ritual phases, there are three. The fourth is everyday life which is outside of ritual). Tourist encounters illness, accidents, etc. in these two phases more than other phases. Graburn links the B phase to the symbolic death which is explained by Van Gennep. Sorting of finances, getting travel insurance, shedding tears in the moment of saying goodbye to others and etc. are signs of the symbolic death for Graburn.

Of course, some anthropologists (Nash and Smith. 1991: 18) believe that all kinds of tourism cannot be studied as ritual. But here, the Iranian tourist experiences can be studied as a ritual. Because of legal and religious constraints in Iran, the Iranians travels to another country can be seen like a liminality situation, with different stages and different experiences.

Although the process of Iranians traveling to Turkey is staged in three phases, but before the travel can be considered as well:

0- The Iranian tourist's daily life in Iran (*Profane* in Graburn);

1- The planning of travel until arriving to destination in Turkey (*Separation* in Van Gennep, *Breach and Crisis* in Turner, *Entrance to ritual* in Graburn; *Pre-travel* in Park and Santos and *Prospective* in Ingram, Caruana and McCabe).

2- Their accommodation and activities in destination (*Transition* in Van Gennep; *Redressive* in Turner; *Sacred* in Graburn; *During travel* in Park and Santos and *Active* in Ingram, Caruana and McCabe).

3- Return to Iran (*Incorporation* in Van Gennep, *Reintegration* in Turner, *Exit from ritual* in Graburn, *Post-travel* in Park and Santos and *Reflective* in Ingram, Caruana and McCabe).

The amount of difference between daily life experiences in Iran and touristic experiences in Turkey makes the Iranian tourist's experiences ordinary or extraordinary. So, although the daily life experiences of an Iranian in Iran is not considered in this study, comparing them (basis on available studies) with touristic experiences in Turkey, helps us distinguish ordinary tourist experiences and extraordinary tourist experiences of Iranian tourists.

The first phase (number 1) helps us to understand the effects of motivations, expectations and etc. on tourist experience, the third phase (number 3) helps us to understand why an Iranian tourist tries to repeat their experience in Turkey again (or tries to have a new experience in the same destination), as well as helps us to understand what the impacts of their experiences in Turkey are.

Because of the nature of tourist experience the most important phase in this study is the second phase (number 2). Tourist experience studies focus on the destinations rather than the journeys (Cutler, Carmichael and Doherty. 2014: 152). In this study, the destination is studied as a liminal situation for Iranian tourists and they usually have different experiences than those from their daily lives in Iran.

1.2.3. Nationalism

One of the issues that seemed to subside in the 1960s was nationalism. But it once again erupted in the ethnic independence movements of the West in the 1960s and 1970s in Catalonia and Corsica, Britain, Flanders, Scotland, Wales and Quebec, and then again in the 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union (Smith. 2004: 124; Calhoun. 2014: 14). Even as Calhoun (ibid) says, some believe that the European Union, by supporting

being European, promotes a new kind of nationalism. So, like scientists in other disciplines, anthropologists have paid close attention to this growing phenomenon (Smith. 2004: 9).

Most of those who have surveyed nationalism studies (for example: Smith. 2004 and 2015; Calhoun. 2014; Ozkarimli. 2004 and etc.), have placed theories and studies in this field in three categories: primordialism, modernism and ethno-symbolism. Each of these categories has its own sub-groups that do not need to be addressed here. Only a summary of each is mentioned here, and then we discuss the relationship between nationalism and tourism in general, and the subject of this dissertation in particular. According to Breuilli (1993: 2), before analyzing, it is necessary to present the typology of nationalism, because nationalisms are too diverse to be explained from the beginning by a single research method. So, we have to figure out what kind of nationalism we mean.

The debate over nationalism generally began in the nineteenth century and has since included two groups of proponents (mostly historians) and opponents. Many thinkers, such as Marx (because of his belief in internationalism) and Durkheim (because of the Dreyfus affair), criticized it. But the study of nationalism as a phenomenon that must be examined separately from its good or bad began after the First World War (Ozkarimli. 2004).

The first view seems to have been primordialism, which has its roots even in Rousseau (Smith, 2004). Of course, a distinction must be made between primordialism and perennialism. Perennialist means one who considers nations to be historical phenomena, phenomena that have emerged over the centuries and whose inherent characteristics have largely remained unchanged. Perennialists claim that nations have always existed and that modern nations are nothing but their medieval counterparts (Ozkirimli, 2004). Perennialism is a specific paradigm of some historians. In contrast, primordialism has attracted social scientists and organic nationalists (Smith. 2004: 76). Perhaps that is why the primordialists also considered Geertz to be primordial. He considers the primordial belongings to beliefs and perceptions, which is also common in nationalism (Smith. 2010: 79; Calhoun. 2014: 69). In other words, Geertz believed that maintaining national unity in the modern period is similar to maintaining ethnic ties in premodern times. In

general, primordialism, also known as organic nationalism, believes that nationalism, like taste and smell, is born with a child. This type of nationalism was especially common among German Romantics and was very popular until the middle of the twentieth century (Smith. 2015: 283).

The most serious critiques of the primordial view were made by the modernists. Most famous theorists of nationalism (such as Hobsbawm, Anderson, Gellner, etc.) fall into this group. Anthropologist Gellner (1997) not only opposes the primordialism of nationalism, but also sees terms such as national “awakening”, which are used to justify the beginning of nationalism, as nothing more than justifying the absence of nationalism throughout the history of that land (p: 8). Gellner's view, as Ozkirimli (2004: 157) states, has been considered the most important attempt to understand nationalism, and even his most ardent critics acknowledge the originality of his analysis. According to Gellner (1997: 9), although cosmopolitan humanists oppose nationalism and seek an equal world for all, unfortunately even they accepted the nationalists’ argument that nationalism is a global phenomenon and has penetrated the human hearts but still, they fight it.

Anderson (1983/2006) is another theorist of nationalism in the group of modernists who came up with the concept and theory of "Imaginary Communities". He defines a nation as:

> It is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. [...] is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. [...] It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm (2006: 6-7).

This view of Anderson is one of the most widely used theories in the field of nationalism (for example: Engel. 2005; Costantino & Egan. 2003; Shaw. 2007; Zwiep. 2003. And etc.).

In the late twentieth century, ethno-symbolists such as Armstrong (1982) and Smith (1991, 2010, 2014 & 2015) seriously criticized the view of modernism in the study of nationalism. According to Smith (2004: 73 and 74), all these views believe in the national and nationalism nature of modernity; that is, structural modernism. While

> Ethno-symbolists […] have seen the process of nation formation as not so much one of construction, let alone deliberate 'invention', as of reinterpretation of pre-existing cultural motifs and of reconstruction of earlier ethnic ties and sentiments (Smith. 2010: 90).

It is on this basis that Smith (2010: 30) defines national identity as follows:

> The continuous reproduction and reinterpretation by the members of a national community of the pattern of symbols, values, myths, memories and traditions that compose the distinctive heritage of nations, and the variable identification of individual members of that community with that heritage and its cultural elements.

But the kind of nationalism that is most useful for analyzing our findings on the nationalistic sentiments of Iranian tourists in Turkey is *"Long-Distance Nationalism"*. The term was first used by Benedict Anderson (1992) to refer to immigrants from the mainland. Anderson agrees with Acton that nationalism arose from exile. Because many leaders of nationalist movements started their work from a place far from their homeland. He shows that in the nineteenth century, when 35 million people, generally from Europe, immigrated to the United States, many of these immigrants, despite their affiliation with the new country, had a strong interest in the political destiny of their former country, publishing newspapers in their own language and taught their children the religion of their ancestral land (Anderson. 1992). In the first half of the twentieth century, scholars sometimes used the term *"home country nationalism"* to describe the political involvement of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century immigrants to the United States in state-building projects in their own country (Schiller. 2005: 572). In a similar sense, Tololyan (2000), in his study of the Armenian diaspora around the world, uses the term *"exile nationalism"* for nation-state-building projects formed by scattered elites to establish or re-establish a political state. Anderson rightly believes that in the last decades, long-distance nationalism has become more developed due to the expansion of communication and displacement. An Asian living in the United States

can both talk to his countrymen by phone and fly to their country of origin in a few hours. Anderson (ibid) exemplifies Irish Americans. Many of them have never been to Ireland, do not know Irish, cannot play Irish games, do not pay taxes to Ireland, do not serve in the Irish Army, and only get to know Ireland through movies; but they think of themselves as Irish. As Schiller (2005: 573) writes, at first, scholars thought that this kind of nationalism was transient and related only to the first generation of immigrants, but the persistence of this kind of nationalism showed the inaccuracy of their hypothesis. Long-distance nationalists are expected to maintain a kind of loyalty to their homeland and based on this dependence, take the necessary actions for the homeland (ibid).

As Schiller (2005: 578) has shown, one of the reasons that strengthens long-distance nationalism is the feeling of insecurity or humiliation of immigrants in the destination country. The Turks in Germany, who in addition to receiving German citizenship, still a large part of them retain their Turkish citizenship, are an example he gives. Latin American and Caribbean immigrants in United States who were the target of racist behavior also led them to resort to long-distance nationalism, by saying *"Haiti is my pride".* Part of this sense is used for new generations who are culturally different from their parents and are not fluent in their mother language, using blood-based metaphors to link these generations to their "homeland" (Schleier. 2005: 577 quoted by Zlatko Skrbis. 1999).

Of course, Schiller (ibid) gives two other reasons for the spread of long-distance nationalism: First, the intentional or inadvertent plans of the destination country's politicians. For example, American governments, whether Republican or Democrat, sought to confront their enemy by inciting long-distance nationalism in immigrants from communist countries. Also, the conditions for obtaining residence in the European Union are now almost exclusively for political refugees. Immigrants are therefore unwittingly forced to identify with opposition political movements in their homelands. He links the growth of Kurdish identity and nationalism, as well as the politicization of the Tamil and Eritrean diaspora, to this policy. The second reason for the spread of long-distance nationalism is its encouragement as a lever for the expansion of a country in the territory of its neighbors. Hungary is currently calling and claiming citizens in its

neighboring countries as a "relative" in the name of its Hungarian mother nation (Eschlier. 2005: 579, quoted by Steward. 2003: 24).

Perhaps these are the reasons why long-distance nationalism is not positive for its theorist. Anderson (1992) and Schiller (2005) cite the examples of Canadian Sikhs supporting the Sikh movement in Khalistan, American Jewish extremists for Israeli extremists, British Tamils for Tamil violence, European Kurds for supporting Kurdish armed movements and so on, show (especially Anderson) their opposition against long-distance nationalism, which is irresponsible. Because they regularly send money to the armed nationalists to buy weapons in support of this nationalism, without being directly involved in the violent struggles. In fact, from the four different political positions, according to Schiller (2005: 574), long-distance nationalists have taken towards their homeland, namely: (1) anti-colonialism, (2) separatism, (3) regime change, and (4) participation, only the last one is a peaceful option.

But based on this last option, in recent years travel agencies have offered special travel packages during highly competitive elections that encourage various political parties to send their supporters abroad to return to their homeland and vote.

Therefore, it is natural that tourism studies are somehow related to nationalism, because as Ozkirimli (2004: 13) shows, there is no field in the social sciences that directly or indirectly has not felt the charm of nationalism. Tourism is no exception. Tourism and nationalism, both as phenomena that entered the field of academic studies in the second half of the twentieth century, are widely related. For example, tourism can promote nationalism by promoting national culture and identity (Palmer, 1999; Pretes, 2003), and nationalism can promote tourism (Bhandari, 2013) or even prevent it; of course, the latter, ie the consequences of nationalism on tourism is greater (Altinay and Bowen. 2006: 945).

Nationalism may manifest itself on tourist sites, where governments or the private sector incite visitors' nationalist sentiments (Pretets. 2003: 126). National myths and traditions that are promoted by the tourism industry may have little relationship to the people's real lives or their understanding of their own national identity (Palmer, 1999: 318).

All this has led to research on the relationship between tourism and nationalism, which has become one of the topics of interest for researchers in these fields. Long-distance nationalism is also seen among Iranians traveling to Turkey. In fact, their nationalist sentiments after seeing Turkey's progress in tourism and other areas, and comparing these developments with the current situation in Iran, generally manifest themselves in the form of description of the glorious history of Iran, alas for its current condition and sometimes even the expression of ethnocentric sentences.

1.3. LITERATURE

Due to the shortage of anthropological studies on Iranian tourist experiences, specially related to nationalism, this literature can be on the similar topics. For this research, three categories can be useful: 1- the studies on the tourist experiences (because our study is on Iranian tourist experiences in Turkey); 2- studies on nationalism and tourism (especially related to Iran); 3- the sociocultural studies on the Iranian tourists in Turkey. In each case, examples are mentioned that in the analysis process of this dissertation can be cited more or have the closest relation to the findings and analyses.

1.3.1. The Studies on the Tourist Experiences

There are a lot of works on the tourist experience, although Ritchie, Tung and Ritchie (2011) believe that the portion of experience-related papers in the tourism journals are low. Also, according to the theoretical thinking and empirical research, Ritchie and Hudson (2009) categorized extant knowledge of tourist experience into six main streams (i.e. fundamentals of the experience, experience-seeking behaviors, methodologies used in experience research, the nature of specific tourism experiences, managerial issues in the design and delivery of experiences, and the evolutionary trail of experience thinking), but other than the methodological category, the categorization of this study is different and is regarded to the disciplines.

However, a lot of them (i.e. Vittersù, Vorkinn, Vistad and Vaagland. 2000; Graefe and Vaske. 1987; Frochot and Batat. 2013), are related to the satisfaction of tourists, by the

marketing targets. These studies investigate satisfaction rate of tourists to finding the causes of their probable dissatisfaction and resolving them or finding the reasons of their satisfaction and reinforcing them.

Chandralal and Valenzuela (2015) by combining quantitative (700 questionnaires) and qualitative (100 travel blogs and 35 deep interviews) methods gathered data and tried to provide a valid measuring instrument for memorable tourism experiences. They claimed that a reliable and valid MTE (Memorable Tourism Experience) instrument has 34 items across ten experiential dimensions. These dimensions are authentic local experiences, novel experiences, self-beneficial experiences, significant travel experiences, serendipitous and surprising experiences, local hospitality, social interactions, impressive local guides and tour operators, fulfillment of personal travel interests and effective emotions.

Kim worked on this area in several articles (Kim. 2009; Kim. 2010; Kim, Ritchie and McCormick. 2012; Kim and Ritchie. 2014) and called his method "MTES" or Memorable Tourism Experience Scale. Kim (2009) constructed the memorable tourism experience scale based on seven factors, which are hedonism, refreshment, local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement, and novelty. He continued his scale in his future studies. For instance, Kim, Ritchie and McCormick (2012) used the same seven factors with 24 items. Also, Kim and Ritchie (2014) investigated the same scale for cross-cultural validation. They compared the American student tourist experience with the Taiwanese. Finally, they resulted that the scale is suitable for cross-cultural tourism as well. Ritchie, who worked with Kim in the last study on the seven factors scale, before and in another study (Tung and Ritchie. 2011) suggested four dimensions of memorable tourism experiences, which are effect, expectations, consequentiality, and recollection. Kim (2010) also in another study worked on the factors which affect the memorable nature of tourism experiences. He found that the experiential factors of travel, like hedonic activities and participating in local culture *"positively affected the autobiographical memory of recollection and vividness of past experiences".*

Another part of studies on this issue (i.e. Filep and Pearce. 2014; Moufakkir and Selmi. 2017) are about the psychological dimensions of it. For example, Moufakkir and Selmi (2017) worked on the spiritual experiences of the tourists in the Sahara Desert. They

write that the spiritual tourists do not necessarily believe in God, the Devil, etc. but they can connect with the self, other or a higher power.

Some of the works have an interdisciplinary perspective. For example, Park and Santos (2016) studied the memorable tourist experiences. "*A memorable tourism experience is a meaningful experience that is remembered and selectively reconstructed by the tourist when describing a particular travel experience* (Tung and Ritchie. 2011. Cited in Park and Santos. 2016: 2). They investigated the Korean backpacking tourist experiences in Europe. They distinguished between pre, on-site and post-travel experiences. They showed that the tourists' background has a significant impact on destinations chosen, shaping anticipation and expectations, and construction and shaping of tourist experiences. Also, they show that the tourist motivations and their gathered data were important in their planning, but in the unexpected situations in a destination (like talking with other Korean tourists in guesthouse about their experiences), they are flexible and can change their plan. But the interesting finding of this study is that in the post-travel period, the investigated tourists remember their unexpected experiences, more than the planned experiences, which can be positive or negative experiences. The most important meaningful experiences were those that cannot be recorded (for instance by photography).

Also, some of the works in this issue (Wearing and Foley. 2017; Chen, Scott and Benckendorff. 2017; Brown and Osman. 2017; Uriely. 1997 and 2005), are done by sociological perspectives. Each of them focused on a special part of tourist experiences. For example, while Foley and Wearing (2017) studied the urban tourist experience by sociological perspectives, Chen, Scott and Benckendorff (2017), studied the mindful and mediation tourist experience in Thailand by the socio-cognitive perspective and Brown and Osman (2017) studied the female tourist experiences in Egypt, as an Islamic destination with different situations for the female tourists.

In the sociological studies, except the studies which were mentioned in theoretical framework, Uriely (2005) mentioned four conceptual developments in the study of the tourist experience: from differentiation to de-differentiation of everyday life and touristic experiences; from generalizing to pluralizing conceptualizations; from the toured objects to the tourist's subjective negotiation of meanings; from contradictory and decisive statements to relative and complementary interpretations (p: 200). Then, he

suggests the use of a post-modernistic form of the study of these conceptual developments; because *"unlike grand theories that conceptualize societies as totalities, postmodern theorizing emphasizes diversity and richness of life"* (p: 201). In fact, this is the same way that anthropology continues. Because of the academic discipline of Uriely, he focused on the sociology; while all of the characters listed above, more or less are used in the tradition of anthropology. But in anthropological studies of tourist experience, there are just a few scientific works. Which will be referred to below.

Selstad (2007) studied tourist experience with his attention to the tourist not as a *"relatively passive"* person, but by focus on the tourist as a *"middle role"* who creates varied experiences from individual perceptions to interactive events and memories. He put the interactive events at the center of attention to his study. So, he focuses on the relations between tourists and hosts, or between host and tour operators. Because of this, he referenced the social interactions of Goffman (1967). But he explained that the tourist experience is not created necessary for these kinds of relationships. A lot of tourist experiences are created by relationship between tourist and the native or constructed environment of destination, or even between the tourist and themselves. His article is theoretical not the based on his fieldwork. He points out some important notes in his writing. For example, the perceptions are located at the core of experience. These perceptions *"are in turn affected by expectations, interaction, stories and memories"* (Selstad. 2007: 21). Also, he is critic of a sharp distinction between individualism and institutional tourism (p: 23) or between ordinary life and tourism (p: 24). Also, Selstad (2007: 28) explains that some tourist experience is not expected, while these experiences are important.

Buzinde et al. (2014) investigated the motivations, activities, and experiences of pilgrimage tourists in Kumbh Mela, a Hindu pilgrimage in Allahabad, India. They used an interpretive framework in their study. The motivations separated into spiritual connectivity and spiritual knowledge attainment (p: 7). But the researchers distinguished between pilgrim activities and pilgrim experience. They found two main participants' activities: serving self and serving others. Serving self includes praying, meditation, bathing in the revered River Ganges and listening to spiritual discourses. But serving others includes voluntary service endeavors and is indirectly related to the *"participant's need to attain a deeper level of self-envelopment in an attitude of*

selflessness" (p: 15). In the other hand, the main experiences found were spirituality and social unity. The experience of spirituality was experiencing the perceived divine which is related to the site; but the experience of social unity includes *"sentiments of solidarity"* in the Indian society with social stratification is abnormal (p: 12). Regarding the researchers' expression, it seems that they accounted the visible behaviors as activities, while the experiences were extracted from the pilgrims' expressions.

Huang et al. (2018) investigated the international airports, as a place that have a liminal nature for the tourists. They explain that the airports usually were standardized in every country with their similar restaurants and shop stores. But in the recent decades, the local culture plays a more important role in these places. They describe the airport as an *"in-between"* place, between origin and destination (p: 2). It is located between boundaries of home and freedom of away, as well as between work and leisure. So, the writers try to find how the passengers experience the international airports as a *"micro-destination"* and how they utilize it as a unique social environment. By the review of the literature about the role of airports in tourism industry, they found the role of airports expanding from an air transit place to a complex place with its different diffusions. Regarding the ritual theories by Van Gennep (1960) and Turner (1973), the writers separate and ritualize the process of a passenger's passing from various gates in the international airports. Pre-liminal rites of separation with anxiety within the security check process; entering the liminal zone and feeling relaxed; the post-liminal rites of incorporation upon arrival (Huang et al. 2018: 7). Regarding to Creswell (2007), their phenomenological data analysis consisted of three steps. First, deep reading of interviews and highlighting significant meaning units within (include participants' feelings towards the airport environment, activities in airports, and behavioral patterns in airports). Second, significant meaning units were clustered into themes. Third, the themes were synthesized with significant meaning units and written in a *"consistent statement of a participants' experiences"*, that is called by Laverty (2003: 20. Cited in Huang et al. 2018: 5) as *"the structure of the experience"*. Based on this phenomenology, passenger experiences are portrayed in these three themes: airports as a tourism space, airports as a social space and for some passenger as a personal space (for thinking or relaxing); with every theme having interrelated sub-themes (Huang et al. 2018: 6).

Fotiou (2010) in part of her Ph.D dissertation in anthropology on the westerner shamanic tourism in Iquitos, focused on the westerners' experiences in shamanic tourism. Cited by Chambers (2000: xii), Fotiou used the word tourism as *"any kind of travel activity that includes the self-conscious experience of another place"* (p: 47). She wanted to know why the western tourists want to experience shamanism? Also, she tried to understand why their experiences are different from each other? Her main theoretical perspective was cultural constructionism, because she wanted to know how the American Natives shamanism is constructed in different cultural contexts by different tourists? So, she focused on their experiences and because experience is invisible, she used metanarrative in her analysis on the stories of the tourists (Fotiou. 2010: 46). Her findings show us that the Westerners intention is healing, both of an individual and a culture. The shamanism was viewed by the Western tourists as a healing force not only for their bodies, but for their mental disorders too. They believed that the Western culture was distant from its spiritual dimensions.

1.3.2. Nationalistic Orientations in Tourism

Many studies have been done on the relationship between tourism and nationalism from various angles, that some of them will be discussed here. Some areas such as Wales or Scotland (Pitchford. 1995; Pritchard, Annette and Morgan. 2001; Griffiths and Sharpley. 2012; Bhandari. 2013) have been the focus of this study. Maybe because the nationalism and separatism in these areas is strong. But about Iranian tourists or tourists in Iran, we face a lack of studies in this field. Naturally, in the absence of studies on nationalism among Iranian tourists in Turkey, nationalism among Iranian tourists in other countries can be addressed. But since the number of such studies is so low (only one case), we will deal with a few similar cases in other countries.

Some studies that have dealt with the relationship between politics and tourism in Iran (i.e. Mozaffari, Karimian and Mousavi. 2017; Morakkabati. 2011; Seyfi and Hall. 2019; Seyfi and Hall. 2020), inevitably, a short or long part of their discussion is related to nationalistic policies in pre-revolution tourism, and religious policies in post-revolution tourism. What is more, the main intersection of politics with tourism in Iran, especially

after the 1979 revolution, has been the determination of tourism policy based on national identity or religious identity.

For example, Seyfi and Hall (2020) in their article *"Political Transitions and Transition Events in a Tourism Destination"* have examined the consequences of the transfer of political power in Iran on inbound tourism to the country. Although they focus on incoming tourism to Iran, which has no relation to our research (Iranian tourists in Turkey), this study indirectly addresses the relationship between nationalism and tourism in Iran. What emerges from this article is the rivalry between Iranian conservatives who prefer tourism in Iran for religious purposes only (based on Shiite religious nationalism) and against other forms of tourism, especially tourism based on pre-Islamic Iranian historical destinations (countering historical nationalism). Before the revolution, Iran was able to be a leader in tourism in the region based on its history and civilization, especially pre-Islamic history, by attracting about 700,000 foreign tourists annually and launching international brand hotels. Even now, reformists and moderates believe that the development of tourism in the country is based on the ancient civilizations of Iran which can offer a much better image of the country than a conservative Islamic country. Therefore, with the change of any government and the coming to power of conservatives or moderates, the tourism environment in Iran will also change to some extent. As Butler and Suntikul (2017) cite, Iran is a good example for examining the cessation of tourism following the change of rulers and ruling ideology.

In another study, Gholamian, Maleki, and Rezaei (2020) examined the relationship between ethnicity / nationalism among Iranian Kurdish tourists traveling to Iraqi Kurdistan. Their method was in-depth interviews with 17 Iranian tourists who have traveled to Iraqi Kurdistan. Their findings show that being from the same ethnicity, along with some other issues such as social freedoms, the proximity and cheapness of travel to Iraqi Kurdistan, was one of the main reasons for their travel to this region. The experiences that these tourists gained during the travel have increased their sense of Kurdish identity and reduced their sense of national solidarity with other Iranians. During the travel, they compared their situation with the residents of Iraqi Kurdistan and were dissatisfied with their situation in Iran. Of course, the humiliating view of the

Iraqi Kurds towards them (mainly due to the weaker economic situation of the Iranian Kurds), despite their common ethnicity, has been annoying to them. However, they were proud of Iraqi Kurdistan and that it has an autonomous government with Kurdish symbols and flags.

The above two studies were the only studies in which the relationship between Iranian nationalism and tourism was somewhat directly addressed. So, in the following parts, we will introduce and briefly describe some research on the relationship between nationalism and tourism in other parts of the world.

In an article entitled *"Tourism and Nationalism,"* Pretes (2003) uses Anderson's perspective on imaginary communities and examines three attractions built in South Dakota that influence American tourists in building their national identity. For example, the statue of the four presidents on Mount Rushmore, although only completed in 1939, the sculptor and his supporters perceived Mount Rushmore as an "archaeological" site; As a place that represents a fundamental myth and can be used to create an imagined community. In other words, the stories that guides tell tourists and visitors about these attractions are very similar to the stories that people are told about past civilizations. Pretes (2003) shows that in a country like the United States, which has a very short history, especially compared to European countries, the discovery of dinosaur fossils and the construction of large replicas of them (in South Dakota, for example) is a kind of unhistorical compensation. And this, along with Mount Rushmore (the statue of the four presidents of the United States) and the Wall Drug store, stimulate a sense of nationalism in Americans. He believes that modern attractions, when be full of national values, can fulfill the same goal of the pyramids of Egypt, the Greek Parthenon or the Indonesian Borobodor in forming the idea of a glorious common past (Pretes. 2003: 140).

In another research, Brunner (1994)’s Anthropological Survey on the New Salem Historic Site in Illinois, USA shows that tourists in the area participate in five activities:

> (1) learning about their past (2) playing with time frames and enjoying the encounters (3) consuming nostalgia for a simpler bygone area and simultaneously (4) buying the idea of progress, of how far we have advanced. Finally they are also (5) celebrating America (1994: 398).

While tourists are free in constructing and using their meanings, Bruner points out that certain patterns are repeated, in particular the consumption of nostalgia, the idea of progress, and the image of traditional America. Teachers bring their students, parents bring their children and immigration officials bring the immigrants who taking their citizenship training class, to visit this area and learn about New Salem, especially the role of Abraham Lincoln in American history. But every tourist and visitor *"constructs a past that is meaningful to them and that relates to their life and experiences"*[3] (p: 410).

Cheng and Wong (2014) examined the nationalistic reactions of Chinese tourists to Japan following the escalation of the dispute over Diovio Island in 2012. Following Zhao (2013), they name two types of *"Chinese state nationalism"* from above and *"popular nationalism"* from below (p. 5) and point out that nationalism in China goes from state nationalism to popular nationalism and the recent type of nationalism is more common now. Cheng and Wong (2014: 12-14) have identified four groups of Chinese nationalist tourists to travel to Japan: 1. Core nationalists who not only canceled their travel to Japan due to the country's dispute with China, but also urge others to not travel to Japan. This group chose the agencies that oppose travel to Japan for their next travels. 2. Social nationalists who canceled their trips in part because of their association with the others, or because they are under the others supervision, and this was sometimes unsatisfactory. But they still support the activities of agencies that are against travel in Japan. 3. Easy nationalists who did not agree to the cancellation of the travel to Japan and were in some way opposed to both former nationalist groups; But if tensions between China and Japan escalate, they cancel their travel because of their patriotism. This group preferred agencies that had not canceled their travel to Japan. 4. Rational nationalists who believe that politics and tourism should be separated, and Japan has always been an attractive destination for Chinese tourism. There is a range here that can be distinguished from patriotism to self-interest. They show that tourism as a soft power can positively or negatively affect other countries, especially with stimulating nationalist sentiments. In this way, sometimes the popular nationalists push the government to be more active towards the antipathy of countries.

3. The origin sentence is: "Tourists contruct a past that is meaningful to them and that relates to their lives and expreinces".

Also, in another study on the nationalist sentiments of Chinese tourists traveling to another country, Maruyama, Weber, and Stronza (2010) did in-depth interview with second-generation Chinese-Americans who traveled to China. The findings of this study showed that unlike other studies that pointed to the greater dependence between the identity of the tourist and the ancestral homeland after the travel, these tourists still considered the United States as their main homeland after the travel, but in their own identity they needed to be redefined.

1.3.3. The Sociocultural Studies on the Iranian Tourists in Turkey.

Although as it was mentioned that a lot of Iranian tourists come to Turkey every year, there are just a few studies on them. On the other hand, the sociocultural dimensions of tourism are usually neglected by Iranian scholars as a group that is expected to do the most studies about the Iranian tourists. As Seyfi, Hall and Kuhzady (2018) show, tourism development, tourism marketing, ecotourism, tourism policy/planning and tourism economy are the most repeated themes of the articles on tourism by the Iranian scholars. Although the recent investigation is about the studies on the tourism in Iran, it is also about studies on the Iranian tourists in the other countries. The search on the outgoing Iranian tourists reached to only three direct study on the sociocultural dimensions of them (by author), while the indirect studies on this topic were scarce, too. So, all of the found articles on the Iranian tourists in Turkey, which are only three, are mentioned here.

Etemaddar et al. (2018) in the article *"A taste of home - choosing a destination wedding"* discussed the Iranian *"destination wedding"* in Turkey. It means they surveyed *"a group of Iranian diasporic families who live in various countries throughout the world who reunited in Turkey for a wedding celebration"* (p: 423). The findings of this study, collected through interviews with 19 Iranians who attended such weddings, show that geographical proximity, lack of need for a visa, cheap travel, restrictions in Iran etc. are some of the reasons that pull Iranians to celebrate their weddings in Turkey. But it seems that the most important reason for holding these Iranian weddings in Turkey is the possibility of the presence of all relatives. Respondents noted that the bride or groom's family is scattered in many countries

around the world, and since some of them have travel restrictions - usually political - to Iran, Turkey could be an alternative destination where everyone can attend. The study predicted that Iranians might expand their wedding style to other nearby countries.

Ozturk et al (2017) investigated the main motivational factors among Iranian tourists in Antalya, Turkey, and their satisfaction level with all-inclusive packages. Regarding the findings of the study, entertainment facilities, a family friendly environment, good climate and quality of accommodations were the main motivational factors for choosing Turkey. On the other hand, the main factors for choosing all-inclusive packages were "predetermined schedules, set prices, the elimination of extra spending and quality of service". Against the previous studies which claimed the quality of all-inclusive packages is reduced in Turkey, this study found that the Iranians are satisfied of the quality of these packages in Turkey. Of course, the expectations of Iranian tourists and European tourists are different. Although the writers mentioned this issue, they did not clarify it. The study also claimes that unlike the other international tourists, the natural and cultural attractions of Turkey are of little importance to Iranian tourists (p: 8). Of course, that is related to the destination. The writers choose Antalya as their destination, while Konya is also interesting for Iranian tourists, because of its cultural attractions.

Nikjoo and Ketabi (2015) investigated the push and pull factors of Iranian tourists in Istanbul and Antalya. They used the Crompton (1979) model of tourist motivation by push and pull factors. They gathered their data by questionnaire and analyzed them by SPSS. They found escape from the ordinary as the push factor for the Iranian tourists in Antalya and ego-enhancement as the push factor for the Iranian tourists in Istanbul. Convenient access for Iranians, no visa requirement, suitable expenses in comparison with the other countries as the most important pull factors for both groups. But shopping centers and the attractions of the city were the special pull factors for the tourists in Istanbul; while entertainments and infrastructures were special pull factors for the tourists in Antalya (p: 593). Also, they showed that the hotel and its facilities are important for recreational tourists (in Antalya) more than the cultural tourists (here in Istanbul).

As shown -as far as the I searched and found- only three studies have been conducted on Iranian tourists in Turkey. However, in the next chapters, the findings which have some common dimensions with the cited literature are described.

CHAPTER 2: STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND PURPOSES

2.1. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Based on the latest Iran official reports (ICHTO. 2019) in 2018 (from 21 March 2017 until 21 March 2018 as one Iranian year) 7.242.667 Iranian tourists visited foreign countries, with almost half of them having traveled to Iraq as Shia pilgrims. Turkey is the second most popular destination for Iranian tourists; and the first destination for their non-pilgrimage tourism. In 2019[4], after Russia (7.017.657), Germany (5.027.472), Bulgaria (2.713.464) and England (2.562.064), Iran with 2.102,890 tourist was the fifth highest tourist sender to Turkey (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı. 2020). In other words, 2.57% of the 82 million population of Iran traveled to Turkey. The Iranian tourists, as Ozturk et al. (2017: 2) showed, are important for the incoming of tourism in Turkey.

One of the reasons that a lot of Iranian tourists go to Turkey, is its different attractions in its different destinations: The historical attractions (in most of its famous destinations like Istanbul, Antalya, Izmir, Konya, Van etc.), cultural attractions (i.e. the Sheb-i Arous ceremonies in Konya), the seaside recreation attractions (i.e. in Antalya, Kush Adasi, Muğla, Izmir), the shopping attractions (i.e. Istanbul and Van), spa attractions (i.e. Denizli), health tourism attractions (i.e. Ankara and Istanbul) and etc. As it is showed in these examples, one destination like Istanbul can have multiple kinds of attractions like historical, shopping, health etc. One of the reasons which Iranians select Turkey for their travels, is this variation of attractions. According to the KTB[5] (2017), the most desired destinations for Iranians are as follows: 1- Istanbul, 2- Antalya, 3- Ankara, 4- Van, 5- Trabzon, 6- Izmir, 7- Mugla, 8- Aydin, 9- Erzurum, 10- Konya.

Because of relations between destination and tourist experience (Cutler, Carmichael and Doherty. 2014), the Iranians have had different experiences in each different destination (here, Istanbul, Antalya and Konya). But usually, their experiences are seen as superficial like recreation and shopping by some part of Iranians and governors. Although there is no formal documentary about this, there are some signs that show this

4. As the last official report by Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey about tourism statistics.

5. Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı

occurring (i.e. reports in newspapers and barriers and negative recommendations to travel to Turkey by governors).

Also, as Gnoth (2016) has mentioned, motivation is closely related to tourist experience. So, this is expected that the studies on tourist experiences (i.e. Mufakkir and Selmi. 2017; Chen et al. 2017; Chronis. 2015; Cutler et al. 2014) show that the tourists from one home country have different experiences. According to this, the Iranian tourists in one destination in Turkey, have different experiences from each other, driven by different motivations. For example, it is possible that two Iranian tourists have vastly different experiences in Istanbul.

So this thesis tries to find the variety of the Iranian tourist experiences in Turkey and looking for common components in these various experiences.

2.2. RESEARCH QUESTION(S):

According to the above explanation and if the statement of problem might be shaped in some clear questions, the main question in this study is:

- What kinds of touristic experiences do Iranians have in Turkey?

But besides this question, the study will try to find the answers for these sub-questions:

- What are the motivations of Iranians to travel to Turkey?
- What are the effects of Iranian tourist motivations and expectations on their experiences in Turkey?[6]
- Is there any common component of Iranian tourist experiences in Turkey?
- What are the consequences of Iranian tourist experiences in Turkey?

6. Motivation and Expectation are different from each other, although they are related. As Gnoth (1997: 283) explained, "*[…] motivation constitutes a major parameter in expectation formation. Expectations, in turn, determine performance perceptions of products and services as well as perceptions of experiences. Motivation thus impacts on satisfaction formation*". The motivation is more obscure and is an inner feeling which pushes the tourist from her/his home and pulls her/him to the destination to gain satisfaction; but expectation is more clear and is something which the tourist knows how, how much/many, when, where can gain it. Although it seems that motivation and expectation are overlapped and confused sometimes. For instance, clothes shopping in a destination is a motivation for tourist, but finding a cheap and high quality jacket is an expectation. Here, motivation is more general than the expectation.

2.3. PURPOSES OF THE STUDY:

The most important purpose of this study is finding and understanding experiences of Iranian tourists in Turkey - as far as possible - from their own point of view.

Another purpose of this study is to discover the diversity of these experiences on the one hand and find similarities and differences between these experiences among Iranian tourists on the other hand. This can help us in providing insight into "the varying values, symbolisms, behaviors, and societal ideals that comprise the human condition" (Buzinde et al. 2014: 3).

2.4. INNOVATION OF RESEARCH:

While until now, most studies on the tourist experience were mostly related to the western tourist experiences (Uriely. 2005: 213), one innovation in this dissertation regards the nonwestern tourist experience. But the most important innovation is that until now the Iranian tourist experience has not been studied, and this study will be the first one. These two types of tourists (one group from developed countries and another group from developing countries) can be naturally different from each other. While a lot of westerner tourists go to other destinations to experience authenticity which they believe is lost in their modern life (MacCannell. 1976; Shepherd. 2015), the modernity and modern life dimensions of developing countries are not as well as developed countries.

Also, due to the inadequacy of some concepts and theories that have been created and used in relation to the experiences of Western tourists so far, at the end of this study, I describe the concepts that were created during this research and are more relevant to Iran.

2.5. METHODOLOGY:

Experience usually is investigated in a phenomenological perspective and methodology (Strauss and Corbin. 1998: 38). Phenomenology is a qualitative methodology which

tries to find and "discover the meaning and essence of given phenomena" (Higginbottom. 2004: 12). As Geertz (1986: 373) writes, finding these meanings in the experiences is important for an ethnographer. He explained that nobody can live other people's lives, so one of the most important jobs of ethnographers is paying attention, specially to the meanings. These meanings can be discovered by listening to people, watching their actions or the images they show in their lives. So, in the phenomenological studies, subjectivity is an important point. Experience, according to Dilthey (Kazemi. 2005: 105), can be studied with perception. Perception is another keyword in experience studies. It is the act by which one mind perceives another. And this is not only the perception of the mind, but like life, it perceives life. It means that the perception of people about an event, place, thing etc. is more important than the event, place and thing itself. This is unlike positivism.

Also, as it was mentioned in the above definition, exploring of experience is one of the issues in the qualitative research. Qualitative research means any type of research that has its main findings not arrived to by statistical procedures. Anthropology is known by its qualitative methods (Strauss and Corbin. 1998: 10-11). Every qualitative research has 3 major parts: gathering the data (with various techniques), organize and interpreting of data, and finally writing reports (ibid: 11-12).

As Angrosino (2007) points out, access to reality is difficult and conditional for us ethnographers. This is related to both the nature of the field of anthropology and the complexity of human society, in which the researcher and the subject matter interact to create -relatively- reality. Therefore, it is not surprising that if another anthropologist does the same research in the same field, s/he will reach different results (p: 36). So naturally this becomes more complicated when it comes to the subject of experience. I need to point out here that my own personal experiences as a researcher have undoubtedly influenced both data collection and analysis. For example, since I have been studying nationalism and ethnocentrism in addition to tourism for several years, my analysis has been drawn in this direction, willingly or unwillingly. With this explanation, it is natural that if another Iranian anthropologist wants to research the experiences of Iranian tourists in Turkey, s/he will collect other data and provide another analysis.

For this study, the multi-sited ethnography is used for gathering data. In multi-sited ethnography, as its founder, Marcus (1995) explains, instead of a focus on a single field, there are several fields. So, the ethnographer can do a macro level study. S/he follows a thing or topic in several sites. In this study, Iranian tourist experiences in multi-sites (Istanbul, Antalya, and Konya) are investigated. Especially when these tourists return to Iran, it can be useful to examine the impacts of their experiences in Turkey.

In the multi-sited ethnography, different techniques can be used. In this study, semi-structure interviews are the most important technique for gathering data. The experience occurs to others by expression and a semi-structure interview can receive a part of these expressions. I tested his techniques at the first. For example, after a few interviews, the occurred problems were found and mostly resolved, and the other interviews were conducted better. Also, as Park and Santos (2016: 3) say, photographs are a tool for tourists to remember their experiences in a destination. So, the I asked interviewees to show or talk about their important photographs from their travel. When interviewees did it, in fact, they showed which experiences were important to them.

Also, because of personal nature of experience, investigation of the others' experiences is difficult. But as Fotiou (2010: 62) writes about tourist experience, especially in experiencing of a ritual, fieldwork and sharing the ritual space of tourists help anthropologist to understand them better in an empathic process. Even she believes that fieldwork itself is a kind of rites of passage for anthropologists. In fact, travel to a tourist destination is an intrinsic part of the tourism experience (Bruner. 2001: 883). So, besides the semi-structure interviews which inquired person expressions their experiences, participant observation –with participating in the ceremonies of Sheb-i Arous, shopping centers in Istanbul, Iranian museum tours in Istanbul, Lara beach, Kale Içi and Uall hotels in Antalya- was important in this study to understand the atmosphere of tourists who participated there.

Also, another way to participate in the Iranian tourist experience is participating in their discussions; when they are talking about Rumi and their related experiences in Konya[7], when they are talking about their daily activities in the hotel entrance halls, and even by reading discussions and comments of travelogues in the travel websites (which are

7. For instance, in the Sheb-i Arous period, it is easy to find Iranians who gather in a corner of tomb of Rumi and talk about Rumi, his poems, their previous experiences of travel to Konya etc.

explained below). An important part of the tourist conversation in a destination are their experiences there. These conversations are common, not secret and personal. This type of participation is only for observing and listening, not for participating. In other words, I participated just to hear and see the ways of sharing their experiences to each other. This is not participant observation, but rather it is participating for observation.

The Iranian tourists in Turkey, write a lot of travelogue, especially about their travel experiences in Istanbul and Antalya. Most of them are published in the *Last Second* website[8]. A lot of Iranian tourists read the travelogues about their future destinations, while some of them write their travelogues after their travel to the same destination. These travelogues can help me discover the other dimensions of tourist experiences which were neglected or remained unexpressed in the field and interviews.

Some of the interviews were recorded with participant permission and knowledge. But if they did not allow, the important notes were written in a notepad and completed immediately, after returning to the hotel, as well as the important notes in the field were written there and completed in the hotel in the same day. The recorded interviews etc. were converted to text as well.

In the second step, the gathered data was managed. For this, all the notes and texts were read. Then, categories for the data were created. At first, categories were created based on different tourist experiences and after that, categories were split and spliced where needed (Dey. 2005). If some experiences remained outside of these types, I had to be sure that the categorization was true; if not, it was edited. But if the categorization was true, it was investigated if the experiences were an exception and if they could be in another type or not.

The last interpretation of tourists' experiences occurred here, because as Bruner (1986: 10) says, there were two other interpretations in the previous steps: the first one, when the people interpret their experiences by expression, and the second one when the researcher interprets these expressions in his work. Because of nature of experience, one important practice in this step was checking the analyzed and interpreted data with the informants, especially when the I was suspicious about his perception on the expressions of the tourists. For this step, I received the telephone numbers of some of the interviewees and contacted them whenever necessary during the analyzation and

8. https://lastsecond.ir/itineraries

interpretation of data. It was on this basis that some of the interviewees became friends of me. This can increase the credibility of the study.

2.6. STATISTICAL POPULATION AND SAMPLE:

The statistical society were different in the different fields/ destinations.

Istanbul: All of the Iranian tourists who went to this city from 21 March 2019 until 3 April 2019 (Nowruz vacation[9]), were the statistical society for this field.

Antalya: All of the Iranian tourists who went to Antalya from 22 June 2019 until 5 July 2019 (part of Summer vacation), were the statistical society for this field.

Konya: All of the Iranian tourists who went to Konya from 7 December 2018 until 17 December 2018 (Sheb-i Arous period), were the statistic society of this city. Regarding to the CTK (Culture and Tourism office of Konya. 2018) 5.807 Iranian tourists went to this city at 2017.

For sampling, this study will use convenience or accidental sampling technique, which means that the participants who were readily available and easy to contact were selected. Of course, this was one of the weak points of the study, but more or less, this is the weak point of a lot of qualitative research in tourism. Also, while the quantitative methods use non-probability sampling techniques, the qualitative methods usually use probability techniques, and this has led them to become criticized (Higginbottom. 2004: 14).

The interviews and samples were ended when I reached the point of saturation. As Strauss and Corbin (1998: 212) say, theoretical Saturation means continuing gathering of data until (a) no new data emerges regarding a category, (b) the category is well developed in its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and (c) the relationships between categories are well established and validated.

9. It is Nowruz time and about 2 weeks are vacation in Iran. So most of Iranians go to domestic travel and part of them to the other country. Turkey and especially Istanbul is one of the most interested destination in this time. According to the Iranian news agencies (i.e https://goo.gl/wpxL16) in the Nowruz of 2018, more than 350.000 Iranian go to Turkey and Istanbul was their first destination.

2.7. FIELD STATEMENT AND TIME:

In general, in the study of tourist experience, the destinations are more focused on rather than the journeys (Cutler, Carmichael and Doherty. 2014), because the main experiences occurred there. The field statements and times are described in the below table:

destination	Time	Field statement
Konya	7-17 December 2018	The tomb of Rumi, Culture Park (Amphitheater for Sema), the houses of 5 and 25 (which belongs to Sufis and a lot of Iranians participate in the Sufi's ceremonies), Shams Mosque, LC Waikiki (most Iranians go there for shopping)
Istanbul	21 March until April 3 2019 (Nowruz vacation)	Istiklal street, Cevahir and Forum malls (where a lot of Iranians do their shopping), Sultan Ahmed Square (the most famous historical sites are near it and finding the Iranians who want to visit there was easy), ship tours (which is held every Nowruz).
Antalya	22 June until 5 July 2019 (Summer vacation)	Grand Hotel Lara (as a 4-star Uall hotel, always has a lot of Iranian tourists), Lara beach, Kale İçi and Mark Antalya mall (as interesting destinations by Iranians).

It should be noted that I had gone to all of these destinations for personal research in previous years, and some of the findings of that research were also used in this study. This point is made wherever those old findings are used.

2.8. RESEARCH CONSTRAINTS:

One of the problems of studying tourists is their limited time in the destination (Graburn. 2002: 20). So, this is one of the problems of the studying of tourist experiences as well (Ingram, Caruana and MacCabe. 2017). The tourists prefer to pass their time in destination in the most efficient manner. So, they do not like to lose their time answering a researcher's questions. Graburn (2002) suggests some ways to overcome this problem such as more but shorter interviews. But for finding tourist experience, the shorter interviews are not suitable. So, I had to try conducting more interviews, until enough deep interviews were obtained.

Although the short-term presence (only 10 days) of Iranians in Konya seemed to exacerbate the problem, the best interviews were conducted in that city. Without the need for multiple interviews and then extracting the best interviews from among them, the interviews were in-depth, and I achieved theoretical saturation among the interviews earlier than in other cities. This luck was due to the atmosphere of empathy among the tourists of Konya, and those who believe in Rumi's[10] advice. Therefore, they became friends very soon and most of them tried to help in this regard. Also, most of the friendships that developed between me and the interviewees were among the tourists of this city. In Turnur's (1969: 96) words –as will be described later, because the *communitas* space in Konya is strongly.

But access to Iranian tourists in Antalya was seriously difficult, due to most of Iranian tourist passing most –if not all- of their time in the Uall hotels. These kind of hotels are very expensive (their cost start from $100 for each night). Therefore, I was only able to spend two nights in one of these hotels and during breakfast, sunbathing beside of the pool, etc., conducted a number of interviews with Iranians present in that hotel. But the main purpose of attending the hotel was to observe the behaviors of Iranians there. Other interviews were conducted elsewhere in the city.

10. He is known as Rumi in the West, and Mevlana or Mevlevi in Turkey and Iran. In this study, he is generally referred to as Rumi, except where reference is made to Mevlevi's Sufi sect, Mevlevi's dervishes, Mevlana Street or Mevlana Cultural Center.

CHAPTER 3: FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION:

The tourism situation in Iran, which also includes outgoing Iranian tourists, is strongly linked to Iran's domestic and foreign policies, which are related to the prevailing ideologies (Seyfi and Hall. 2020: 502). On the one hand, after the Islamic revolution many entertainment centers in the country were closed and social restrictions on travel and leisure were imposed, especially in beach resorts, because it was thought to be contrary to the Islamic values of the ruling elite (Seyfi and Hall. 2019) and on the other hand, many Iranians face obstacles to traveling abroad (Seyfi, Hall and Kuhzadi. 2018: a). For example, after Ahmadinejad's second term in office in 2009, restrictions on foreign travel to destinations such as Thailand and Turkey increased (Mozaffari. Karimian and Mousavi. 2017: 191). Putting Turkey next to a destination like Thailand, which is generally known for its sex tourism, shows the authorities' concern about sexual freedom in Turkey. This was especially evident in the cancellation of direct flights from Tehran to Antalya. Also, during the Rouhani administration, the tripling of the exit tax[11] proposed in 2017 put a lot of pressure on outbound tourists (Seyfi and Hall. 2019). This situation, of course, led to a further boom in domestic tourism, but it still had its own problems. Zakai (2012: 48) points to the lack of specific spaces for leisure, criminal view and ambiguity on the youth subcultures, silence and uncertainty about some forms of leisure, etc., which shows some problems with domestic tourism. It also seems that Iran has not been very successful in attracting incoming tourists. Baum and O'Gorman (2010) says that issues such as anti-Israel rhetoric, Holocaust denial, dispute with the West over nuclear energy, pollution, traffic, false imprisonment, some Islamic punishments, etc. are among the factors that weaken Iran as a tourist destination.

11. Some people called "the exit fine" instead of "the exit tax". The term even reached the official media. For example, in the widely circulated newspaper "Hamshahri", a satirical note with the same name "the exit fine" was written and the receipt of such a large amount of outgoing tourists was criticized:

https://newspaper.hamshahrionline.ir/id/1354

Nevertheless, outbound tourism is still one of the middle-class behaviors in Iran. 15 years after the revolution and following the economic policies of the government of Rafsanjani, a new social class was created in the society which increased the demand for outbound trips (Seyfi and Hall. 2019). Therefore, for at least two decades, foreign travel, especially to neighboring countries, has become one of the activities of some Iranians, even if it only happens to them once a year or every few years. For example, in the year 1398 AH (which is from March 21, 2017 to March 21, 2018) more than seven million Iranians went on outbound travels (ICHTO. 2019); Although a significant proportion of them were Iranian pilgrims to Shiite shrines in Iraq.

Meanwhile, Turkey is one of the attractive destinations for Iranian tourists. Turkey attracts a large number of Iranians every year. Statistics of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism (2020) show that in 2019, more than 2.100.000 Iranian tourists visited the country and Iran was located as the fifth tourist sending country to Turkey.[12]

But why is Turkey so important to Iranian tourists? The following is an attempt to explain the most important reasons for Iranian tourists to pay attention to tourism destinations in Turkey.

3.1. WHY DO IRANIAN TOURISTS GO TO TURKEY?

Turkey, as one of the main destinations of outbound tourism for Iranians, attracts many tourists every year. The first question is why do so many Iranians go to Turkey every year? The answer is both simple and difficult. It is difficult because it is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon. And it's simple because:

1- Turkey is a neighboring country with several direct flights between the two countries every day (sometimes up to 30 flights a day). Turkish Airlines, Pegasus, Atlas Global, etc. from Turkey, and Mahan, Aseman, Ata, Zagros, Meraj, etc. from Iran have their daily flights on this route. There are also several busses and one train a week between the two countries. To these must be added tourists who simply drive across the border

12. 2019 Yılı Sınır Giriş-Çıkış İstatistikleri, accessed at 2021.01.04: https://yigm.ktb.gov.tr/Eklenti/72101,sinir-istatistikleri-2019xlsxxlsx.xlsx?0

and from cities near and far from Turkey in their private cars. Therefore, access to Turkey is very easy for Iranians.

2. Turkey is still Iran's most stable neighbor, despite some events such as the 2016 coup or some bombings in previous years. This stability, as will be shown later, includes not only political stability, but also the stability of behavior with tourists. Among Iran's neighbors, its eastern neighbors (Afghanistan and Pakistan) have poor security conditions, and there are less tourists that even think of traveling to these countries. The northeastern neighbor (Turkmenistan) has kept its gates closed to tourists for years. Obtaining a Turkmenistan visa is very difficult not only for Iranians, but also for citizens of European countries. Azerbaijan and Armenia in northwestern Iran are some of Iranians' favorite destinations, but not as much as Turkey is. Apart from three decades of military conflict between the two countries, there are restrictions for Iranian tourists to travel there. For example, if an Armenian visa is found in the passport of someone wishing to travel to Azerbaijan, it will be difficult for her/him to enter Azerbaijan. The same process is seen for tourists who have Azerbaijani visas and want to go to Armenia. On the other hand, receiving bribes from Iranian tourists is a trivial matter for many border and customs officers and police officers of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The bitter memories of many Iranian tourists who have traveled to this country can be read in their travelogues that are available in cyberspace. Iraq, as Iran's only western neighbor, receives millions of Iranian pilgrims annually, but their sense of security is low during the trip, and of course it is the only Iranian pilgrimage destination and not a recreational destination. Moreover, the possibility of traveling to this country has been provided to Iranians for only a few years. The United Arab Emirates, led by Dubai, is another destination for Iranian tourists, but following the dispute between Iran and the Arab world, there have been reports of many harsh and sometimes offensive treatment to Iranian tourists in the country.

3- Turkey is the only country that did not and does not ask for visas from Iranians. Some of Iran's neighbors have cut ties with Iran for years, and fewer Iranian tourists go there. Others have had political ties with Iran, but the visa problem has continued to act as a deterrent. Some have visas for Iranians in a state of fear and hope; Sometimes they want to and sometimes they don't. Meanwhile, Turkey never required a visa for Iranian

citizens since about ninety years ago (after Reza Shah Pahlavi agreed with Ataturk). In recent years, the political and economic conditions have been getting worse, some of the countries that did not require a visa from Iranians before started requiring a visa after large surges of Iranian refugees entered them. Serbia was the last one that canceled its visa for Iranian tourist in 2018, a lot of Iranians went there as tourists, but stayed as refugees. A comment under the travelogue of Mr. Traveler (2018) described it in short: *"going to Belgrade is finished for us, but Turkey accepts us yet, with an open hug".*

So far, these few factors have shown that one of the reasons many Iranians travel to Turkey is the lack of options for Iranians. Travel to neighboring countries is one of the easiest and best options for foreign travel for anyone. In two interviews (no. 25 and 26 in Istanbul) when I asked the Iranian tourists why they chose Istanbul as their tourist destination, they answered *"because Antalya is cold now"*. It means that foreign destination is limited to a few cities in Turkey and they had to choose among them. And in the meantime, Turkey has a position that many Iranians can count on.

4. Turkey is the only country among Iran's neighbors that has been planning to develop its tourism for nearly four decades and has a roadmap for the future of this industry in its country based on the strategies it formulates. An example is the strategy developed in 2007 to achieve $50 billion in tourism revenue by 2023 (Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism. 2007). Therefore, integrated and coordinated marketing, attention to the capabilities of tourist markets, attention to the needs of tourists from both Muslim and non-Muslim countries, expansion of tourism infrastructure (such as airports, airlines, hotels, restaurants, etc.), attention to and maintenance of natural attractions, inclusion of the history of tourism and many other programs in its programs. All this attention has increased the feeling of satisfaction of Iranian tourists and has helped the prosperity of the tourism market in this country (Ozturk et al. 2017).

5- Turkey's soft power is expanding in the region, including Iran. Many Iranians are now serious fans of Turkish series and movies. As many Iranians have been listeners and fans of Turkish music and singers for many years. Part of this is due to Turkey's serious planning and activities in this area, i.e. the expansion of its cultural influence in the region; But in the other hand, it is related to the weakness and vacuum caused by restrictions and censorship in the production of works of art in Iran. As Keddie (2004)

points out, Western and Iranian pop music was banned after the Islamic revolution. So, there was a vacuum in this area. To fill this gap, Iranians generally turned to illegal satellites, which either broadcast the banned Los Angeles music (Los Angeles Iranians) or, more recently, Turkish films and series. In these series, the Iranian viewer will inevitably get acquainted with some of the tourist attractions of Turkey. For example, as will be mentioned in the Istanbul section, the broadcast of the series "Muhteşem Yüzyıl" made many Iranians interested in visiting Topkapi Palace. Turkish officials are also familiar with the situation, and so in the run-up to public holidays in Iran, such as Nowruz, they are increasing publicity in the TV channels to visit these attractions and even lesser-known attractions.[13]

In addition to Turkish films, series and music, books published about Turkey should also be mentioned, which play a significant role in attracting Iranian tourists. For example, the book *"The Forty Rules of Love"* (Elif Şafak. 2009) was not only mentioned in the Konya interviews as one of the incentives to travel to this city, but also some travel agencies have realized this connection, and for example, Tabriz Tidagasht Agency, in an advertisement on 18 September 2019 on its Telegram channel, mentioned the gifting a volume of this novel as part of its Konya tour services. While the circulation of the books in Iran is on average 500 copies and sometimes books with a circulation of less than one hundred copies are published, it is estimated that the legal publication of the translation of the book *"The Forty Rules of Love"* in Iran by 18 publishers was over 500,000 copies until two years ago (2019). The black market has also published many illegal copies of it, and that exact number cannot be obtained.[14] Also as another example at the meeting to review the Persian translation of the novel *"Istanbul, Istanbul"* (Burhan Sonmez. 2015), Moghanloo (in Asadzadeh. 2018), director

13. For example, the Persian section of Turkish TV promotes Istanbul factories just during Nowruz 2019.

https://www.trt.net.tr/persian/lmy-frhngy-w-hnry/2019/03/21/khkh-mwzhhy-stnbwl-sfry-bh-trykh-trkhyh-1168247

14. "Will the record of the "Nation of Love" be broken?" at: https://plus.irna.ir/news/83354137 This book is known in Iran as the "Nation of Love". There are two possible reasons for the popularity of such a book in Iran: first, knowing Rumi as Iranian and therefore being interested in a book that has been published about his life; And second, the growing tendency of Iranians towards mysticism to which this novel is related. It was after this book that Elif Şafak came to the attention of Iranians and the rest of her books became popular.

of Shurafarin Publishing House and publisher of the Persian translation of the novel, says:

> In my opinion, and based on what I have seen over the years in movies and fiction books, there is a macro-cultural approach to the city of Istanbul in order to establish its position as an attractive city with high fiction potential, both in cinema and in literature; And of course this is a calculated and good cultural policy that has worked.

All this shows that due to the calculated cultural policies of Turkey on the one hand, and the anti-cultural policies of the Islamic Republic on the other hand, the popular Turkish cultural goods in Iran have been able to make Iranians interested in traveling to Turkey.

6- Turkey is located to the west of Iran. At least for the past century and a half, Iranians have always looked to the West rather than the East; And this is despite the fact that most of Iran's cultural and historical relations are with the eastern lands rather than the west. Of course, it is not only the "Westernity" of this land that matters, because Iraq is also in the west of Iran. The important thing is that Turkey has been the gateway for the West to Iran for a century and a half. Many Iranians have become acquainted with the West through Turkey. Our intellectuals have always had a view of Turkey. Even the process of westernization of Iran during the reign of Reza Shah was based on its Turkish model. So, a travel to Turkey is a gateway to a travel to the West. Especially since Istanbul, which is the main destination of Iranian tourists, most of its buildings and tourist attractions are located in the European part of the city.[15]

7- Many Iranians have immigrated to Turkey in recent years. Some are looking to become citizens of this country by buying a house or want to spend at least part of their time (like summer vacation) in Turkey. Others go to this country as refugees. These refugees usually stay in Turkey for a few years before the UNHCR finally (if accepted)

15. Of course, this is only one side of the story. The other side of the story is that since 200 years ago, many princes (such as Abbas Mirza), Iranian intellectuals (such as Adamiyat. 1983: 159; Haeri. 1999: 475) and even non-Iranian intellectuals (such as Murray. 1823; Freigan. 1812, quoting Adamiyat 1983: 160), consider the Ottomans and Turkey as an obstacle to Iran's relations with Europe, and believe that if it was not for this, Iran would have a direct relationship with Europe (as in the period Before Islam, the Achaemenids was a direct neighbor of Greece, and later the Parthians and Sassanids were neighbors of Rome), Iran was developing more rapidly.

sends them to a European or American country. Or, like some Azeris[16] who advocate for ethnic divisions, they choose Turkey as their place of residence. In 2010, more than 500,000 Iranians lived in Turkey. At the same time, in 2010, a total of about 5 million Iranians lived in other countries (Etemadar. 2018). In other words, 10% of Iranians living in other countries have chosen Turkey as their place of residence. Given the significant increase of home purchase in Turkey by Iranians in recent years, it can be assumed that this figure has increased significantly. According to a new report published in the first days of 2021 (Dunya-e-Eqtesad newspaper. January 16, 2021), in the first 9 months of 2020, Iranians bought 6445 houses in Turkey, that is 18% of the total number of houses bought by foreigners in Turkey and Iranians have taken the first place for house buyers in Turkey. This is more than eight times higher than three years ago. In 2017, Iranians bought a total of 792 houses in Turkey.[17]

In fact, unlike the previous generation of Iranian immigration to Turkey, which began after the 1979 revolution, saw Turkey more as a short-term destination on their way to Europe, or returning to the country to make fundamental changes in government, the new generation of immigrants to Turkey, who have several characteristics of not being political, seeking individual freedoms and escaping the economic crisis in Iran, see Turkey as a place to live. Especially in recent years, Turkey has become very different from the insecure Turkey of decades ago. So now in many neighborhoods of major cities in Turkey, you can see Iranian shops and restaurants and companies that provide services in Persian to their compatriots in Turkey.

Of course, throughout history, immigration between Iran and Turkey / Ottoman was more of a two-way relationship than a one-way one. From fugitive princes fleeing to another land that was generally hostile to long wars, to poets and thinkers. For example,

16. In this study, conventionally, wherever we use the term "Azeri", we mean Iranian Turkish Azeris, which we call Azeri for short. It should be noted that there is a lot of controversy over this word in Iran. The official media, nationalists and a significant number of Azeris in Iran use the word Azeri to refer to this group and avoid using the word Turk. On the other hand, many members of this group, and at the head of them, the proponents of ethnicists, consider themselves Turks and consider the attribution of the Azeri word to themselves as an attempt to separate them from their Turkish identity and "theTurk World". Being aware of this and without the purpose of entering into this controversy, the researcher here refers to the Iranian Azeri Turks only as Azeris, in order to separate this group of people from the Turkish citizens who have been mentioned a lot in this study.

17. https://b2n.ir/034642

even before the coming to power of Shah Ismail Safavid, many of the followers of this family left Anatolia for Azerbaijan land of Iran and settled in this land. In Ardabil, for example, at that time, there was a neighborhood called the "Rumi" whose inhabitants were all Anatolian immigrants (Reis Nia. 2000: 19-20). However, during that period, most of the migrations from Iran to the Ottoman lands were more than vice versa. One of the reasons for this can be considered the prevalence of Persian as a common literary language in the court of the Roman Seljuks and then the Ottomans. Therefore, it is natural that the Roman Seljuks and their successor, the Ottomans, also use Iranian culture and Persian literature in their courts. Thus, many Iranian poets, writers, and artists traveled to the Ottoman lands (Aydin. 2006). Also, in the late Qajar period, Istanbul was the base of Iranian critics of the Qajar government and Persian newspapers were published there (Abrahamian. 2008: 81-87). During his embassy in Turkey (from 1928 to 1930), Foroughi spoke of the presence of several thousand Iranians in this country, whose affairs need more attention from the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Foroughi, 2008: 49). Of course, at the same time and in the first years of the Republic government in Turkey, this country also had citizens in Iran who had settled mostly for business. For example, in the census of 1933, it was found that 33 Turkish citizens live in Mashhad (Saleh Mirzaei. 2003: 33). However, their number was much smaller than the number of Iranians going to the Ottoman Empire / Turkey. This is interesting as all of the last six kings of Iran (Nasser al-Din Shah, Muzaffar al-Din Shah, Mohammad Ali Shah and Ahmad Shah of the Qajar dynasty, and Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah of the Pahlavi dynasty) have traveled to the Ottoman Empire / Turkey (Naser Al-Din Shah. 1983; Muzaffar Al-Din Shah. 1984).

Immigration of Iranians to other countries, especially Turkey, has increased so much in recent years that there is now a lot of talk in social media, even among some officials, that "all Iranians are leaving the country".[18] "More than 43% of Iranians are thinking of migrating from Iran [...] Clearly, the immigration discourse is a common discourse in the country. Something that may not be a issue in another country and has no discourse value" (Arabestani. 2018: 16 and 56). This significant number of Iranians living in Turkey, both for permanent and short-term life, also attracts many tourists. Dwyer et al. (2014) show that relatives and friends of those who have immigrated to another country

18. But the “Immigration Observatory” opposes this view, believing that there is not as much migration from Iran as they say. https://t.ly/zbdmk

travel to visit them. In this way, part of their cost (for accommodation) is reduced. In the findings of this chapter, we encounter such cases.

8- Travel to Turkey is “foreign travel”. Basically, foreign travel is a kind of prestige for tourists. As one of the tourists from Antalya mentioned. This 34-year-old woman says:

> For some, outbound traveling is like kind being high class for some people, so they start asking each other where you are going this year [summer]. If you do not, it will come as a surprise to them.

This phenomenon was well illustrated in a comedy series. In the Hayoula (Monster) comedy series, which was the most watched TV series in Iran in 2019, the Chemchareh family regularly bragged to others about their travel to Istanbul and staying at the five-star hotel near Dolmabahce Palace. Graburn (1989: 22) points out that tourism is commonplace today, and that those who do not travel are considered unusual. He points out that if a healthy adult does not travel, he is labeled with words such as proud, hippie, lazy, etc. For many family, friends and acquaintances, traveling abroad is a major need. Going to Turkey as an outbound travel destination is a pleasure (not a pilgrimage). A big part of Iranian society is able to go on such a journey. For many Iranians, it is not possible to go to the Bali or Canary Islands for relaxation and nature, or to France and Spain to see cultural and historical attractions. But going to the islands and shores of the Mediterranean, or visiting the monuments and cultural centers of Turkey, is easily accessible. The cost of European travel for Iranians, except for the hassle of getting a visa, etc., depending on the travel facilities, is more than $1.000. While travel to Istanbul can be provided with travel packages under $200.

9- The cheapness of hotels and the abundance of charter flights to Turkey make some of these tours cheaper than similar Iranian domestic tours. For example, a two-night and three-day travel package for Kish Island is more expensive than the same travel package for Istanbul. This point was shown in many interviews and travelogues of Iranians from Turkey.

10- Beside of traveling to Turkey, a significant number of Iranian tourists also shop. Some Turkish goods have gained a lot of fans in the Iranian market in recent years, and therefore Iranian tourists reach two goals at the same time: both traveling and shopping. Turkish clothing is popular in Iran, and most Iranians who travel to Turkey buy a

significant amount of clothing and bring them to Iran. One of the main places to interview Iranian tourists in Istanbul and Antalya, was in front of clothing stores.

11- Among other facilities, many hotels in Turkey (such as the five-star hotels in Antalya), as well as large shopping malls in this country, have a section for children. This section, depending on whether it is in a hotel or a shopping center or other leisure and tourism centers, has facilities for entertaining children so that parents can easily go for walks, shopping, or other entertainment. For example, on the ground floor of many large shopping malls, there is a space in the entrance hall that is full of toys, large dolls, white boards, etc., along with full-time educators who take care of children and play with them, small electric locomotives that children ride on and take a tour around in the corridors and halls, and so on. Of course, parents often stand nearby and watch their children rejoice. But these facilities, especially in hotels, are a place where children can be left to the educators for half a day or a whole day, and they can leave with ease for shopping or swimming or rafting tours, etc. As Pierce (2005) writes, the satisfaction of parents in travel depends to a large extent on the satisfaction of children (p: 29).

12- Turkey has a very high diversity of tourist attractions. Fewer tourists go to this country (or any other tourist destination) just to visit one type of attraction. In Turkey, Iranian tourists can shop (especially Turkish clothing, which is very popular in Iran), enjoy the Mediterranean climate, attend that part of Persian concerts that are illegal in Iran, stay in cheap five-star hotels, visit historical monuments etc. Many studies show that a small number of tourists pay attention to only one specific area of the product and most of them are looking for several attractions at the same time (Ibid: 42).

13- Iranian tourists in Turkey can have experiences beyond the cultural and social limitations in Iran. Contrary to many Iranians' assumptions about Turkey and about Iranians who go to Turkey, these experiences do not necessarily mean sexual freedom, and the sexual behavior of Iranian tourists in Turkey is a part of very few tourist experiences. As most Iranians travel to this country with their families, it is naturally not possible for them to seek sexual diversity. Experiences beyond the cultural and social limitations in Iran mean for many Iranian women tourists wear the same hijab in Turkey as they do on the streets of Tehran and other cities, with the difference being that in Turkey no one tells them why their scarves do not completely cover all their hair

or why their coat does not reach their knees. These experiences can be seen the carefree presence in the concerts of great Iranian musicians such as Shajarian, Nazeri, Alizadeh, Keyhan Kalhor, etc. Their concerts are often canceled in Iran. A tourist seeks to experience things that are not possible in their region and country (Van Den Berghe and Keyes. 1984: 344-5). Hofstede's (2010) last value dimension is extravagance against self-control. Here as well, Iran ranks 53rd out of 93 countries, indicating that its culture is slightly inclined to self-control (p: 283). Restraints prevent the free gratification of their desires, which is usually due to extreme social attitudes and controls. Most countries in South America and Western Europe are extravagant, while most Muslim countries, Eastern Europe and Eastern Asia are self-controlled. One of the characteristics that Hofstede considers for self-control cultures (such as Iran) is the low importance of leisure time (Ibid: 291). Iranians going to Turkey can both escape this restraint and give more importance to their leisure time. This notion was also confirmed by research conducted on Iranian tourists. According to Mahmoud Alilou, Razmi and Nemati (2009) excitement among Iranian tourists (who traveled for at least two one-week trips each year for five consecutive years) and non-tourist Iranians (who had no or very little travel plans), Iranian tourists scored higher. They gained excitement, extraversion and openness to [new] experiences. Travel and excursions for these people provide the possibility of creating excitement through new experiences in lands other than the home environment. In such environments, tourists are even more likely to be extroverted and show their excitement.

14- It should be noted that the experiences beyond the social and cultural limitations of Iranian tourists in Turkey are not only the ones mentioned above. For some it can be swimming with their spouse, but in the mixed pools of hotels, sitting and drinking with family in bars; clapping and dancing at the Los Angeles Iranian artists' concerts, and for a significant group, it can be walking the streets, the beach and the other public places at nights, that are generally closed or secluded at the beginning of the night in Iran. Simmel (quoted in Pierce, 2010: 51) discusses the stranger moving to a different role. If we apply this role to the tourist, s/he can reveal the most astonishing revelations and secrets that indicate issues that have long been hidden from view. Turkey allows a group of Iranian tourists to show these amazing revelations of their secrets away from the eyes of their compatriots.

15- Finally, in addition to the above factors, the language and cultural closeness of the Azeris with Turkey should also be mentioned as an important factor. A lot of Azeris come to Turkey as tourists every year. Turkey, as several Azeri respondents have pointed out, is a good destination for them due to their linguistic proximity. During his many years of living in Turkey, I have seen many times that Turks while dealing with Azeris, say things like: *"Do not feel homeless here for a while. This is your country, too."* or *"This is the country of the Turks. You are a Turk and we are Turk"*. This approach makes Azeris really feel good about being in Turkey.

At the end of this detailed introduction about the reasons for Iranians traveling to Turkey, it is necessary to give a very general explanation about the situation of these two countries so that the reader is familiar with the general atmosphere of the tourist sender country and the tourist destination country.

With an area of 1,648,195 square kilometers, Iran has more than twice the area of Turkey (783,562). But the population of the two countries is close to each other and is almost 83 million (World Bank. 2020). Until the beginning of the 21st century, Iran's economic situation was better than that of Turkey. But since 2004, Turkey has had a better economy. In 2019, based on the Purchasing power parity index, Iran is the 22nd largest economy in the world and Turkey is the 13th largest economy (World Bank. 2019). Also, while the Iranian political system became an Islamic Republic after the revolution, the Turkish political system is a secular republic. However, after the AKP came to power, Islamic programs in the country expanded and some behaviors that go against Islamicnorms (such as brothels) were stopped. Both countries are Muslim, but most Iranians are Shiites and most Turks are Hanafi Sunnis. After the revolution, Iranian law was rewritten based on Shiite jurisprudence, and so many cultural and social restrictions were imposed on people's lives. For example, producing or buying and selling alcohol, bar and cassino, dancing in public places, women singing, showing musical instruments on TV, the relationship between a non-mahram (for example, shaking hands between a boy and a girl and even sitting together), women's cycling, etc. is prohibited in Iran. While none of these behaviors are prohibited in Turkey. Also, Iran's international relations became very limited after the revolution and the country is

generally in isolation; While Turkey has extensive relations with the West and is part of the NATO alliance and has been trying to join the European Union for years.

As shown in the following pages, the difference in the above conditions in Iran and Turkey is one of the factors that attract many Iranians to Turkey as tourists.

In the following pages, more specialized explanations will be given about the experiences of Iranian tourists in the three destinations of Istanbul, Antalya and Konya, respectively the number of Iranian tourists there.

3.2. PART ISTANBUL

«We Orientals each have our own Istanbul» (Asadzadeh. 2018).

Introduction:

Nowruz in Iran starts from March 21st and finish on April 2nd. But the Nowruz holiday in general is longer. 20th of March is the "Nationalization of Iranian Oil Industry" and is also a holiday. The year 2019 (which I did fieldwork in Istanbul) the last day of Nowruz was on a Tuesday, so because the weekend in Iran is on Thursday and Friday, Wednesday became vacation too. Overall, this year's Nowruz vacation was 18 days. A lot of Iranians came to Turkey and especially Istanbul in this vacation and I was there at the time.

I looked at Iranian travelogues of Istanbul and noted the important points in order to check them on the field or complete with interviews. I also checked internet websites to find which hotels are suggested by the travel agencies to the Iranian tourists, in order to be near them.

At 17:20 on 2019 March 14th in the LastSecond website –the most popular and the most visited last second tours website- there were 72 different tours to Istanbul by the tour agencies in Tehran. It means that there were a lot of tours from the other cities in Iran, but because most of them contributed with Tehranian tour agencies and presented the same tours, I neglected them. These tours had different prices, based on the number of days, date of travel to Turkey and back, hotel grade, hotel distance to the Taksim Square, airlines etc. The prices started from 2.390.000 Tomans (around $184 at the time) up to 20 million Toman (around $1538 at the time). The cheapest tour was three nights in a 2-star hotel with Qeshm Airlines on 19-22 March. The price of the tours that were on March 21st (Nowruz day) were cheaper, because almost all Iranians prefer to be at their home or their paternal home the instant the New Year begins. Majority of Iranians start their travel after the first day of Nowruz.

The most expensive tour was 8 nights with Pegasus Airlines, 4 nights in a single room of a 4-star hotel in Istanbul and 4 nights in the single room in a 5 star hotel in Antalya. Of course, each of these tours could be chosen in another condition with a different price. For example, the most expensive tour (20 million Tomans) was accessible with 7.300.000 Tomans in a double room in a 3-star hotel.

But even the cheapest tour is expensive for Iranians, in general. After the new sanctions by USA, the value of Iran's currency fell too much. So, while the minimum wage of an Iranian worker was 1.111.269 Toman[19] (around 86 $ at the time) the cheapest tour to Istanbul is double that.

3.2.1. Fieldwork (Participant Observation and Interviews)

At Wednesday 20th of March 2019, I went to Istanbul from Ankara and arrived there at noon. Because most Iranian tourists stay in the hotels around Taksim Square and Istiklal street, I stayed there too. 3 nights in a cheap hotel and 11 nights in a pension. In general, I was going out at 9:00 and going to Istiklal street, Javahir shopping center, Topkapi Palace and Ayasofya[20] museum. These were the places where the Iranian tourist were always visible. Around 14:00 or 15:00 o'clock I returned to my hotel/pension and rested for 2-3 hours. I was going out again at 17:00 or 18:00 o'clock and was walking in the Istiklal street or sitting in the Iranian restaurants, cafeterias, or discos. At 24:00 until 03:00 I returned to my hotel/pension again. In the last days, I also participated in a few tours with Iranians.

In the evening of the 4th of April, one day after the last day of Nowruz vacation, when most of the Iranian tourists went back to Iran, I returned to Ankara. Of course, there were a significant number of Iranians in Istanbul still, but because of the costs and more importantly because of theoretical saturation, I decided to return.

19. https://www.isna.ir/news/97012609159

20. Hagia Sophia which I use its Turkish name in this dissertation, because it is known by Ayasofya by Iranian tourists, too.

PS: due to lack of time and budget, I used two of the reports of my participant observations that I made 3 years ago in Istanbul during the Nowruz vacation; one of them is participating in an Iranian tour in Topkapi Palace and another a night ship tour on the Bosporus. As it was noted before, I went to Istanbul for personal research in previous years, and some of the findings of that research were also used in this study. This point is made wherever those old findings are used.

Some informants helped me on the field, especially, Ramin, an Iranian Turkmen who was selling tours or finding hotels for Iranian tourists in Istanbul. He has been working for several years in Istiklal street and knows a lot about Iranian tourists. He introduced me to some Iranian restaurants and hostels on Istiklal street.

In total, I conducted more than 70 interviews with the Iranian tourists in Istanbul. But only 58 of them were useful. Because of the fieldwork license by the migration office of Istanbul, I had no permission to record interviews (it was noted in the license unfortunately), so I interviewed with them while I noted their important points and immediately after that I tried to repeat their speech (while looking at the notes) and recorded their words using my voice. Although I tried to record all parts of the interviews, it is only naturally that it was not perfect, and I made mistakes. At certain parts I may have also forgotten some points.[21]

Two interviewees expected me to be an influencer more than a researcher; in interview number 13, the interviewee said to me: *"you, as a sociologist [anthropologist], must explain to the Iranians that why it is necessary to come and see Istanbul".* Also, in interview no. 17, the interviewee said:

> *You [as a social researcher] must convince the Iranians that their protests must be civil and calm, like boycotting the purchase of poor quality and expensive products, so the government will change its behavior and Iran would be like Turkey.*

All the interviews were done in these places:

21. For example, in interview no. 53, the interviewee said there are only two things in Istanbul that there are none of in Iran and the Iranians come to Istanbul because of them. One of them is freedom, but I forgot the second thing, because I could not note it in the interview.

1. In front of toggeries (especially Cotton and LC Waikiki) in Istiklal street and Javahir shopping center. Usually, women went into the stores and men, who were not interested were waiting for them in front of the stores. So, it was only a few minutes to talk with them. The problem was that sometimes their wives called them to ask their opinion about something and their return took a long time, and it was possible to return outside with their wives after finishing shopping; so, they had no more time to continue their half-finished abandoned interviews. So, I tried to finish the interview in a short time, to be sure.
2. The entrance queue to Ayasofya and Topkapi. In these queues everyone waited for 10-20 minutes. So, while they moved slowly with the queue, I was interviewing them.
3. A few interviews done in the ships, Istiklal street (while we were walking) etc.

Unlike in Konya, the tendency to accept the interviews was very low and a lot of Iranians rejected my request for interview. In the first two or three days, I started my request in this way: “Excuse me, may I take a few minutes of your time?” and when they asked “Why?” I explained I need their opinions of their travels Istanbul for my thesis. A lot of the tourists rejected my initial requests. So, I changed my technique and after that started in this manner: “Hi. I am a PhD student in Ankara, and I am working on my thesis on Iranian tourists in Turkey. If there is no problem, help me with your answers to my questions in 5-10 minutes, while you sit here / are moving in the queue forward”. The impact of these new sentences was wonderful and more of them accepted my request. Perhaps because I deleted the possibility of negative thought in the first "May I take a few minutes" question. Because there are a lot of Iranians in Istanbul who sell tour packages, concert tickets etc. importunately. Also, some Iranians constantly attempt to defraud other Iranians for investments, jobs, citizenship or having them buy a house in Turkey. I talked with two such fooled Iranians among my fieldwork in Istanbul. One of them did not even have money to go back to Iran. So, Iranians in Istanbul usually do not trust others when they do not know them. In the new sentences, I emphasized that I am not taking their important time, but we are simply using up the time spent queue or in front of stores. Finally, perhaps they probably just thought they can participate in a scientific activity.

Most interviews in Istanbul were done with men, because: 1- the opportunity with men was much higher than women. There were almost always men waiting for their wives in front of stores and I only once found a woman who was waiting for her family in front of a clothing store. 2- in the queue of historical museums, the families were together, so I usually was starting my questions with the men, because I was worried about their sensitivity to strangers approaching the women of their family. Although Iran is the most secular community in the Middle East (Keddie. 2003), the patriarchy and men's jealousy are powerful. I think if I had a female colleague, I would have certainly gotten better results. But between the interviews, I was trying to involve the women in the conversation with asking their opinions. This method sometimes had very good results. For example, when talking to interviewee No.5, I started with the man of the family. A couple of about 30 years old. But from the beginning, the wife was very active in the interview, and she answered almost all the questions, and the husband only sometimes said something to confirm or supplement what his wife had said. But sometimes this method was not effective. For example, as soon as I started talking to interviewee No. 3 (45-year-old man) in the queue of Ayasofya, his wife and 17-18 aged daughter, moved about a meter away from us and openly determined their border with the interviewer. Also, sometimes the women were starting and answering almost all of questions, but usually they were saying their opinions to confirm, complete or reject of the men's answers. 16 interviews were done with participating men and women, sometimes men answered more and sometimes women answered more. In some of the interviews, they were suggesting one of their family/ group and saying, "ask him/her" or "you answer the questions".

Also the average interview in Istanbul was 5-10 minutes. In Istanbul, the Iranian tourists are in a hurry, from this store to another, from this museum to another. They did not have enough time to stay still for a complete or long interview. As it was mentioned in the proposal, this is a problem in tourism studies, but as Graburn shows (2002: 20), the negative impacts of the short time for interviews with tourists reduces with more interviews. So instead of a smaller number of longer interviews, 58 shorter interviews

were done in Istanbul. The information from the interviews was completed with the detailed travelogues[22].

No	Gender	age	Education	Job	with	with	from	Time	Days
1	M	45	PhD	Professor/ builder	Family	Their self	Tabriz	Every 2 years	----
2	m/f	26/24	Bachelor	---	Each other	Tour	Khuzestan	First	5
3	M	45	Master	Employee	Family	Tour	Tehran	second	5
4	m/f	24/18	bachelor/ Diploma	Student	Family	Tour	Tehran	Some 1 some 2	6
5	F	30	---	---	Family	Tour	Bushehr	First	6
6	M	57	Diploma	Tradesman	Family	Their self	Tehran / Azari	First/ others2	10
7	M	35	bachelor	Tradesman	Friend	their self	Mazandaran?	First	7
8	M	24-5	Master	Student	Family	Tour	Mashhad	First/ some others 2	---
9	m/f	47/45	---	Engineer/ midwife	Each other	---	Isfahan	second	---
10	M	30	Bachelor	Tradesman	Family	Tour	Lorestan	second	---
11	f/f	27/50	Bachelor	Accountants /restaurant	Friends	Tour	Spain/ France	First	7
12	m/f	30/26	Master/?	Bank employee /?	Each other	Tour	South of Iran	First	4
13	m/ a little f	30-35	---	Computer engineer	Each other	their self	---	First	4
14	M	40	---	Businessman	Family	---	Tunes/ Iran	First	4
15	M	29	bachelor	Tradesman	Family	Igdir Tour	Ardebil	First	---
16	m/f	60	Bachelor/ PhD	Retired	Family	their self	Tehran / USA	First	---
17	M	54	PhD	Surgeon	Family	Car	Tabriz	First	
18	M	35-40	---	---	Family	---	---	First	---
19	M	45	Associate Degree	Tradesman	Family	Car	Tabriz	Third	3-4
20	M	45	Master	Builder	Family	Tour	Chalous	First	---
21	M	38	bachelor	Accountants	Family	Tour	---	First	7
22	M	44	bachelor	Tradesman	Family	Tour	---	Third	5
23	M	32	Bachelor	Builder	Family	Car	Tabriz/ Ukraine	First	2, then Izmir
24	m/f	35/31	PhD/ Master	Both student and builder	Each other	Tour	Mashhad	first	---
25	M	37	Master	Bank employee	4 men friends	Tour	Najaf Abad	first	5
26	m/f	28/23	Master/	Tooth Lab	Each other	Tour	Isfahan	First	4

22. The form of interview is attached.

			bachelor	/student					
27	m/f	40/ ?	bachelor	Employee/ unemployed	Family	---	Germa ny	First	4
28	m/f	60-65	---	Retired	Family	their self	Iran/ USA	Second	---
29	M	25	PhD	Student	Family	their self	Britain / Iran	first	4
30	M	31	Master	Tradesman	Family	their self	Ardebi l	First	---
31	M	51	---	Employee	Family	---	Tehran	Second	6
32	M	55	---	---	Family	Their self	Tehran	Several	much
33	M	35-40	---	Employee	Family	Tour	Isfahan	Third	5
34	M	40-45	---	---	Family	Tour	---	First	---
35	M	40-45	Bachelor	Tradesman	Family	Tour	Tehran	---	7
36	M	35	---	---	3friends	Their self	Canad a/ Iran	Second	---
37	M	50-55	---	Employee	Family	---	Tabriz	First	---
38	m/f	33/ ?	Master/ ?	Employee	Family	---	Tehran	Second	---
39	M	40	---	---	Family	---	Ardebi l	First	---
40	m/f	39/34	PhD/ Master	---	Family	Their self	Canad a	First	---
41	m/f	43/?	PhD/ PhD	Doctor/ Doctor	Family	Tour	Khuze stan	---	---
42	F	40-45	---	---	Family	Herself	Austral ia	First	7
43	M	35	bachelor	---	Family	---	Europe / Iran	Forth	---
44	m/m/m	35-55	---	---	Family	Tour	---	Third	6
45	m/ m	40/55	bachelor	Tradesman	Family	Tour	Isfahan	Second	---
46	m/m	32/73	---	?/bachelor	Family	Tour	---	First	---
47	m/f	23/23	Master	Teacher	Family	Tour	---	First/ second	5
48	m/f	22/22	bachelor	Student and businessman	Family	Their self	Mashh ad	First	5
49	m/f	37-8	bachelor	Employee	Family	Their self	Tehran	Third	6
50	m/f	30/25	---	Employee	Family	Their self	Tabriz	First	10
51	M	40	bachelor	Tradesman	Family	----	Mashh ad	Third	---
52	m/m/f	32/28 /24	PhD 3	Student 3	Family	Tour	Austral ia /Iran	First	5
53	M	30	Master	Employee	Family	Their self	Tehran / Mazan daran	First	10
54	M	30 ?	---	Unemployed	Friends	Their self	Karaj	Fifth	15
55	m/m/f	35-40	Bachelor and master	Unemployed	Family friends	Their self	Nederl and. Tehran	Several	13
56	M	33	PhD	Student	alone	Tour	Tehran	First	3

3.2.2. Documentary Data (Travelogues)

Similar to the Iranian's frequent travel to Istanbul, their travelogues are considerable, too. There are even tens of Iranian travelogues to Istanbul from the Qajar period (1789-1925) (Isfahani.1802 (1994); Garmroudi. 1838 (1968); Farhad Mirza Qajar. 1875 (1987); Afshar. 1882 (2007); Farahani. 1885 (1983); Emad Al-Saltaneh. 1887 (2004); Nasser Al-Din Shah Qajar. 1888 (1983); Muzaffar Al-Din Shah Qajar. 1899 (1984); Mousavi. 1899 (2013); Hosseini. 1899 (2008); Sayyah. 1904 (2008); Vazir Vazayef. 1904 (2000)). As it was shown, two of the Iranian Qajar kings (Nasser Al-Din Shah and Muzaffar Al-Din Shah) traveled to Istanbul and wrote their travelogues about it.

At that period, Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire capital were like a bridge that gave Iranians access to Europe, which Iranians saw as more developed than Iran and they wanted to find the mystery to its advancement and reach it. However, Istanbul did not develop as well as Europe, but in comparison to Tehran it was more developed than anything the Iranians knew and they saw a lot of industrial phenomena in Istanbul, for the first time. Tabatabai (2001) believes that during the Qajar period, travel writers became Iranian thinkers. That is, the same mission that was placed on the shoulders of the Sufis after the Mongol invasion[23]. But these travel writers did not go beyond surprise with the progress of the West and its achievements, and finally did not explain more than some of these achievements in the Ottoman lands that were not in conflict with Islam and in which the caliphate was common. But they neglected to describe and analyze the ideological foundations that made these advances. According to Shaygan (2012):

> Our neglect is not of the progress of science, technology and its dazzling efficiency in the developed world, but our neglect is of the dynamic factors of thinking that has made these changes possible (p: 49).

This thirst for travelogue reduced during the Pahlavi period (1925-1979), which came after Qajar. One of the reasons may be related to the rapid modernization of Iran in the Pahlavi period. During this period, the developmental gap with Turkey reduced to the

23. It is mentioned in the Konya part in the front pages of this chapter.

point that during the second Pahlavi king's period, Mohammad Reza Shah, Iran developed more than Turkey (Fazeli. 2010).

But after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and events after that (i.e. bloody ponies, attack to USA embassy and hostage taking, 8-years war with Iraq, which a lot of countries, including Arab and Western countries supported Iraq against Iran, sanctions against Iran which continue to this day etc.), the development process in Iran reduced (Abrahamian. 2008; Keddie. 2003) and Turkey passed Iran again (Fazeli. 2007). So, the Iranians considered Turkey again, either for migration (as a destination or as a bridge for access to Europe) or for tourism. So, writing travelogues about Turkey and its most famous city, Istanbul, started again.

"Long way of Istanbul" (Zamani Nia. 1985) is one of the first Iranian travelogue of Istanbul that shows Iranian migration to Turkey and from Istanbul to the other countries, after the Islamic Revolution. But after economic growth and simultaneous tourism development in Turkey, waves of Iranian tourists started being attracted to Turkey and a lot of travelogues were created. Of course, most Iranian tourists go to Istanbul and as a result, most of travelogues are written about Istanbul. But unlike the previous travelogues which were published as a book, the new travelogues are published on websites, especially in the LastSecond website.

There were 121 travelogues of Istanbul in the LastSecond website. The first one was published on 21 August 2012 and the last one (of course until 13 May 2019, the time that I searched in the website) was published on May 3rd 2019. Each of the 20 travelogues' titles and links are arranged in a web page with the older ones put on previous pages. So, I only read and analyzed the first page (20 travelogues. But 2 of them were written in 2 parts making it 18 actual travelogues). This group of travelogues was written between August 13, 2018 until May 3, 2019. This is around the time that I started my thesis. Of courses some of the travelogues were related to one or even two years ago. For example, a travelogue that was published in the May 2019 may not necessarily mean that the travel occurred in the same year or at a time near the publication date. This is because of late writing of travelogues by the tourists, as well as the control of travelogues by the editor of LastSecond website.

The 18 travels were explained in 20 travelogues. Exactly 9 writers were women and 9 were men. On average, each travelogue has around 6800 words and 70 pictures. The quality of pictures is good and some of them are taken by camera and the others by mobile camera. In all of travelogues, only the attractions are present not the travelers or any fellow travelers. In one travelogue (Shima. 2018) it was written:

> Because I never thought of writing travelogue before or in the travel time, so I did not take suitable pictures for uploading in the website, without persons. So I had to use some of the pictures from internet and the other pictures were edited by software and remove persons as far as possible and then put them in the website.

One of the reasons relating to this problem may be the veiling or lack thereof. A lot of Iranians dress are more freely in their outbound travels, while the formal cultural and religious rules in Iran do not accept this kind of dressing. Of course, the government or police in Iran do not check the Iranian returning tourists' photos in Facebook or other social medias, unless in special cases. For example, after parliament election in 2017, an unveiled photo of Mrs. Khaleghi in the one of her outbound travel appeared. So, her votes were declared void, even though she won her election. On the other hand, a lot of Iranians do not care for these sensitivities and share their unveiled photos on their social media pages. In this case however, LastSecond website, like many the other websites that are active in Iran, does not accept unveiled photos for publishing. But of course, as it is described in more detail further, all the Iranian tourists are not unveiled in Istanbul or the other outbound destinations. So maybe the lack of personal photos in the travelogue, is due to the other writers who because of their unveiling or the other reasons, do not like to share their photos so this became as an unwritten rule in travelogues. Also, in some of travelogues, there are a few clips of magic tricks, acrobats, seagrass etc. that the authors saw in their travels.

These travelogues are used complementary to the fieldwork. Due to the short length of the field interviews in Istanbul, any lacking information was completed by these detailed travelogues. Especially since these travelogues are written by a group of tourists that give information about their touristic experience with passion, meaning they go into informative detail about their experiences. Some data in the travelogues were not mentioned in any interviews, meaning the travelogues provided extra

information that was not found in the field work. For example, costs, plans, foods etc. are described in detail in the travelogues, but in the short interviews, the interviewees did not remember enough. For example, most of the authors had a daily cost table giving accurate summations of their expenses. Another advantage of travelogue is related to the past-travel stage experiences. As it was cleared in the proposal, tourist experience can continue until after travel and because a travelogue is written after travel, they can represent past-travel experiences. For example, a sense of longing for the destination and remembering the travel memories are some past-travel experiences that are mentioned in the travelogues. On the website under the travelogues, there are a lot of (sometimes a few hundred) comments that discuss their tourist experiences in Istanbul, edit the travel writer's mistake, or add additional information. So, there are more than 20 travelogues information in these documents. In general, comments are grateful and encouraging of the writer. Some of the readers read a lot of travelogues about Istanbul and themselves travelled there (i.e. Navid Makvandi, Meysam F., Vida Mahin Pou, Farshad Shafi'i, Jalal. 100safar etc.). So, they add additional information to the travelogues. For example, they suggest to the writer or the other readers to choose another road to access to the mall or taste the food from that one restaurant. As well as sometimes the readers notify that the correct name of a historical place or a street is another one, not as writer wrote. They sometimes answer the questions that other readers asked the author before the author themselves answer.

In fact, these travelogues became one of the most important resources to the Iranian tourists that want to go to Istanbul, as well as influence future tourist experiences. This is obvious in some travelogues that describe the pre-travel stage, when they gathered information about Istanbul and read the previous travelogues in this website and even wrote notes from them. As Hesariha (2019a) writes:

> I want to thank the worthy LastSecond website that open travelogue in the widespread Internet and helps to develop smart and targeted travel with this duty; also, travelogue increases information of travel lovers with sharing their experiences together. I personally have benefited from this website so much and I hope my travelogue takes a small step toward this website target and its readers.

The parts that include suggestions, important points etc. are highlighted in the travelogues. Some of them (i.e. Abrishami. 2018) are full of important points and suggestion to the readers.

Most of travelogues are written in non-formal language, using slang and dialects etc. or if one of them starts in formal language, after a few sentences it changes to non-formal. Some of the tourist feelings can be understood better in the travelogues: in the name and title of their travelogues, in the sentences that describe Istanbul or its places with them and even in the express their feelings when they are leaving the city and go back to Iran.

On the other hand, travelogues have limitations, too. In some of them, the writers explain their travel like a guidebook; *"you can go from Taksim square to Javahir shopping center by metro. Javahir shopping center is a big 6 floor mall with most of the famous Turkish clothing brands. We spent 3 hours there and bought some clothes. After that we went to the 6th floor and ate Eskandar Kebab as our lunch…"*[24] or: *"Ayasofya is open from 9:00 until 19:00 and its ticket costs 60 Turk Liras"*. Sometimes it is difficult to find the emotions and experiences in these kinds of writings. Some of the information is repeated in most of the travelogues, like how to get Istanbul Card, how to get access to Prince Islands by ships, easier ways to access the famous shopping malls or Sultan Ahmad Square, fish stores under the Galata Bridge etc. Also, some of the information about the city and its attractions (especially their history) are copied from internet websites or even previous travelogues. The readers always critique these kinds of travelogues calling them *"Wikipedian travelogues"*. It seems that the readers are looking for new experiences in Istanbul from the Iranian tourists. Maybe because they want to experience new things in their next travel to this city.

Another limitation of these travelogues is related to the sociopolitical situation of Iran. No writer mentioned drinking alcohol, going to bars and discos, dressing more freely or dancing on the ships, for the same reasons that were described for lack of personal photos. Some of them even mention these limitations, as Khaf (2018) writes:

24. No travel writer has written exactly these sentences, but the researcher has created them to get acquainted with the general atmosphere of such sentences in travelogues.

> When we got on the ship, they served us quickly and had a good service in generally. There were so many attractive and diverse programs that I do not mention because of the rules of the website.

The name of the above writer is an alias. Another writer with their alias name, “Mr. Traveler” is the only person who describe their experiences a little more obviously. He is the only person who noted to his wife’s name (Sara), describe their dancing in the ship with humorous language, and without mention to the beer, the beer cup is presented in one of his pictures near their food (maybe the website editor did not watch it or maybe neglected it). Finally, they generally explain that they bought *"some souvenirs"* and even some of them wrote the price of the souvenirs, but only few of them noted what these souvenirs are.

The travel writers are the most acquainted tourists with Istanbul. They know the city more than many of the interviewees. Most of them read a lot about Istanbul prior to their travel, while a lot of interviewees know only a little about Istanbul. Some of the interviewees asked me about the attractions of Istanbul, when they understood I live in Turkey. I met with some of them that were waiting in the queue of Ayasofya or museum of the Baptism in Topkapi Place, while they did not know what was there and asked me for directions and if it was worth to visiting those places or not.

With all this, a lot of data was gathered from these travelogues: Which shopping centers Iranian tourists go to and which brands they find the most attractive. What kind of Turkish foods are preferred and their opinions on them. Where they go in search of night life. How they perceive Istanbul as a destination. What their feelings about this city are. It is also sometimes possible to find the illegal activities they do in their destinations. For example, some of them took photos in places that you are not allowed to take photos in, while knowing that it is forbidden. For example, Hesariha (2019a) writes: *“because it is not allowed to take picture in this part [museum of the Baptism in the Topkapi palace] I only could take photo from some of its parts”.* Another travel writer (Dashti. 2018) did the same thing in the same place.

3.2.3. Why Istanbul?

> *Time in travel separates for me like this: I wake up early in the morning and eat a full breakfast, preferably warm meals at the hotel. Then I visit compact the sighting places that have certain hours of work, look around the alleys and streets in the afternoons, sit in the cafes and look at the lives of the local people, and it is better to have nightlife, and I walk in the alley and in the crowd. With the music-lover people, sit on the ground around a street music player and do not think about anything for hours. If that destination is a good place for good purchases, then it is perfect. And Istanbul has all I want, in one place (Dashti. 2018).*

The above quotation is an abstract of the reasons for the Iranian tourists to travel to Istanbul, which is expressed in one view. If we look closer, the reasons why a lot of Iranian tourists go to Turkey were mentioned before. It is because Istanbul is the symbol of Turkey, in fact that is the main reason for their going to Istanbul. Only a few of them are more detailed and they are highlighted here:

a) Istanbul is one of the cheapest foreign destination for Iranian tourists. Every day there are more than 10 flights between Tehran and Istanbul that increases to more than 20 flights during Nowruz and in the summer. Besides those, there are daily or weekly flights between Istanbul and the other cities in Iran, like Isfahan, Tabriz, Mashhad, Shiraz etc. some of these flights are used to transit the Iranian tourists which have cities other than Istanbul as their final destination, some of them even use the flights as transit for Iranian flights to Europe or other continents. So, in the competition between airlines, Iranians were able to access the cheaper charter flights. Due to the agreements the tourism agencies have with certain hotels in Istanbul, besides cheap charter flights they also provide cheap stays in hotel as well. They send many tourists to the hotels and in exchange they receive discounts for them. This cheap price is one of the most important reasons that were mentioned in a lot of interviews (i.e. 16, 20, 22, 25, 26, 33, 49 and 50), as well as in the travelogues. Some of them even (no. 30) noted that the travel to Istanbul is cheaper than some domestic tours in Iran, so they prefer a foreign experience that is cheaper over a more expensive local one. Interviewee no. 20 said that they used to go to Europe in past Nowruz vacations, but after the declining economic condition in Iran, they had no other choice but Istanbul. Interviewee no. 22 said if he had money twice the amount of an Istanbul tour price, he would go to a further destination, if he had triple, he would go to Europe and if he had fourfold, he would go to the USA. But

with this money he had two choices: Istanbul or Dubai. He does not like Dubai, because they are Arab and their behavior is strange. Then he explained his words: *"their behavior is not strange, but the way they look at us is offensive"* and when I asked about the Turks looking, he answered they do not look at us offensive.

b) For a lot of Iranians, Istanbul is the safest destination as their first foreign travel. In other words, it is the closest destination with the most familiar culture to Iran. As Sabbaghi (2018) wrote: *"Because we had not had an experience of traveling abroad without a tour, we decided to go for the first time to somewhere that would be more comfortable for the Iranians. And this comfortable place was Istanbul".* Istanbul is considered familiar and comfortable because of the large number of Iranian tourists, Iranian restaurants, Iranian tour guides, Iranian music concerts etc. in Istanbul. Interviewee no. 38 was surprised at the *"so many Iranians"* in Istanbul. Khaf (2018) mentioned his good mood when he saw so many people from his homeland in Istanbul: *"It was so good mood. There was no foreign country feeling in Taksim square and Istiklal street, because they were full of Iranians".* Tahmineh (2018) mentioned to this point in her travelogue, too:

> We went out of the hotel. It was around 12 o'clock at night and everywhere was full of light and commute. We arrived to Taksim square with a 5-minute walking. It was really crowded and everywhere full of Iranians! It was the first time that we were seeing so many Iranians outside of Iran and everywhere speak in Persian, even the Turkish sellers! We asked questions in English and we heard answers in Persian.

Of course, here it is better for me as the researcher to recall my own experience in the field. In fact, every time I went to Istanbul from Ankara, as I did this time for field research, seeing the large number of Iranians on Istiklal Street, around Sultan Ahmet Square, as well as shopping malls, always made me think that Istanbul had become an Iranian city. This idea, however, collapsed when I came across a certain event. At Topkapi Palace, I was looking for Iranians for an interview when two group of Russians passed each other. A member of one of the groups, hearing Russian from another group, told his other friends in broken English, "Where exactly are we?" "Turkey or Rusca[25]?"

25. She used the word in that exact way: "Rusca".

It was there that I guessed that like me, the Russians, and maybe the Arabs etc., would also feel the same way when they saw their compatriots or heard their languages.

c) As it was written in the first quotation in this part, Istanbul has various attractions for tourists: shopping centers, historical buildings, natural attractions, recreational centers etc. These attractions can attract various tourists with various tastes. Salari (2018) believes Istanbul always has a new thing for discovering:

> Due to the proximity to Iran and the lack of a visa, perhaps Iranians have gone to Istanbul more than the other cities in the world. Perhaps, because of the cultural affinity to Turkey, there is not much left to say about Istanbul. But for me, this city is not summed up by doner kebab, Iskandar kebab and shopping. Istanbul is always fresh for me. There's always something new to discover out. Istanbul is one of the few cities that the pulse of urban life can be felt well.

Perhaps, some of the readers who read and write comment under almost of travelogues of Istanbul, discover new things in the new travelogues. A comment from the travelogue of Jamali (2018) wrote: *"I do not know why every travelogue about Istanbul that is published and I read is not repetitive".* Also, below the travelogue of Mr. Traveler (2018) a reader wrote:

> I went to Istanbul 5 times and almost did not leave any attraction, park, café and neighborhood; so I would not have thought that the other's travelogues about Istanbul would have a new point for me. But after reading yours, I saw that I thought wrong.

The interviewees (i.e. No. 3 and 46) mentioned this attraction diversity as an important reason for their travel to Istanbul.

All these reasons together make Istanbul a very popular destination for Iranian tourists; some of them traveled to Istanbul more than 5 or even 10 times and suggest it to the other Iranians. Interviewee no. 24 that they came to Istanbul for the first time, said one of his friends came to Istanbul for 7 or 8 times. So, he asked him why does he go to Istanbul so frequently, does he have a job there? But now that he himself came and visited Istanbul, he understood that he needs to come again, because there are a lot of historical buildings that are their priority, and they cannot visit all of them in one travel. Even some of Iranian tourists were encouraged to buy a house in Turkey, after their first travel to Istanbul. In the topic of "Iranian Tourists Feeling on Istanbul" it will be explained more.

However, many travels to Istanbul by the Iranian tourists made them informed about Istanbul and its transport system, shopping centers, recreation centers, historical buildings, museums etc. therefore, most Iranians that travel to Istanbul are without a tour guide. However, flight tickets and hotels are still reserved by the tourism agencies, because of their agreements with the hotel in Istanbul and charter flights. Mohammadi (2018) describes this matter:

> *In the old days, most people's target about travel, mentioned the north [of Iran, near Caspian Sea], and later travel to the Kish Island. Of course, limited destinations in Iran is one of the weaknesses of our domestic tourism, while there are countless internal attractions inside. Travel to Istanbul between foreign destinations, has become something like a travel to the north or Kish Island. Perhaps the main reason for this popularity is the abundance of information and experiences available in websites or the [expression of] experiences of friends and relatives about Istanbul. Comparison of the number of Istanbul travelogues on this website, LastSecond, with other travelogues, is evidence of this.*

So it is not strange that sometimes Iranian tourists meet their friends or relatives by chance in Istanbul as well, I met my old neighbor after 20 years in front of Topkapi place (interviewee no. 45). Also 4 comments below Tahmineh (2018)'s travelogue wrote that they were in Istanbul at the same days and even one of them was in the Prince Island at the same day that as Tahmineh explained, the horse and buggy's owners had a stroke.

Due to the reasons mentioned above, Turkey has become an unquestionable destination for many Iranians and Istanbul in particular. The interviewee no. 49 answered surprised at this question because Istanbul is a tourist destination. Istanbul was an ordinary touristic destination and asking about the reasons of travel there, was for him strange.

Istanbul even attracted those who hated this city at a time and changed their opinions. In the travelogues there were mentioned at least two reasons of dislike Istanbul as a tourist destination:

> *At that moment I did not have any special feeling in this travel, even I was not so happy with going to Istanbul. This feeling came back to the time of my travel to Russia (July) and the flight gate officer, who nagged that the number of passengers to Turkey is high and everyone with 500 thousand Tomans [110 Dollars at the time] goes to Turkey and what and what... I felt I was like one of those responsible*

> *that the gate officer said. Of course, it was a mistake feeling and in general his words were also mistake (Dashti. 2018).*

And in another travelogue:

> *After consultation with our travel fellows, the only cheap option for us was Istanbul, but I do not know why I did not like Turkey and especially Istanbul [...] I think because of some of our homelands who escape from Iran and the first place to go is Istanbul. Of course, now I really would love to go back to Istanbul […] I began to read the travelogues in LastSecond website and to listing interesting issues and places. I really did not believe it would be possible to find all that nice and interesting place in Istanbul (Khaf. 2018).*

Both the travel writers were upset because of the notoriety of Istanbul, whether because of the presence of Iranian asylum seekers or because of mass tourists that made authorities have a negative view on Iranian tourists. However, the city has the ability to satisfy most of those dissatisfied and send back them to Iran with good memories.

Of course, among all these positive views of Istanbul, some of the tourists or the potential tourists think unlike the others and do not like travel to Istanbul. One of the comments below the Mohammadi's travelogue (2018) says:

> *After reading [your travelogue] and seeing its photos, I gave up on travel to Istanbul. Because although you described [Istanbul] very good, [but] I look at every angle, I am not interested in paying around 10 million Tomans for a five-six-day travel for walking and tea drinking and seeing old buildings. For me, cultural differences are very attractive that must be found in more distant lands.*

Also, in a few interviews (19, 42, 48, 56) they were dissatisfied of their travel to Istanbul and were unwilling to go to Istanbul again, as they said they will say to their friends to do not go to Istanbul (in the topic of "Iranian Tourists Feeling on Istanbul" it will be explained more).

3.2.4. Iranian Experiences in Istanbul

3.2.4.1. Freedom experiences:

When I asked the Iranian tourists in Istanbul *"what kind of experiences did you have here that you did not have in Iran?"* or *"What is the differences between Istanbul and touristic cities in Iran, like Isfahan?"* or *"What was more interesting in Istanbul for*

you?", almost all of their answers referred to the freedoms that are available in Istanbul, but not in Iran. Even some of them, before even getting asked about this topic, referred to their own experiences of freedoms. In 21 interviews (no. 1, 2, 6, 16, 17, 22, 24, 25, 28, 30, 31, 35, 38, 40, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 51, 53) the freedoms in Istanbul were a highlight. These experiences of freedoms were highlight in the travelogues, too. If I asked them to expand on what this freedom is in the interviews, they usually mentioned the veil and drinking, however they did mention other things as well. In fact, the freedom to veil and drink was more tangible for them. But we will see later that the scope of this freedom goes far beyond veil and drinking. For example, sometimes they were explaining their other experiences without mentioning freedom, but it was some kind of freedom experience too; especially when they cannot experience it in Iran. These include spending nights out and staying outside very late, street music and concerts. Besides these, some of the freedoms like dancing openly is mentioned in no travelogue or interview, but in my participant observation, especially in the Iranians' ship tours or beside street music I encountered them.

Lack of freedom generally results in lack of joy and happiness. This is mentioned in the answers and writings. For example, one of the comments below Dashti (2018)'s travelogue wrote: *"Iran has a lot of spectacular and nice places, but when [government] took our freedom and vitality, I think it is better to choose foreign travels or in the popular word, go and change your weather and take a breath".* Some of interviewees (no. 1, 2, 22, 35, 38, 47 and 51) knew Istanbul as a city where everybody is busy with their own work and does not interfere in other people's work. For example, the girl in the interview no. 47 said that it was her second time travelling to Istanbul. When I asked her why she came to Istanbul again, she answered because nobody interferes in our life and we are free here. So, I asked her what this freedom is, she answered maybe "Relax" is a better word. Everybody is busy with their work and not with you. She emphasized that they do not have this feeling in Iran. Interviewee no. 51 mentioned that because of this lack of freedom, they do not have *"psychological security"*.

For many Iranians, this free and peaceful life in Turkey, where devout Muslims and those who do not follow the precepts of Islam in matters such as the hijab or alcohol, was amazing, and they said that if such conditions existed in Iran, few people would go

to Turkey as tourists. It was interesting for the interviewees No. 24 that there are two groups in Istanbul: one who wears a hijab and whose hair does not appear, and one that is secular and does not wear hijab. But they are living together freely. But in Iran we only keep the appearance. That is, while a lot of people are secular, they wear the hijab. Some Iranian tourists believe there is nothing for them in Turkey, except *"this Freedom".* Some of them even emphasized the attractions in Iran as more interesting than those in Turkey, but they come Istanbul because of this freedom. Interviewee no. 46 said they came Istanbul because of its freedom and explained this freedom as the freedom of his wife to have an unveiled head, emphasized several times that *"we were more developed than these [people of Turkey; but] that we got to this situation".* Also, interviewee No. 53 believed that if the Iranians had this freedom in their country, they would not travel to Turkey in this huge number. This reference to having more attractions in Iran than in Turkey, or that Iran was more developed than Turkey (meaning the years before the 1979 revolution) was repeated many times within interviews, and of course it is often found in travelogues. Anger and dissatisfaction with the situation that caused Iran's attractions to be ignored, forced the tourists to come to Turkey and Turkey to become more developed than Iran were seen in the interviews. This discomfort could even be seen among Azeris who travel to Turkey because of their linguistic (and sometimes ethnocentric) feelings. For example, a 38-year-old lawyer who came to Istanbul with his wife from Urmia said angrily: *"Istanbul does not have even half of Isfahan's historical monuments. Why should we come here?"*[26] Also interviewee No. 15, who is a young Azeri man that shows in many of his sentences and responses that he is linguistically and culturally close to Turkey, said: *"Although our civilization is much broader than this. Our Persepolis is much higher than here* [Topkapi Palace where the interview took place]". Interviewee No. 17, a 54-year-old physician from Tabriz who referred to his sense of closeness to Turkey as an Azeri and did not seem to accept Iranian nationalist historical narratives (for example, mentioned in his speeches that the name "Iran" is a new word that did not exist before Reza Shah, and this narration is told by extremist ethnic Azeris), said that it is our fault that we bring our money and spend it in Turkey. We could have the same things in Iran and this money would be spent in Iran itself, if we had a qualified government.

26. This interview was related to my personal research in 2017 on Iranian tourists in Istanbul.

All these examples of Azeris show one thing, that even if due to their ethnicity and language they feel close to Turkey or oppose Iranian nationalism, their Iranian identity is still powerful, and they are dissatisfied that Iran is less developed than Turkey in areas such as tourism.

A part of these criticisms is probably related to the government's disregard for Iranian monuments. The post-revolutionary extremist attacks on the relics of pre-Islamic Iranian civilizations (including attempts to destroy them as a symbol of the monarchy), as well as the occasional restrictions of access to these relics intensifies such thoughts. For example, preventing people from gathering in every year on the 28th October (7th of Abanin Iranian calendor) on the tomb of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenid Empire, on the pretext of the anniversary of his arrival in the ancient city of Babylon and its conquest.

However, the most repeated experiences of freedom that are sought for by Iranian tourists in Istanbul, are investigated below.

3.2.4.1.1. Night Out and Soiree:

The activities that people do in nights are neglected in the most branches of science. As Kreiner (2003: x) mentioned, in the anthropological literature, there are a few studies like Malinowski's research in the Trobriand and Krauss in Japan about night activities in the culture; howbeit these studies did not research more than sexual life.

Usually, the people who are in the streets instead their homes in the night, are known as *"uncivilized and beastly"* (Steger and Brunt. 2003: 4). Those who like going out and walking in the streets, not only are always in danger of being questioned by the police for no apparent reason (Alvarez. 1995: xiv cited in Steger and Brunt. 2003), but they also have to feel the other's humiliating looks and deal with thieves and criminals more than others (Melbin. 1987 cited in Steger and Brunt. 2003).

Nightlife activities in general increased in the modern era compared with the past due to a number of reasons: the daily work hours and its fatigue reduced, so less hours were needed for resting. The capitalist economy always looks towards increasing profit and

the increase of the activity hours and night economy was one of them. Crowding, road traffic and air pollution in the day, as well as the social reasons like increasing of the number of employed mothers, increased the popularity of nightlife (Foster and Kreitzman. 2017). So, terms like *Nightlife, Night City, 24-hour City, Night Economy* etc. caught prevalence in the scientific literature.

In the history of Iran, like other countries and cultures, nightlife was not significant. In the history of Iran, soiree was limited to some soirees and social activities on special nights. Ani Zadeh (2018) showed a list of these activities (like praying in some nights of Ramadan in mosques or Chelle / Yalda celebration on 21 December as the longest night of the year). But when the nightlife became started in the Western cultures, it was not normal in Iran. For example, the Iranian ambassador to Siam during the Qajar period was surprised because of soiree of Europeans living in the country (Tabatabaei. 2001: 259).

Unlike the traditional Bazars, in the modern era malls and stores are open until midnight and sociocultural changes occur (i.e. bars and cafes that are open until the dawn), nightlife and night activities increased, similar to most other countries. But after the Islamic Revolution in 1979, nightlife was marginalized. Those who were interested to the nightlife received negative labels. Formal orders were issued to restrict night activities in cities. But there are some exceptions on time and place. The example of a time exception is the nightlife in the month of Ramadan that cinemas and some stores are open until dawn. The example of a place exception is the streets around Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad where most of hotels, restaurants, stores etc. are active and a lot of people are lively, because the shrine is open in the night and some of pilgrims prefer to pilgrimage to it at night, when it is less crowded.

But in general, nightlife in Iran is forbidden or very limited. There is no night out in the streets of Iranian cities because all restaurants and stores must be closed before 12 at midnight (or sometimes 1:00 am). There are a lot of critical media reports and interview with the scholars that request the government to remove the restrictions. Some titles of these reports are: *"Why Tehranians are deprived of nightlife*[27]*", "Tehran: the city that*

27. Why Tehranians are deprived of Nightlife?, 2016, Tabnak news Website, 14 June, accessed 17/04/2019: https://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/597748

does not have nightlife[28]*", "City thirsts for night economy*[29]*", "Does Nightlife in Tehran find a fresh smell?*[30]*", "Reviving nightlife in Tehran is a necessity*[31]*", "Nightlife of the city, an opportunity to attract tourists*[32]*"* etc. Beside these journalistic essays and reports, some of the scientific articles on the prerequisites of tourism development in Iran (Shaykh and Tabrizi. 2016), explain that Iran needs to consider nightlife more. The world experiences (Hsieha and Chang. 2006; Giovanardi, Lucarelli and Decosta. 2014; Mariani and Giorgio. 2017; Wolf and Croft. 2012) confirm this importance. Nightlife is more important in tourism, because it seems that tourists are more interested nightlife than inhabitants; Huang and Wang (2018) also showed that in their article. For Hong Kong inhabitants, activity in the night is superficial and vulnerable, but for the American tourists it is successful and glamorous.

However, in the tourism industry, nightlife is important. So, the Iranian tourists who cannot experience nightlife in Iran go to a foreign destination like Istanbul to experience it. Istanbul nights, especially in Istiklal street is described in a lot of travelogues (Khormaei. 2019; Shafi'i. 2019; Hesariha. 2019b; Varzesh Nejad. 2018; Dashti. 2018; Abrishami, 2018; Sabagh. 2018; Jamali. 2018; Judi. 2018; Mohamadi. 2018; Tahmineh, 2018) as a wonderful phenomenon, the same was mentioned in the interviews. The terms that used for these nights, can help us to understand the Iranian feelings toward nightlife in Istanbul. The terms an *"Istanbul night", "Istanbul nights"* and *"Istiklal nights"* were used much in the travelogues. Some other terms were also used like *"The pure nights of Istanbul"* and *"The alive nights of Istanbul"* (both of them in Shafi'i. 2019) and *"The memorable nights in Istanbul"* (Mohamadi. 2018) show the writers' feelings toward Istanbul. *"The Nights of Istanbul Tour"* (Pierre Loti Tepesi, Sultan

28. Tehran, a city that does not have nightlife, 2017, Eghtesad Online, 21 Augost, accessed 17/04/2019: https://www.eghtesadonline.com/n/15Vr

29. City thirst for "night economy", 2017, Iran Newspaper, 11/09, accessed at: 17/04/2019

http://www.iran-newspaper.com/newspaper/item/429216

30. Does Nightlife in Tehran is find a fresh smell?, 2019, Ebtekar Newspaper, 21 March, accessed at: 17/04/2019: http://ebtekarnews.com/?newsid=131898

31. Reviving nightlife in Tehran is a necessity, 2019, Irna: Islamic Republic News Agency, 20 May, accessed at: 17/04/2019: https://www.irna.ir/news/82921979

32. Nightlife of the city, an opportunity to attract tourists, 2015, Iran Online, 20/07, accessed at: 17/04/2019: http://www.ion.ir/news/6265/

Ahmet Square and having dinner in one of Galata Bridge restaurants) and *"Bosporus Strait Night Tour"* are two of interesting and favorite tours for Iranians. But night walking in the Istiklal street is a special experience for them. This street has properties that make it special. As Dashti (2018) wrote: *"That night, similar to the other nights [in Istiklal], there were us and Istiklal and bustle and happy Turkish music and happy people and Turkish Coffee and Hafiz Mustafa Baklava".*

Interviewee no. 13 besides several reasons for the necessity of Iranians' traveling to Istanbul, said: *"They should to experience the Turkish Night".* When I asked him, what is *"Turkish Night"*, he answered playing music and singing in the cafes and restaurants. He himself has gone and enjoyed it.

Some of the travelogues explained how the writers go back sooner to hotels in the evening to take a rest and be ready for night out. Some of their reasons for having a night out and a night trip in Istiklal are the people's vitality and liveliness in the street, street concerts, the stores that are open until very late at night, coffee and sweetmeat's stores. Also some of the travelogues suggests some ways to have a better night experience in Istanbul:

> *Your hotel being near the Taksim Square is better, because in this way you can enjoy the Istiklal nights that really are perfect" (Jamali. 2018).*
>
> *Be sure to come out of the hotel at night in Marmaris and go to the marina (port). Make sure you do not get tired of walking for miles. In Istanbul, be sure to visit Ortakoy neighborhood and Nabizadeh alley in Istiklal at night (Judi. 2018).*
>
> *If you want to have memorable nights in Istanbul, you must to enjoy vitality of Istiklal street (Mohamadi. 2018).*

These tips at travelogues are often used by readers on their next travels to Istanbul. There are signs in some of the travelogues that prove the writers used a previous travel writer's night experience:

> *We walked to the Eminonu Pier, because I read in the travelogues that one of the Istanbul people's entertainment places is beside of the Eminonu Pier and Galata Bridge and the nights is crowded, but in our last year's travel [to Istanbul] we did not visit it at night (Hesariha. 2019b).*

The nightlife of Istanbul was mentioned in the Qajar travelogues, too. For example, Afshar (1882 / 2007) described like this: "*After dinner, we walked through the Bey Oglu*

bazar. All the markets were open, with a crowd of men and women walking around the markets. The night was more crowded than daytime".

Some of the night activities (i.e. going to bars or discos) were not mentioned, not in the travelogues nor in the interviews, although sometimes were slightly referenced. Walking in the Istiklal street for several nights until 2:00 or 3:00 O'clock and observing Iranians, led me to a restaurant and two discos that were special for Iranians. In the following I describe two of them. The third one will be described in the "Experience of Iranian Culture" topic.

Box 1.	**Keyf Papion Restaurant and Café:**	**10th Nowruz, 30 March.**

It is not so far from Taksim Square. In the evening, when I was passing by there, I noticed their Persian advertising about night programs. So, I asked them about their programs for that night and I understood that every night their program starts at 23:00 and continues as long as there are customers. I also saw they always have live music, but their music group was playing in another place for that night, so a DJ will be there.

I returned to my pension, rested, and went back to the café at 11.

The Night Program done at the fourth floor. This old building has four floors and a few Iranians managed it as a café- restaurant. The area of this building is around 70- 80 square meters: almost 5×15 meters. The music was loud and was heard on the ground floor. I went from the old and narrow stairs up. In every floor there were some customers smoking hookah or eating dinner. I went to the last floor that had black walls and ceiling. I could not see after entrancing and it took a few seconds until my eyes got used to the darkness. The combination of black walls and ceiling with cigarette smoke and light dancing in disco was confusing everyone. On one of the walls, it was written with a white chalk, 1398, the Iranian year that starts with Nowruz. The sound of the bands, which played the Iranian and sometimes Turkish songs, was very loud.

Because I had not eaten dinner yet, I ordered the Iranian food, Ghorme Sabzi, that was ready after a few minutes. After that, because I did not like to make the Iranian families and the women who were there worry, so I tried to be busy on my cellphone and was writing the notes about the restaurant's overall atmosphere. In the other word, I tried to not look at the families and women who were sitting or dancing. A single man looking at women in that space could create a misunderstanding. After the dinner, I had to order another thing to be allowed to sit more, so I ordered a tea and after that a fruit plate.

When I went, there were 10 people there: two groups of two people and two families of three. A couple of single boys went out at 12 o'clock and a family with four members (in fact, 2 two-person families) came. Another family with four members (a middle-aged man and woman with their 10-year-old and 2-years-old child) came a little later. The last one (2-year-old) was a cute baby and sometimes was dancing near their table and the other customers were cheering him.

There were 2 DJs. One of them came down from the small stage and invited the 2 two-person families to dance. After 5 minutes they sit down and the father while embracing his 2-year-old baby, stood up and danced, after another minute his wife started dancing with him. After a few minutes they sit down, and the women of the 2 two-person families stood and danced again. These women danced more than the others, until the end of night program. When they sat down, the single boys started dancing, while the families, especially women, were trying to do not look at them directly. Because one of the boys was dissatisfied with his dancing (perhaps he was a little drunk), they sat down soon. So, the two young women started dancing again. Their table was near to the stage, so they were dancing while they were sitting, too. The father and his wife joined them, while their 2-year-old baby was not with the father this time. One of the DJs was coming and dancing with them sometimes. Both of the waitresses were moving their bodies sometimes, while were bringing beverages and fruit plates to customers.

One of the young women sat down and the other young woman's husband stood and danced with his wife, but the woman was laughed at her husband's dancing and the husband sat down laughing. One of the waitresses came and danced with the young women for a few minutes. Then one of the DJs danced with a man who had come a few minutes ago with his family. It seemed that they were friends with each other. Then the same DJ danced with a woman. It seemed the men were not worried about the DJs or restaurant staff, while they were worrying about other single boys and men.

When an Azeri song was played, the 2 two-person families stood and started dancing Azeri style. All of them, especially one of the women were dancing very well. It was obvious that they are Azeri. Then an Arabic song and all of them sit down, except one of the women who was trying dancing in Arabic style. After that, a Turkish song (Ankara style) was played and almost all the customers, around 20 people danced. Both DJs joined the 2 two-person families, took each other's hands and danced Ankara style circularly.

The customers started leaving at around 1:45. The 2 two-person families that were the most active, left the café at 2:00. I left at 2:10, there were still 5 people left there when I exited. Of course, the price of their service (food. tea and fruit) was twice that of their catalogue (while according to the catalogue I must to pay 35 TL, I paid 65 TL). They said the catalogue is old and it needs to be updated.

When I went out of Keyf Papion, Paris Café –which is in front of Keyf Papion Café- was crowded by Iranian customers. Two middle-aged men and women were dancing in the middle of this small restaurant. It was forbidden for single men to enter. One night I tried to go there, but they did not let me while were accepting single girls and women. Even Keyf Papion Café serves a free hookah to single girls and women.

After that I walked in Istiklal street. At 2:30 midnight it was full of Iranians. In the middle of street, there is Tehran Night Club. 4 Iranian men and women come out at 2:50. It was late, and I was sure that there were not many people left there at that time. So, I decided to go there another night. I went toward my pension and passed in front the Paris Café that was still at this time crowded.

Box 2.	**Tehran Night Club:**	**12th Nowruz, 1 April**

At 23:00 o'clock, the manager of the club was describing his club to an Iranian couple. I waited until they went and then asked him about the club. He explained that it is 60 TL for the singles as entrance for one hour. But with this price they gave a beer or vodka. After one hour if I wanted to stay longer, I had to buy another beverage or etc. He also said that the main program will start at 1:00 midnight.

I walked into Istiklal street and observed Iranians until 12:40 then went to the night club. A couple came out and asked the club bodyguard surprised why it was free for them? He answered because they are family, so it is free for them. I did not understand if just the entrance was free, or the drinks were free too. I passed the bodyguard and entered. There was another bodyguard that check the customers. He checked me and asked me 50 TL for entrance and a little more money for themself (bodyguards). I gave him 60 TL, but he asked for 10 TL more and said: *"Do you count in Iranian money?"*. He meant although 10 TL in comparative with Iranian Toman is a lot in Iran, it is not in Turkey. I said that the manager told me 60 TL and I will not pay more, so he finally gave me a white card and led me to the stairs. I went up and entered a corridor. There was a bar table in the right side and some tables and chairs near it. A man and a woman who worked there were behind the table. The man took the white card and led me to the hall. In the end of this small corridor, there was a small hall that was the main part of night club. It was smaller than the clubs that I have seen in movies. He asked me about my favorite drink, and I ordered it. A few minutes later he brought my order with a small bowl of peanuts. In fact, I paid for them in the same 50 lira that I paid for the entrance. The walls were black and around the hall there were 14 tables and 3-4 chairs near each table. On the small stage, a DJ was setting songs. Sometimes industrial steam was coming out from the stage. Some colorful spotlights with their light dancing were hanging from the low ceiling.

When I went in, there was a single girl and two families each one with four members (one of them a middle-aged mother with a young boy and two young girls and another a couple with their teenage boys). A few minutes later, another couple came and after them, another younger couple. But the last one did not sit down; they only put their jackets on a table and started dancing.

At 1:15 two other families came, one of them included two men and one woman and another, a couple. A single girl came too and sat down at a table near my table. The first family (two men and one woman) started dancing. Another family went to the middle of hall and danced.

Three single young men came. Another young man came and sat down near the single girl (who that was there when I entered). It seemed the girl was waiting for him. He brought Iranian cheese puffs for the girl (several times in airports I have seen Iranians taking multiple bags of the Iranian cheese puffs with them abroad). Another single young man came in and the waiter set him beside me, after asking me of course. Some other families came too.

While the families were dancing in the middle, the single young men only sat and were observing. Accorded to what I saw here and in the Keyf Papion Café, it seems these kinds of spaces were under the domination of families and the single men were not more than observers. The families with their not looking and not caring about the young single men, ruin the single

men's motivation for dancing and keep the bar, café, or disco as a place for family activities and support their family's privacy. Maybe because of this, 3 single men after drinking their beer, left there. They stayed there less than a half-hour.

Some of the families were dancing, while the others just were sitting. Of course, some of the families were separated into two groups: one that was dancing one that was sitting. The mother (who that was there with her three children when I entered) was dancing with excitement. The Los Angles songs[33] were exciting for them more than Iranian pop songs. I confess that although I do not know how to dance and even if I did, I did not dance there, but the Los Angeles songs made me even more excited. At 1:40 almost all of families were dancing (except some of their members) and only two other single men, a single girl and me were sitting. I think if the single girl had another (girl) friend, she would have been dancing as well. While the single men, even if they were in a group of 2 or 3 people, would not have danced.

Some of the women were dressed in short clothes with some even having their navel visible while it was beginning of spring and weather was cold. It seemed they dressed in this particular for the night club.

At 2:00 o'clock DJ said: *"please applaud Miss Tala, because this is her birthday"* and a famous Persian song for birthdays was played, while Tala with her husband (?) started dancing together. I do not know how DJ was aware from her birthday. Maybe they were friends, or maybe her husband (?) let DJ know.

At 2:30, the club started to become less crowded and some of families left, but some of them were still dancing. 10 minutes later only a few customers remained. Of course, some people were still coming, and I knew that it will continue until 4:00 or 5:00, but the next day was "Sizdah Be Dar", the last day of Nowruz and almost Iranians will be returning to the country. I also wanted to accompany an Iranian tour to the Prince Islands and wanted to get enough rest at night.

3.2.4.1.2. Street Music, Concert and Dance

After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, *"most kinds of music were outlawed"* (Keddie. 2003: 257) and most singers and musicians left Iran and migrated to the USA, specifically, to Los Angeles. So, their songs were being listened to in Iran on smuggled filmstrips and tapes. With the proliferation of satellites, access to Los Angeles music became easier (Naficy. 1993). Although the use of satellites is illegal in Iran and sometime police have

33. The Loss Angles music for Iranians means that kind of music that usually are made in Los Angles by the Iranian exiled musicians. It is in fact the continuation of Iranian pop music before Islamic Revolution that in 1979 became forbidden and its singers and players escape to USA, especially Los Angles.

entered the homes and apartments collecting and destroying satellite dishes and penalizing their owners, a large percentage of Iranians still have them. Some reports[34] even claim around 90% of Iranians use satellite. But despite all the reduction of limits on the music in the recent years, it is still treated in the formal arena and political system as taboo (Fazeli. 2007: 20).

All this has made many Iranian music lovers, especially fans of singers who are not allowed to work in Iran, go to neighboring countries to attend their concerts abroad. Every year in Nowruz, some of Los Angeles singers hold concerts in the countries neighboring Iran, and the Iranians also attend their concerts while traveling to these countries. In Nowruz 1398 there were many concerts of the Iranian Los Angeles singers in Istanbul and Antalya, the main programs of Istanbul were:

Date	Singer	Place	Price
29 Esfand/ 20 March	Shohre	Ship/ Bosporus	100-200 $ (with food and drink)
1 Farvardin/21 March	Shohre	Ship/ Bosporus	75-180 $ (with food and drink)
2 Farvardin/ 22 March	Hengameh	Ship/ Bosporus	75-180 $ (with food and drink)
3 Farvardin/ 23 March	Mehrshad	Ship/ Bosporus	50-125 $ (with food and drink)
4 Farvardin/ 24 March	Andi	Ship/ Bosporus	90-190 $ (with food and drink)
5 Farvardin/ 25 March	Andi	Ship/ Bosporus	90-190 $ (with food and drink)
6 Farvardin/ 26 March	Shohre	Ship/ Bosporus	75-180 $ (with food and drink)
7 Farvardin/ 27 March	Hengameh	Ship/ Bosporus	75-180 $ (with food and drink)
7 Farvardin/ 27 March	Ebi	Concert Hall	110-220 $
8 Farvardin/ 28 March	Shahram	Ship/ Bosporus	75-180 $ (with food and drink)
9 Farvardin/ 29 March	Hengameh	Ship/ Bosporus	75-180 $ (with food and drink)
10Farvardin/30 March	Shahram	Ship/ Bosporus	75-180 $ (with food and drink)
13 Farvardin/ 2 April	Shahram and Mehrshad	Ship and Prince Islands	75-180 $ (with food and drink)

34. https://www.isna.ir/news/94031307607

Iranian Music Concert Program in Istanbul, Nowruz 2019[35]

Therefore, many Iranians also have an experience of attending these concerts while traveling to Istanbul. In fact, attending these Persian concerts is one of the main motivations of some Iranian tourists to travel to Istanbul. For example, interviewees no. 2, 41, 49 and 53 said that these concerts were important for their coming to Istanbul. Some of the other respondents (i.e. no: 10, 22 and 51) said although they did not go to Istanbul because of these concerts, they will still attend them. Sometimes attending these concerts can be the main tourist experience for Iranians in Turkey and after the travel, that can become the most important memory. For interviewee No. 2, besides Ayasofya, the Ebi concert was also associated in the interviewee's mind as something tied to Istanbul, as a symbol of this city. Finally, there is a group of them that did not go to concerts, because of the concerts being expensive, not liking the singers and not wanting to pay money to attend a concert.

Besides these kinds of concerts, some of the free or cheaper concerts are held in Istanbul. For example, one night while I was walking in Istiklal street, a tour marketer was inviting the Iranians to a free concert by Iraj, a famous Iranian singer who stayed in Iran after the revolution and did not work for a long time.[36] In his concert, he did not allow some women who wanted to dance with his songs, because he had to go back Iran and does not want to face problems. But in the other concerts, from beginning to ending, a lot of Iranians dance with the songs.

But the street music playing is interesting for Iranians, even more than the formal concerts. Interviewee no. 1 said the street music is very interesting for him. He loves both Iranian and other nations' street music in Istiklal street at night. Hesariha (2019b) wrote:

35. This table designed on the information at the below link:

https://turkeyconcert.com/concerts-nowruz-98-istanbul-turkey/

36. I confess that the experience of attending Iraj's concert was very valuable and unforgettable for me. As well as attending other Iranian traditional music singers in Turkey, were experiences that I am sure I could not have easily achieved in Iran. In addition, I also admit that the street concerts of Iranian musicians on Istiklal Street generally occupied me much more than was needed for research and dissertations. Sometimes I spent long time to seeing and hearing their music.

> *Some girl and boy students were gathered alongside the Galata Tower and were local and the other dancing with music playing, which was very entertaining and fun, and we watched them at least about an hour*.

There are few Iranian music groups in Istiklal street and when they play their instruments and sing, a lot of Iranians gather around them, cheer for them, pay them money and sometimes dance to their songs. There are more Iranian music groups in the Istiklal street and the spectating Iranians around street musicians are more than the spectators of any other nationality, even Turks. Almost always there is at least one Iranian music group that is playing music and singing in the Istiklal street and sometimes on days like Nowruz days, there are always few at the very least. The Iranians are always excited to see street music.

3.2.4.1.3. Participating in the Iranian Culture

Other than the Iranian music and concerts that were mentioned above, Iranians experience some of the other parts of Iranian culture in Istanbul as well. For example, related to Nowruz there are some Iranian celebrations that are described here.

The night before the last Wednesday of an Iranian year is called "*Charshanbe Souri"*. Some folkloric and traditional activities done in this night with the most important being jumping over fire. They gather some dry firewood in the alleys and streets, set it on fire and while singing some special poems, they jump over it.

The moment of new year is the most important time in the year, and so is Nowruz. The moment of the year changing, which is different every year because each year is 365 days and 6 hours and 9 minutes and 9,5 seconds, Iranians smile, kiss each other and elders give youngers money as gift.

The last day of Nowruz is called *Sizdah Be Dar*. It means 13th day of Nowruz be outside. Almost all of Iranians go with closed families to the countryside in this day, they talk and play with each other, drink tea, eat fruit and have lunch and go back to home at the evening.

All these celebrations are limited in Iran. Especially after the revolution all aspects of national identity became weak compared to Islamic identity (Rajaee. 2006). Although these celebrations are being held now, conflict between people and government is still continuing. For example, the government has decreased its control of *Charshanbe Souri* due to many people playing with and using strong fireworks that lead to tens of traumatic and a few fatalities every year. The use of fireworks was a replacement for the banned traditions. The police and government now gave permission to Iranians to hold their celebration in the traditional manner of jumping over fire. At the moment of new year programs in TV channels become soulless, before and after this moment, with a lot of speeches present. Many people watch the filtered TV satellite channels that are managed in foreign countries (especially the USA). The government tried to change the name of Sizdah Be Dar to *"The Nature Day"*, as well as tried to change the name of Charshanbe Souri to *"The Last Charshanbe"*. The root of these contradictions, as detailed in the fourth section, goes back to the revolutionaries' opposition to Iranian traditions and anything else that did not come directly from Islam and Shiism. In such a way that any kind of Iranian nationalism was opposed and Ummahism was emphasized.

So, one of Iranian's experiences in Istanbul is experiencing their own culture, like the related celebrations to Nowruz. Some ship owners provide firewood and Iranians celebrate this night on the ships. Interviewee no. 35 described his experience of Charshanbe Souri on a ship. He said there were around 100 Iranians in their ship alone, while there were 7 or 8 other ships that were full of Iranians. There was music, dance, and fireworks. But it was limited to jumping over fire. It was interesting for him that there was no firecracker and dangerous behaviors nor conflict between police and people.

I did participant observation at the moment of new year in an Iranian restaurant in Istiklal and "Sizdah Be Dar" with an Iranian group on the ship and in the Heybeli Island. Both were full of Iranian music, dance, reception and expressions of strong Iranian feelings.

3.2.4.1.4. Clothing and the Veil

When the interviewees said they experienced "freedom" in Istanbul, they were usually referencing to this. There is a famous story of a lot of Iranian women removing their veil in the plane, just when the pilot informs, they left Iran. Even recently in the "Gando", a TV series that is produced by a revolutionary institution[37] this kind of unveil in the planes is shown[38]. A lot of Iranian women experience this unveiling as a freedom in the foreign destinations. This is not only for women, but also for men. As well as in Istanbul. Mr. Traveler (2018) wrote jokingly: *"I think I'm still in Iran, if I do not wear shorts when on my foreign travels".*

But the more important experience is the *"Feeling of Freedom"*. For example, interviewee no. 1 mentioned his wife (that had Iranian Hijab[39]) and said while his wife has hijab, here they are relaxed and no one is ordering them to wear this or that and everybody is busy with their own work, unlike in Iran.

But if somebody has the Iranian Hijab on or is unveiled, it does not mean they are confronting religion or that some of them are strong believers. For example, when I was interviewing with three men who were waiting for their wives in front of Topkapi Palace, the wives came out and started talking excitedly with their husbands about the shirts of Hz. Zahra and Imam Hussain. It was the most important part of Topkapi and its museums for them. In fact, as Fazeli (2004: 179) points out, the lifestyle of a significant portion of Iranians, especially the middle class, is eclectic in cultural consumption. He uses the *"Omnivore"* of cultural consumption styles from Peterson (1992: 252).[40] This is why we see that many Iranian tourists who are unveiled, but pray; or they have hijab, but also go to bars and discos; or have religious beliefs but have no problem with dancing and etc. Many manifestations of these seemingly contradictory behaviors can be seen in the behaviors of Iranian tourists in Turkey.

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37. Revolutionary institution or Revolutionary person mention in Iran to an institute or person that is so loyal to the Revolution targets and so is supported by the government.

38. http://tabnakbato.ir/fa/news

39. I use "Iranian Hijab" as a style of Iranian women that have makeup (almost heavy) and veil their heads and hairs by scarf, but the front of their hair is visible and wear a short and tight manto that cover until the under their hips. This kind of Hijab distinguishes them from women of other countries and can easily be identified by Iranians themselves. It means that they believe Hijab, but in their way, not in the formal way.

40. Of course, Fazeli refers to Peterson (1983), but it seems that he made an unintentional mistake.

On the other side, like the Iranian Hijab, there are even those who wear the complete hijab[41], preferring this freedom. The interview no. 28 said that although she has been wearing the Hijab from when she was 9 years old until now (she is 60 years old), the freedom in Istanbul was still important for her. In interview no. 22, the man respondent's mother had an Iranian Hijab on, while his wife did not and this companionate is interesting for him.

3.2.4.1.5. Drinking Alcohol

Drinking alcohol is against the rules of Islam and is illegal in Iran. But it is still used in Iran. Because of limits, measuring the amount of alcohol consumption or number of alcohol consumers in Iran is difficult. According to a survey, around 8.8% of Iranians over 18 years old have at least once drank alcohol[42]. But it can be guessed that the real amount is more than this. Iranians provide alcohol in two ways: making by themselves (especially grape wine) or purchasing alcoholic drinks that are smuggled into the country (especially from the border of Kurdistan or Iraq). Both are expensive and can be dangerous (especially fake drinks). Sometimes news regarding people who have been poisoned, lost their eyes or kidneys, and even died because of drinking fake or unwholesome alcohol is heard. For example, while I was observing some of Iranian tourists who were drinking alcohol in Istanbul, a formal news report was released[43] that 240 people in the Nowruz were poisoned by fake alcoholic drinks in Tabriz city alone and more than 10 of them died, some of them suffered a brain death, 3 of them lost their eyes and some of them were sent to the ICU and dialysis parts in the hospital.

Besides the dangers of unwholesome alcohol drinks, drinking alcohol is dangerous because of its illegality. If police suspect there is alcohol drinking in a house, garden, or any other place, they can enter that place by judicial order, arrest and send them to prison or whip them. So, drinking alcohol can be stressful in Iran.

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41. I use "Complete Hijab" for that group of Iranian women who cover all of their hairs and bodies, even without Chador.

42. https://www.parsine.com/fa/news/472723

43. https://www.irna.ir/news/83257809

Some of the responders (i.e., no. 25, 30, 44) mentioned the alcohol drinking as the symbol of freedom and a motivation for their travel to Istanbul. In interview no. 25 that was with a four single men group, one of them said they were looking for a place to drinking and Istanbul was suitable to this target. Immediately his friend responded that Turkey is only a freedom destination, not more than that.

Drinking alcohol without stress in the ship tours, bars, discos etc. is an interesting experience for some of Iranians in Istanbul. Interviewee no. 38 said his best experience in Istanbul was their freedom that his wife goes out unveiled and can sit and drink alcohol in the cafes in Istiklal until 1 or 2 o'clock after midnight.

Of course, on the other hand, some of the interviewees also refused to attend some places because of their opposition to alcohol. For example, interviewees No. 6 and No. 24 said they would like to experience a night cruise in the Bosphorus but did not go because alcohol drinks are served there. Of course, No. 6 referred to both drinking and dancing, that is, he was opposed to both of them.

3.2.4.1.6. Third Country Tourism

Unlike the experiences described so far, which were mostly related to cultural and social freedoms, some of the experiences are more related to freedoms or, in fact, political restrictions. That is, it is mainly political restrictions that make them travel to Turkey and these restrictions aare not from Iran, but from another country. At least 12 interviews (no. 11, 14, 16, 23, 27, 28, 29, 36, 42, 43, 52 and 55) were done with the Iranian families that had some of their members came from Iran and other members came from other countries, especially European Union countries. I did 2 interviews with these kind of Iranian tourists in Konya as well, but their number in Istanbul was considerably larger. There are reasons for them to meet each other in Istanbul (or other cities, like Konya, or even other countries, like Armenia, Georgia etc.).

At first, the limitations in Iran, push them to meet their family in another country. These limitations can be due to the Iran government, or the other countries government. As an example of the first group, interviewee no. 42. was a middle-aged woman who came from Australia, said because she went to Iran two years ago and she did not like to go

there at a close time. She lives in a free country and used this freedom. So, the limitations for women in Iran is unbearable for her now. Some of them are also Iranian refugees will be arrested if they go to Iran. Perhaps because of this, some of them worry about being questioned, especially by a stranger. For instance, interviewee no. 43 said some of them came from other countries and some of them from Iran. But when I asked from which country and which city in Iran, although he was so affable, asked me to limit our interview only to their experiences in Istanbul.

As an example of the second group (who do not go to Iran, because of limitations by the other countries), interviewee no. 52 was a 32-year-old PhD electric engineering student in Australia who went to a scientific conference in Germany and in return to Australia, arranged with his family to meet in Istanbul. He explained that he was allowed by his university to go to the conference, but if he goes to Iran this may create issues between him and his university and the Australian government. Especially since he studies a sensitive academic discipline, and he is worried about how it will look if he goes to Iran without informing his university.

Istanbul is the only logical meeting point for many of these people because it is closer to both groups (the people living abroad and their families) and none of them will lose any excessive time coming and staying in Istanbul. Interviewee no. 27 said their children were allowed only 4 days off school and they did not have enough time to go anywhere else. There is also no direct flight from Germany to Iran. So, they chose Istanbul, because there are a lot of flights to there from both of Iran and Germany.

Related to this topic, Etemaddar, Thyne and Insch (2018) show Istanbul is an “ideal” place for some Iranians’ weddings and they do their celebrations in this city. Some of the couples chose Istanbul, because their family is scattered in the different parts of the world. So, they decided to gather them for their wedding in Istanbul. Between their homeland, Iran and Turkey, they prefer Turkey because of its leniency and freedoms. There is also no possibility for some of the relatives to go to Iran in order to participate in the wedding.

3.2.4.1.7. The Other Freedoms

Some of the other freedoms are mentioned in the interviews by only one or two respondents. For example, interviewee no. 45 explained in their previous travel in 2018, they saw some of Iranians in the Imam Airport in Tehran that delivered their dogs to the check-in, so they thought this is some kind of smuggling. But when they arrived to Istanbul, they saw the same Iranians that were walking with their dogs in the Istiklal street, while they wore shorts.

The dog is an unclean animal in Islam and only keeping of watchdog is allowed. So, keeping the other kinds of dog is looked negatively upon and walking with a dog in the streets and parks or a dog sitting in a car seat without a cage is illegal in Iran. A significant number of Iranians have dogs as pets and sometimes conflict between them and policemen occur, when they walk with the dog or sit with it in the car. So, for some of them, during foreign travels there is an opportunity to walk the streets with their dogs. Because I did not meet any of these people in interviews or travelogues, I cannot write about such an experience from their own point of view.

3.2.4.2. Indirectly Freedom Related Experiences

Some of the Iranian's experiences in Istanbul are not direct related to freedom but are indirect and are resulted of a feeling of lack of freedom by the Iranian tourists in Istanbul.

3.2.4.2.1. Be Deceived

Some of the Iranians are deceived by the disco and bar staff or prostitutes. There are some reminiscences on the Internet by the Iranians who lost their money this way. Even the Persian BBC prepared a report on this topic[44]. I found one person who experienced it. The pattern is similar in most cases: one bar marketer who knows you are an Iranian (they usually look for young men that are alone or in a very small group with other

44. http://www.bbc.com/persian/world-37534026

young men), comes and starts talking with you about Iran. He knows a few Persian words and describes his Iranian friends, or his travel memories to Iran. He introduces their bar to you as a place that has a lot of Iranian customers and invites you to there. If you do not accept, he insists more and more. When you accept and go and take a seat, two or three girls come and sit beside of you and start talking with you. A few minutes later, waiter comes and gives you your ordered and gives each of the girls one or two big drink glass. The girls drink all of them and leave you (some of Iranians believe the drinks are just juice, not alcohol). Finally, when you want to leave bar the waiter hands you the bill, with it being at $1000-2000 bill. They claim the girls were your guests and they drank very expensive drinks. The end of the story is similar as well. You reject their demands for payment, and they beat you up. Finally, they take all your money and belongings that are on you etc. You do not tell the police, because you do not know the legal ways in a foreign country; Also, because you are worried if you tell the police, they will end up informing the Iranian government.

3.2.4.2.2. Feeling Frustrated

Almost all Iranians compare Turkey with Iran and Istanbul with Tehran, as the biggest city, and Isfahan, as the most historical and touristic in Iran. Even the other historical cities in Iran were mentioned as well. Interviewee No. 5 believed that the neighborhood of "Chahar Koucheh" (4 alleys) in Bushehr, a city on the Persian Gulf coast where she was from, was more attractive to tourists than Istanbul but the authorities show no interest in it. Seeing Turkey and Istanbul creates a question mark in their mind: *"Why did Turkey develop and Iran did not?".* This question is a big highlight for them, and they try to answer it in their travelogues and interviews. Some of them look for the answer in the lack of freedom. They believe Turkey only has one thing that Iran does not, and it is freedom (i.e. interviews no. 1, 7, 16, 30, 41, 48). For interviewee no. 38, Turkey is an Iran that the revolution did not occur in. Of course, this feeling was also present among Iranian tourists in the other destinations (Antalya and Konya).

For Iranian tourists, seeing the development of Turkey means seeing the backwardness of Iran. When interviewee no. 3 hears the name Istanbul, the first thing that he imagines

is the weakness of Iran. Interviewee no. 51 emphasized several times that Istanbul is a Mashhad or Tehran, without the Mullahs and Turkey is an Iran without them. Also, some responders (i.e. 48) believed that if there was freedom in Iran, we would attract tourists more than Turkey. Some of them were talking about the years that Iran was developed more than Turkey (before Islamic Revolution). There is a famous story between some Iranians (which I heard in Iran several times, too) that before the revolution, if it was necessary to pass through Turkey, Iranians had to pay ransom to the people of Turkey.

Some openly tried to ignore and despise the beauties of Istanbul in comparison to the beauties of Iran. Interviewee No. 6, a 57-year-old man of Azeri origin living in Tehran, said the only reason he came to Istanbul was to be with his family. Otherwise, Istanbul has no attraction for him. He believed that Iran could attract 10 times more tourists than Istanbul if its tourism was properly activated. Tehran is much more beautiful than Istanbul. The green space of Tehran is much more vibrant than Istanbul. The passages they have built in Tehran and Tabriz in the last few years are much better than here. Rather than believing what he was saying, he seemed to want to comfort himself and somehow overcome the feeling of frustration that Iranian tourists feel when they see Turkey and compare it to Iran. Otherwise, although we cannot ignore the beauty aspects, green spaces and mountain resorts in Tehran, but as someone who has lived in Tehran for several years in his master's course, I know that with any definition and interpretation of the concept of beauty, Tehran cannot be more beautiful than Istanbul. He believed that in Istanbul, people only feel free, which is not the case in Iran, and he "regrets". The word "regret" was mentioned in about 10 conversations and expresses the feelings of Iranians well in this regard.

Of course, on the other hand, there are many others who do not hide their surprise and excitement from seeing Istanbul. In answer of "What would you say if after returning to Iran, somebody asked you about Istanbul?" some of interviewees said they will say that they must come and see this city up close. Even interviewee No. 13 said that Istanbul is one of the five cities in the world that everyone should see closely.

This interviewee (No. 13) was a young man and came to Istanbul with his wife mostly to visit historical monuments, he asked me to convey the questions that came to his mind when he saw Istanbul:

> *You, as a sociologist [anthropologist], should write that the people of Iran should come see Istanbul and get acquainted with the history of the place that once invaded Iran and took parts of our country. Why is their history shaped like this? Why is their culture like this? Why, while their culture is similar to ours, they are more developed than us? The culture of the Turkish people has changed a lot now. Why do they have Ataturk but we do not? Why is Ataturk so sacred to them? Iranians must know and understand these. Iranians should come here to experience the Turkish baths and Turkish nights. Iranians should be told to not buy meat and to not wear new clothes, to reduce their expenses, and save money to come and see Istanbul.*

This feeling of backwardness from Turkey dates back to the Ottoman era. Not just some travel writers who have visited Ottoman era, but even when "Haji Washington"[45] in 1888 wrote a paper from Washington to the Amin Al-Sultan, the Prime Minister of Iran, he described lawful life in USA and regretted Iran not being like it. Then he mentioned that even though the Ottoman Empire is also a Muslim land, it is still also better than Iran:

> *So, we must have a law in the country, as the Ottomans although have religion of Islam and respect the Qur'an, but they have regulations. At least if we do not have a Napoleon like Europe, why not have the rules like the Ottomans?*

In short, seeing the current development of Turkey and comparing it with Iran hurts the national pride of Iranian tourists.

3.2.4.2.3. Food Diversity

The position of food and beverage in tourism is so important that it was considered by the tourism scholars more than 3 decades ago (Ellisa et al. 2018) and some branches like Food Tourism and Vine Tourism were created. Food and drink can be one of the travel motivations (Kim, Park and Lamb. 2019; Kim and Eves. 2012) or can create an

45. Hussein Gholi Khan Nouri (1849-1898) was the first ambassador of Iran in USA that became known as Haji Washington, because of his service location.

unexpected experience. As Ellisa et al. (2018: 261) writes: *"Food tourism is about cultural anthropology through understanding the interactions of tourists with a place through the medium of food".* Iranian tourists' experiences with Turkish food help with understanding one of their cultural experiences and their perception of the destination.

For most Iranians in Istanbul, tasting various Turkish foods or drinks in Turkey is part of their touristic experiences, however it sometimes becomes the dominant aspect of their travel. Interviewee No. 22 said that hearing the name Istanbul, brings to mind the food diversity of this city and compares it with Tehran. According to him, if someone goes to a luxurious restaurant in the north of Tehran, they have chicken and Koubide Kebab, if they go to a cafe in the south of Tehran, they still have chicken and Koubide Kebab; only the quality may be different. But in Istanbul, every chef manipulates food and adds and subtracts something to get a new food out of it. Perhaps a quotation from one travelogue that is only about foods in Istanbul, clears it up better; a travelogue that is called *"Constantinople without Iskandar Kebab: A Guide to Tasting New Flavors in Istanbul"* (Salari. 2018). Her travelogue is 3212 words long and considered only foods and famous restaurants in Istanbul which she herself went to and tasted.

> *one of the most important part of being a traveler, specially, for a gastronome like me, is searching for delicious new foods, tasting street foods and the experience of discovering new flavors. In other words, staying far from chain restaurants.*

She even identifies Istanbul with its foods:

> *Snacks: this part in my opinion is the most interesting urban aspect of Istanbul and is known by all of travelers to Istanbul. It includes boiled corn, tea, Baklava that are found in Iran too. The inebriant smell of chestnut's smoke and the interesting taste and smell of street Turkish coffee and fresh Simit bread.*

Chagh Kebab in Shehzade restaurant, Por Kebab in Old Ottoman restaurant, Kokorej, Nusrat restaurant, Balik Ekmek (fish sandwich) in Eminonu wharf and the famous Balikci restaurant in Kadikoy neighborhood are some foods that she tried to taste in Istanbul. The last part of her travelogue is related to some foods and beverages that she tasted but disliked. Most of the comments below her travelogue are about foods and restaurants in Istanbul, too.

Of course, for some Iranians, Turkish food was not special. For example, interviewee No. 6 said that Turkish food is very similar to Iranian food. Some interviewees like No. 10 did not like Turkish food. Interviewee No. 11 was a 27-year-old Iranian girl who lived in Spain, she had traveled to Istanbul with prior knowledge of Istanbul's restaurants and foods. She went to Esen Burak's restaurant the night before the interview and believed that there was nothing special about it, while there are a lot of advertising about it. The next night she was going to go to Nusrat restaurant to taste the food there.

In addition to Turkish food, some of the global chain stores that have branches in Istanbul are also important to Iranians. A major reason for this trend is the ban on their activities in Iran. For example, McDonald's has no branch in Iran. Therefore, in the McDonald's branches on Istiklal Street, you can always see countless Iranians eating a cheap sandwich or ice cream.[46]

3.2.4.2.4. Shopping

The most common activity by Iranians in Istanbul is shopping. The tradition of shopping in Istanbul by Iranians, is a continuation of the past. For example, in some Qajar travelogue (Afshar. 1882/ 2007 and Muzaffar Al-din Shah Qajar. 1899/ 1984), they explained their shopping (i.e. clock and jewelry) in the Grand Bazar or Bey Oglu (later Istiklal Street). But their shopping was different from nowadays. In the past, they shopped from Istanbul, because it was an intersection and the goods from other Asian, European and African countries were exchanged there. But nowadays with globalization, these goods can be sent to every place in the world. Iranians started shopping in Istanbul because of the quality of Turkish brands and the other brands that are not allowed in Iran.

Today, Istanbul is a brand of shopping for Iranians and shopping is the most important motivation for some of them. Interviewee no. 10 recognized Istanbul as a shopping

46. This Iranian desire to eat McDonald's in Istanbul is reminiscent of the opening of the first McDonald's branch in Moscow in Jan. 31, 1990, in the last years of the Soviet Union. There was a very long line in front of McDonald's, and the Russians stood in line for several hours in cold weather be able to taste McDonald's. https://www.rbth.com/history/329911-ussrs-first-mcdonalds

destination. Interviewee no. 29 expressed this same belief other words. Istanbul for him is not a recreational destination, but a shopping destination that he can shop in for a few hours, sit and rest a little and again continue his shopping. Interviewee no. 19 said he would describe Istanbul as only a commercial and shopping city. It means that they spend most of their time shopping, as well as interviewee no. 6 said this is their third day in Istanbul and until that time, all they did was go shopping and nowhere else. Interviewee no. 14 said they bought a 4-day tour pack and that three days are for shopping and only one day is for visiting historical places and museums. It has been two hours since interviewees no. 34 arrived in Istanbul, but immediately they went shopping, and that is when I met and interviewed with them.

Javahir, Olivium, Forum and Aqua Florya are the most famous shopping centers for Iranians. The stores in Istiklal street, grand Bazar and Egypt Bazar are other places for Iranian shopping. The shopping centers and stores in Istiklal street are for shopping for clothes, and sometimes other things (i.e. home appliances). But Grand Bazar and Egypt Bazar are for souvenirs, although sometimes clothes are bought as souvenirs.

Their shopping experience in Istanbul is different from that in Iran. The Turkish clothing brands are very famous in Iran and *"This is a Turkish Brand"* is heard in most clothing stores. So as interviewee no. 5 said, instead of shopping at double price in Iran, they themselves come to Istanbul and pay only half the price. The second reason is related to the sanctions on Iran. Because of sanctions, a lot of clothing brands, as well as the other goods, have no branches in Iran. So, their Iranian fans must buy them as very expensive contraband or purchase fake copies. Interviewee no. 41 put aside $7800 only for shopping brand clothes. He was a little angry and said:

> *It really makes me stressful when I know I brought one hundred million Tomans [7800 $ at the time] for shopping here. But when we go to war with the whole world, brands cloths do not come to Iran, and there are no real brands there. So, we have to go somewhere else for shopping. This money could be paid to the cloth brands in Iran and we did not have to give our money to another country if we were in peace with the world.*[47]

47. The interviewee's sentences may have been a little different. I tried to note out the key words of his sentences and immediately after the interview, I repeated and recorded them in my own voice in the same place. So I probably forgot or moved some words. But all the quotes came out of his mouth.

The above view, which of course is shared similarly among some other Iranian tourists in Turkey, is a kind of "economic nationalism". Studies related to economic nationalism, although generally focused on the product's country of origin (CO) (Chuin and Osman. 2017; Rawwas and Rajendran. 1996; Anet et al. 2015), find that the tendency to buy from stores located in the buyer's homeland is the same economic nationalism, because its tax is levied on the government and re-paid to the country, or compatriot sellers make a profit from selling it. The desire to travel within the country instead of traveling abroad can also be placed in this category. This is something that many Iranian tourists in Turkey mentioned (for example, the lack of freedom caused them to come to Turkey, otherwise Iran has more attractions than Turkey etc.).

Interviewee no. 51 said they come to Istanbul every two years for shopping and this year allocated 1500 $ for their clothes shopping. But almost all of interviewees said this year was not good for shopping and they could not buy their needs, because after the new sanctions by USA, the value of Iran's currency fell too much. Some of them said if this situation continues, they will not come to Istanbul again.

The third reason that is not as important as the others, is the shopping experience in the night, which is described in the previous parts.

3.3.4.2.5. Cultural Diversity

The heavy sanctions and weak economy do not allow Iranians to be in an extensive relationship with the people of the other countries. Every year less than 5 million foreigner tourists go to Iran and most of them are from the neighborhood countries (especially Afghanistan, Iraq and Azerbaijan). But Istanbul is different and every year more than 10 million tourists from countries all over the world go there. It was interesting for Iranians to visit the different people and see a glimpse of their cultures. The street music groups from different countries and cultures are one of the cultural diversity symbols for them. At least four interviewees (no. 2, 13, 15 and 16) and two travelogues (Khormaei. 2019 and Jamali. 2018) mentioned this diversity.

Khormaei (2019) described Istiklal street as *"one of the most touristic and beautiful streets in the world"* that people from every nation can be seen there. The interviewee

no. 13 called Istanbul as *"The City of Seventy-two Nations"*[48] and that in a few years, *"a Turkish minority and foreign majority"* live there.

Some Iranians tend to have a "sense of connection with world culture" which Arabestani (2018: 85) considers "a kind of identification with world culture, in contrast to local culture".

3.3.4.2.6. Our Experiences

Although this one is not Iranians' experience in Istanbul, a lot of them mentioned it and some of them used *"our experiences"* to refer to it. They used these words to refer to Turkey changing from a secular country to a religious one[49]. They believed that we experienced this change, and we know that they are moving in the same direction Iran did. Interviewee no. 25 said the freedom in Turkey is not correct. No. 28 that was veiled and came out from Ahmet Sultan Mosque after her praying, said she came to Istanbul few years ago. At that time being veiled was not necessary, but this time it is. She was veiled since she was 9 years old but was against forced Hijab in Iran and was worried about Turkey going to the same direction. No. 43 believed after limitations on alcohol drinking (specified bars in specified hours), there is nothing left anymore in Turkey. There is everything in Iran, except freedom. So, there is no difference between Iran and Turkey.

But the most critical one was no. 32, a middle-aged man who travelled to a lot countries, including coming to Istanbul several times. But this time was different for him, not only because of high cost, but for more limitations on freedom. *"They are becoming miserable, exactly like us"* he said. He said this time the sound of mosques became louder, while the sound of music in the streets and concerts became quieter.[50]

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48. The idiom of "Seventy-Two Nation" is so famous in the Persian literature and a lot of poets (i.e. Rumi, Hafiz, Khayyam, Attar, Sa'di etc.) used it.

49. Even a lot of non-tourist Iranians say the same thing and believe Turkey government is going to be an Islamic government, like Iran.

50. Opponents of the Islamic Republic of Iran sometimes make similar claims. For example, the Mohabat News website, which belongs to Iranian Christian converts and is opposed to the Islamic Republic, wrote an article on May 9, 2017, entitled *"Turkey One Step Until the Islamic Republic"* in which it described the activities of the Turkish Islamist government, especially in promoting halal tourism and the construction

3.3.4.2.7. Be in the Cinematic Location

Film tourism is a new branch of tourism that has some sub-branches in film festival tourism and tourism on location (Beeton. 2004). Some Iranians in Istanbul try to experience being in Turkish movies and TV series locations. Turkish TV series are very popular in Iran and a lot of Iranians watch them on GEM TV. This channel is moderated in Istanbul by some Iranians, but it is illegal in Iran and Iranians watch using their illegal satellite. Because of limitations on Iranian cinema, the pop and romantic movies and TV series are limited. So, the Turkish TV series are welcomed in Iran. Because of cultural similarities, especially with Azaris almost all Iranians watch Turkish channels. These movies and series do not motivate to travel to Turkey, but it is interesting to visit some places in this country. For example, a lot of Iranians (i.e. interviewees no. 10, 11, 12, 26, 28 and 46) visited Topkapi Place, because of "Muhteşem Yüzyıl" TV series. Some of them asked me where is the harem? Or where is the porch that Sultan Suleiman spoke from there to the others? Mohammadi (2018) wrote about this phenomenon in his travelogue: *"Interestingly, Iranians were keen on seeing the harem and asking each other about it loudly".* Also, when I wanted to start the interview with no. 49 in the Ayasofya queue, they told me: *"First, let us ask you a question: is this the palace of Sultan Suleiman?"* and when I said it is not, they left the queue and asked me to lead them to the palace.

Being in the cinematic locations of movies and TV series about modern Turkey is interesting for Iranians, too. When the ship arrived to the Buyuk Ada in "Prince Islands" tour, some of passengers asked the leader to show them the cinematic locations of a Turkish series so they can take some photos. Tahmineh (2018) wrote that they choose that beach in Buyuk Ada for walking, that is famous in the movies and series. Also Khormaei (2019) wrote about the movies and series that were recorded in Bebek beach when he was there.

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of Islamic hotels in coastal cities, which, according to the author of the article, are destroying Ataturk's heritage and ignoring the views of Turkish intellectuals and educators. Accessed at July 18. 2018: https://mohabatnews.com/?p=18325

3.2.5. Conclusion:

The combination of foreign constraints (i.e. visa) and feeling of freedom lacking in Iran, forced a lot of Iranians to go to Istanbul and experience somethings that are forbidden in Iran. These experiences can be an activity (i.e. drinking alcohol, dance, being unveiled etc.) or be only the feeling of freedom (i.e. those women who have the Iranian hijab, but unlike to Iran, they are not worried about the ethics police).

Although “diversity of attractions” is one their reason to travel to Istanbul, it seems this reason is going to be limited. For example, the Iranian currency falling does not allow for shopping like in previous years, and the emphasizing on the religious laws by the Turkey government (i.e. limitations on selling alcohol drinking or getting loader the Azan sound from mosques) limited this “diversity of attractions”.

Also, traveling to Istanbul and seeing this city which has many economic, recreational, and cultural facilities, and comparing it with Iranian cities, makes Iranians dissatisfied with the situation in Iran. For example, Tehran, with a population of more than 10 million, is like a crowded Istanbul, but never had the facilities of Istanbul. Or comparing Istanbul with Isfahan, which, although it has many historical monuments and attractions, has not been successful in attracting foreign tourists. Asadzadeh (2018), as the critic of "Istanbul Istanbul" novel, says:

> *Istanbul is an important city, especially for us Iranians, and especially in the last thirty or forty years [...] The closest equivalent to Istanbul for us Iranians is Isfahan, because at the same time that Istanbul was an important city in the world, Isfahan was just as important.*

Also, some believe at least the lack of recreational and tourism facilities in Iran itself and the restrictions, according to the respondents, hindering its tourism development, is a source of dissatisfaction for Iranian tourists in Istanbul. Especially when they believe that Iran was more developed than Turkey in the years before the revolution, but now it is lagging behind. These comparisons and conclusions have tarnished the pride of Iranians.

The components of Iranian nationalism can be seen in these dissatisfactions. Some of these components are more obvious: such as the economic nationalism of tourists who are dissatisfied with the large number of purchases in Istanbul or the large number of

Iranians traveling to this city, because if conditions were favorable in Iran, the same money could be spent in Iran to help the Iranian economy. In some cases, this nationalism is less obvious: such as Iranians who critique the Islamic government of Iran due to the lack of attention to historical monuments and tourist attractions in Iran. Or Iranians that are dissatisfied with travel to Istanbul for the consumption of Iranian culture (such as the Los Angeles singers' concerts). They are also sometimes drawn to ethnocentrism in the midst of expressing their nationalist sentiments. For example, they point out that Turkey was less developed before the Islamic Revolution, and that the Turks behaved in an uncivilized manner and harassed Iranians as Iranians crossed their territory to reach Europe.

3.3. PART ANTALYA

Introduction:

Antalya is the second most common destination for Iranian tourists in Turkey after Istanbul. The purpose of traveling to these two destinations is different. Istanbul is visited for shopping first, and cultural tourism and nature tourism second, while Antalya is visited mainly for beach tourism and relaxation first and shopping second.

However, Antalya, which owes much of its popularity and tourism to its beautiful beaches, is a place of depravity in the eyes of Iranian authorities and even many Iranians. Javan, the conservative newspaper that is close to the Revolutionary Guards, wrote in a news release in 2016:

> *Yesterday, Hz. Ayatollah Khamenei in his Kharej [Fiqh lessons] gave the example of Antalya as a city where debauchery happens, and lapses travel and prayer and said he hopes the legislator and the cultural and legislative authorities arrange a plan where the unlawful travels are not advertised at all.*

But a short time later, the director of public relations at the Leadership Office described the news as "corrupt" in his criticism of the travel to Antalya (Tasnim News Agency. 2016). However, it is impossible to conceal the negative attitude the Iranian authorities have towards Antalya.

Official opposition to Iranian travel to Antalya started a decade ago, when some photos of Iranian women in bikinis and swimwear on the shores of Antalya were received by Iranian authorities and direct flights from Iran to Antalya were immediately banned. According to some reports[51], Iranian authorities have said in response to the Turkish request to allow Iran-Antalya flights, *"If Iranian tourists become not allowed to wear bikini and swimwear in the beach and are accommodated only in Iranian-approved*

51. https://www.radiofarda.com/a/f2_Bikini_Iranian_women_Turkey/332124.html "Radio Farda" News Agency (2006), a critical media to Islamic Republic of Iran, quoted the Turkish media (Haberturk News Agency and Aksham daily), but the archive of these Turkish media was not available.

hotels in Antalya, the direct flights between Iran and Antalya can get started again". It seemed that such a request was not accepted by the Turkish authorities, because there are still no direct flights. Iranian flights generally take passengers to Esparta Airport (which is a small and military airport) or Denizli. After that, tourists take a three and half-hour bus to their hotels in Antalya. But Turkish Airlines flights fly to Antalya with a short stop in Istanbul or another city, without changing passengers. Of course, Iranian flights also decided to use such a trick, so they started heading for Antalya after a short stop in Ankara. But officials were aware of the *"Antalya Smuggling Flights"* and even banned these kinds of indirect flights to Antalya[52]. Therefore, while the Iranian authorities could only prohibit the Iranian airlines, Antalya's indirect flights were provided by Turkish Airlines. One Iranian passenger described these flights:

> *We looked at the flight information board and were surprised to find Adana instead Antalya! I asked the lady who was sitting in the airport information room. She said: "Adana is the same Antalya, but in fact it was not. The flight had a one-stop in Adana, then headed for Antalya". The flight was done on time and after about 2 hours and forty minutes we reached Adana. At Adana Airport, nothing happened inside the cabin, meaning no passengers got off or boarded. We guessed this stop might be for refueling! But later, as I did more research, I realized that for political reasons there was no direct flight from Tehran to Antalya, and the stop at Adana Airport was nominal! (Ghorbani, 2018).*[53]

Of course, in the early years of prohibition of direct flights to Antalya, even advertisements for Antalya tours were forbidden. So, tourism agencies wrote Analya instead of Antalya, but many of the tourists who bought the Analya tours headed to Antalya on the basis of an unwritten agreement with the tourist agencies. After a while, the ban on selling and advertising Antalya tours was lifted, but direct flights to the city were still banned.

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52. http://www.magiran.com/nptoc.asp?mgID=3291&Number=1169

53. The experiences of one of the readers of this itinerary show that the issue of the destination name being different from the name of the flight is not unique to Antalya, although Antalya is the most famous and serious of them. One reader wrote in the following Ghorbani's (2018) travelogue: *"It has been decoded for us in recent years as the contemporary Airport dictionary. For example Adana's flight route is registered but it is called Antalya! Or when I was going to Northern Cyprus it was listed in the Adana bulletin board but it was called Arjan [?] [...] Strangely enough, at 2011, I had a Georgian Airlines flight to Port Batumi, but it was listed IranAir flight to Tbilisi at bulletin boards".*

Since then, there have been some reports in some Iranian media about the immorality of Iranians in Antalya. For example, in the summer of 2014, Asr Khabar News Website published a report called *"Dishonoring of Iranian Singles in Antalya"* and claimed because some Iranian singles are harassing other tourists in Antalya, some hotels and even tours do not accept them.

However, one of the results or perhaps even the purpose of this negative view and the ban on direct flights to Antalya is to make Antalya tours more expensive than Istanbul and other cities. One of the reasons why Antalya tours are more expensive than Istanbul (along with hotel options etc.) is the lack of direct flights from Tehran to Antalya. Due to the high cost of Antalya tours, it is not possible for all Iranians who want to go to the city to travel by plane, so many of them travel by bus. These bus travels to Antalya have been further compounded by the devaluation of the Iran currency (Riyal[54]) in the past two years. According to a report in an official Iranian news agency, in Nowruz 2019, at only one point of the coast of Antalya between 60 and 70 Iranian buses were seen moving Iranian tourists (ISNA, April 18, 2019). The cost of these bus tours per person is between one and two million Tomans (78-156 $ at time), cheaper than air tours.

Some of these bus tours are also designed to visit more cities thus passengers felt less fatigue on the way. For example, the Tabriz-Antalya bus tour was planned to host a "Charshanbe Souri"[55] in a restaurant on the way, the transition to the new year time is close to Rumi's tomb in Konya with Daf and Ney and Sema. They stayed 3 nights in Konya and then went to Antalya. But many of these Iranian bus tours to Antalya and Turkey have been followed by accidents and the death of some tourists, which are occasionally reported on in Turkish and Iranian media.[56]

There are also sometimes cheaper packages for Iranians traveling by bus to Antalya, but they do not always have a happy ending. For example, in the summer of 2019, the

54. The Iranian official currency is Rial, but in the daily life everybody uses Toman, which is 10 Rial. The problem becomes more complex when because of worthless and non-functional of 1 Toman, they say 1 Toman and it means thousand Tomans or 10 thousand Rials. It is not problem for Iranians, but is so complex for the foreigner tourists in Iran.

55. It means "Wednesday fire Celebration" that is held in the last Wednesday night in the streets and houses with jumping over fire and reading some poems.

56. i.e. http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/video/alanya-da-tur-otobusu-kaza-yapti-36049884

"Dream Land Music Festival" was advertised, it was supposed to be held in a very large area of the coast of Antalya, where the tourists could enjoy the following free services by paying a relatively reasonable price for Antalya tours: three meals a day at an open buffet, four drinks every day, three concerts per night by three well-known singers, ferry and rafting tours, darts competitions, beach volleyball, and more.

The festival goers were supposed to spend the nights in 4 or 6-person tents, with mattresses, pillows and clean sheets delivered on arrival. But when they reached to the festival place after a 40-hour bus ride, it turned out that many of the advertisements about the festival were false and the festival could not accept those who paid and registered. Iranian and Turkish media reported that the number of Iranian tourists who came to the festival ranged from 5,000 to 6,000 people. All of them returned to Iran or went to the cheap hotels in Antalya with their own money, while not being able to get the festival money back.

But even with all this negative propaganda, not only did Iranians still travel to this city, but the number of Iranians who bought or rented a home and settled there after their travel increased. Several Iranian restaurants even opened in Antalya, and the "School of Iranians in Antalya" has been launched with the approval of the Iranian Ministry of Education at all three levels, in Persian. The degree is the same as the normal school diploma in Iran.[57]

Antalya, alongside Istanbul, is even arriving to the Iranian cinema, whether in the production of forbidden films, (in the point of view of Iranian authorities) such as the low-level film *"Once Upon a Time in Antalya"* (Paknehad, 2016), or in approved films and series and even ordered productions by Iranian authorities (such as the four episodes of Gando's security series (Afshar. 2019), that is the most controversial series of 2019 in Iran and creates the controversy between conservatives on the one hand and reformers on the other hand).

However, Antalya tours are still popular for Iranian tourists. Even in Nowruz, when Antalya's climate is not suitable for beach and water sports and leisure, a large number of Iranians go to this city and travel agencies provide many tours for this two-week

57. http://far-aras.blogfa.com/

Iranian Nowruz holiday. Some Antalya hotels that are closed in winter even start their activity in Nowruz due to the presence of Iranian tourists (Hossein Nejad, 2018). 110 Antalya tours were advertised in the list of Nowruz tours in 2019 at the *Last Second* website. Their cost ranged from 3.490.000 Toman (271 $ at time) to 36 million Toman (2.791 $ at time). The cost depended on the flight (direct to Antalya is more expensive), hotel, room (single, double or triple), lateral tours (i.e., shopping, old city, ferry etc.), number of bed nights etc. Most of the Antalya Nowruz tours were six bed nights (76 cases) and five bed nights (24 cases). Some of these tours were combined tours for Istanbul and Antalya; for example, 4 nights in Istanbul and 4 nights in Antalya.

Because of the number of Iranians, forbidden Iranian singers (like Los Angles singers) come to Antalya in Nowruz to hold concerts, and bringing these well-known Iranian singers to Antalya attracted many other Iranians to the city. This means that the presence of Iranian tourists and singers in Antalya has a mutual effect on each other. The name of the singers, the date of their concert, and the price of their tickets in Nowruz of 1398/2019 are listed below:

Date	Singer	VIP1 $	VIP2 $	VIP 3 $	Normal
2. Nowruz	Shadmehr	245	195	145	90
3. Nowruz	Andy & Tohi	245	195	145	90
4. Nowruz	Ebi	155	130	----	85
7. Nowruz	Andi & Leila	245	195	145	90
8. Nowruz	Kamran & Hooman	140	110	----	80
9. Nowruz	Arash	85	85	----	60
10. Nowruz	Sami Beigi	245	195	145	90

Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages were free at these concerts (usually one or two free shots or cups and the rest must be purchased); the tickets differed in price depending on the level of fame of the singer and the proximity or distance to the stage. The concerts were planned so that the singers' concerts would not interfere with each other. Of course, most of these singers also had concerts in other cities in Turkey

(especially Istanbul) and other countries (such as the Republic of Azerbaijan, Dubai, etc.).

Concerts continued in Antalya during the summer, but it was not as intense as in Nowruz. There were also world-renowned singers' concerts in this city, which was another attraction for Iranian tourists. For example, Jennifer Lopez's concert was held at Regnum Carya Hotel in Antalya for $ 700 per person on 15 August 2019, with many Iranians purchasing a special concert tour (plus six nights in the hotel, from 1750 to 2150 Euros) going there.[58]

With these general explanations of the situation of Iranian tourists in Antalya, the author's research findings in the city are presented below.

3.3.1. Fieldwork (Participant Observation and Interview):

Most Iranian tourists take tours with Uall hotels in Antalya because all three meals, snacks, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are free, they serve recreation such as swimming pools and water slides, they have a dedicated beach, nightly concerts, darts, beach volleyball and more, so they spend most of their time in the hotel. The interviewee No. 11 says because hotels here are competitive, they offer all kinds of services, and interviewee No. 8 refers to a combination of services such as food, rest and activity at the hotels. This is the quality of Antalya hotel services that for some Iranian tourists (such as Nos. 9 and 21) is the most important image of the city that remained with them. So, the best place to participate in participant observation as well as interviewing and gathering data is hotels like this. But the high cost of these hotels did not allow me to do so. However, there are some chances to visit Iranian tourists outside of these hotels:

A) Shopping malls. Almost all Iranians who come to Antalya spend one or at least half a day in these centers, so they can be found in there. In the days when I was at the cheap *Expo Royal Hotel*, he spent most of his time in these shopping malls. Especially the downtown Mark Antalya Shopping Center and the Terra City

58. https://turkeyconcert.com/product/jennifer-lopez-concert-in-antalya/

Shopping Center. Most Iranians buy from stores such as LC Waikiki, Cotton, and DeFacto, where sitting in front of these stores almost always gives a chance to meet with them. Especially when some shoppers are tired and wait for others in front of the store.

B) Rafting. The excitement of boating on the roaring river is very attractive for many Iranians. So, some of them believe that if you go to Antalya and do not go rafting, then you only experienced half the trip. Because of this, most Iranians go rafting. Therefore, attending rafting tours increases the chances of talking to Iranians and participant observation. As the author once experienced this tour with other Iranians.

C) Bars and nightclubs. Although all Uall hotels that Iranians go to have free bars, many Iranians like to experience nightclubs as well. There are several nightclubs in Antalya (i.e. Inferno in the Kemer area, Gaga Club in Lara area, Crystal, Aurora and Lara Pitch) known to the Iranians and they usually go there. Of course, only a minority of Iranian tourists experience these clubs. The author experienced a night in Gaga Club in Lara with other Iranians.

D) Ferry tours. Of course, this is not as popular as the other activities for Iranians, and some Iranians who have experienced it have not had much satisfaction. Considering that: 1- I experienced an Antalya ferry tour with the Iranians a few years ago; 2- I experienced ferry tours with Iranians in Istanbul, 3- it is not very widespread among Iranians in Antalya, and finally, 4- due to financial constraints, I did not experience the ferry tour in Antalya this time.

E) The luxury hotels. I experienced only two nights at the Uall and four-star Grand Park Lara and had a good opportunity at participant observation and especially interviews with Iranian tourists.

Research time and place: I spent two weeks in Antalya, from June 23 to July 7, 2019 and collected field data. 11 nights at the *Expo Royal Hotel* in downtown and two nights at the *Grand Park Hotel* in Lara. In fact, if there were no cost restrictions, he would have spent the whole two weeks in hotels such as Grand Park, Titanic, Rexus etc. where Iranian tourists are mostly going.

Due to the very negative view of some Iranian authorities and people on Antalya tours and to check the correctness or incorrectness of this view, Antalya interviews were done with two groups: Iranian tourists and Iranian tour guides. Both groups accused the other group of inappropriate behavior and strongly criticized each other. Another reason for talking to tour guides in Antalya is the specific research problems of this city. Due to the same negative attitude of Iranian authorities towards Iranian tourists in Antalya, as well as the greater freedoms in Antalya, some tourists may not be willing to share all their experiences. Therefore, getting help from tour guides who are more familiar with tourists in Antalya can compensate for this weakness to some extent. Of course, there are official and unofficial Iranian guides. An official guide means someone who has passed a special course on tour guiding in Turkey or Iran and received a degree. Unofficial guides are those who work in this profession without having received a degree, but only based on their acquaintance with Antalya and its attractions. Official guides have strongly criticized the unofficial guides for their failure and their harm to both tours and professional guides. They believe that anyone who comes to Antalya and settles down without work permits, goes for black (illegal) work and tour guiding is one of the most available ones. Therefore, without any training in this field, they start such a profession.

The Jupi Café in the Lara area was where Iranian tour guides gather every evening. Three guides were found and interviewed. Mohammed has been a tour guide in Iran for many years and then continued his career in Antalya for several years but later dismissed it for two years because he believes that the non-professionals have ruined the market of this profession. He said:

> *There was already a hierarchy in this job. You first worked with a professional guide and you helped him. Then you would do small tours and then big tours. Then you would go to the guide head. But now some people come and immediately without knowing the tours and guides, guide the big tours.*

Conversation with at least a few other old guides indicated that they had abandoned it in Antalya because of similar issues.

In the other hand, these guides critique the Iranian tourists, too. Most of the criticisms that the guides (even those who abandoned this profession) said about Iranian tourists are summarized as follows:

1- Dishonor for Iran and Iranians: No. 3, a guide who was very much a complainant to Iranian tourists, says: *"Early years that I came to Turkey, if somebody was asking me where you are from, I would be proud to be an Iranian. But now I abjectly say I'm Iranian"*. Some of the behaviors of Iranians that, in the Iranian tour guides' view, cause havoc and disgrace the whole Iranians are: obscene sexual behaviors (especially singles), showing off (especially in hotels with their many and varied clothes), stealing (especially worthless goods such as towels), excessive drinking (especially at the hotel's free bar) and fighting (usually after drinking a lot of alcohol).

2- Not giving Money: Many guides say that Iranian tourists pay a lot for Antalya hotels and tours, but bargain for a Turkish Lire and a dollar for a tour. Perhaps one of the reasons for the negativity of guides about Iranians can be found here. Of course, No. 4 says this money is not inevitable for some Iranian tourists to spend.

> *3- Many Iranians do not go out of the hotel and only eat bread and cheese there. They do not go out to spend money. Many of them do not really have money. They try so much to gather money and come here to take some photos and live videos and put a story [in Instagram] saying, 'I'm in Antalya'.*

4- High expectations: The guides complained that the Iranians believe they had bought the guides and even the hotel and that guides, and hotel staff had to do everything Iranians wanted.[59]

But on the other side of the story, Iranian tourists also had a lot of complaints about tour guides, which can be classified into two groups:

1- Neglecting tourists. Generally, it was mentioned, both in conversations and in travelogues, that the guides were visible only in the airport to lead tourists to their hotels, while on the way advertising their tours (i.e., ferry, rafting, shopping etc.)

59. Of course, on the one hand, the guides seem to exaggerate all of the above, and on the other hand, the rest of what they say is not limited to Iranian tourists. Drunkenness and excessive drinking are commonplace among many single men, both Iranians and non-Iranians. The researcher could not find any evidence about the theft by Iranians, although he has seen a lot of Iranians show off in his participant observation, which goes back to Iranian singles in particular. However, heavy makeup of Iranian women can also be included in this showing off. The Iranian government's widespread social, cultural, and especially religious prohibitions can be considered as one of the roots of such extreme showing off among Iranians. According to No. 12, despite the conditions that the Iranian people have, they are good people who can tolerate each other and do no more anomy than this. After all, vicious sexual behaviors are not as some of the guides have claimed, but can be found less and more among single men (and fewer women). Sex with someone other than spouse is a severe taboo in Iran (mostly by the rules, which are otherwise declining rapidly among the middle-class urban population), so in Antalya it is extraordinary.

and then tourists would not be able to see them until at the end of the travel, they come back to the hotels to take the tourists to the airport.

2- Expensive tours. The tours that Iranian guides would sell to tourists were sometimes up to two or even three times the price of these tours outside the hotel. The general formula was this: the most expensive tours were sold by Iranian guides, then the tours that were sold by hotels and finally the tourist offices outside the hotel. Tourist offices are generally found near the hotels that sell a variety of tours. Most Iranians bought their one-day tours from these offices, which were much cheaper than the Iranian guided tours. Tours like rafting, ferrying and more. For example, Negar (2017) wrote in her travelogue: *"We bought a pirate ship tour in front of the hotel for $15 per person with lunch which our tour guide announced at $60!"* In general, trust between the two groups is very low. As stated in one of the travelogues (Kikha, 2016): *"The tour guides lie but the contrary is proved"*. Of course, some Iranians who want to accompany these tours with other Iranians, buy the tours from the Iranian guides. Whether to be or not to be with other Iranians on the travels and tours may have been one of their experiences that will be addressed further in the pages ahead.

No	Interviewee	age	Sexuality	Place of interview	No. of travel to Antalya	With…	Job	City
1	Tour leader	35	M	Jupi café	-	-	Freelance	Antalya
2	Tour leader	32	M	Jupi café	-	-	Freelance	Antalya
3	Tour leader	30	M	Jupi café	-	-	Freelance	Antalya
4	Tour leader	40	M	Tera City	-	-	Tour leader	Antalya
5	Student	30	F	Jupi café	-	-	Student	Antalya
6	Tourists	25	F	Jupi café	+20	Alone	-	-
7	Tourists	45	F&M	Grand Hotel	5-6	Family	Athlete	-
8	Tourists	45	M	Grand Hotel	1	Family	-	Tehran
9	Tourists	35	M	Mark Antalya	3	Family	-	Rasht

10	Tourists	45	M	Mark Antalya	-	Family	Freelance	Tehran
11	Tourists	50	F	Mark Antalya	2	Family	-	Tehran
12	Tourists	45	M	Tera City	1	Family	-	Tehran
13	Tourists	48	M	Mark Antalya	-	Family	Lawyer	-
14	Tourists	45	M	Mark Antalya	1	Family	Doctor	Sanandaj
15	Tourists	20	M	Tera City	1	Family	Student	England
16	Tourists	40	M	Mark Antalya	1	Family	Printing	Tehran
17	Tourists	70	F	Mark Antalya	1	Family	-	Tehran
18	Tourists	20	M	Tera City	1	Friends	-	Mashhad
19	Tourists	70	M	Tera City	1	Family	Industrialist	Tehran
20	Tourists	40	M	Tera City	5-6	Family	Industrialist	Tehran
21	Tourists	45	F&M	Mark Antalya	1	Family	-	Sweden
22	Tourists	35	F	Mark Antalya	1	Aunt	Housewife	Saveh
23	Tourists	40	F&M	Tera City	1	Family	Land Agent	Damavand
24	Tourists	45	M	Grand Hotel	3-4	Friends	Employee	Tehran
25	Tourists	65	M	Grand Hotel	-	Friends	Confectioner	Bojnourd
26	Tourists	35	F&M	Grand Hotel	2	Family	Cabinetmaker	Urmia
27	Tourists	45	F&M	Grand Hotel	1	Family	-	Tehran
28	Tourists	25	M	Grand Hotel	1	Friends	-	Kazeroun
29	Tourists	35	M	Mark Antalya	1	Family	_	Nour

30	Tourists	45	M	Rafting tour	1	Alone	Carpet seller	Kurd-Tehran
31	Tourists	30	F&M	Rafting tour	1	Family	-	-

However, the fieldwork in Antalya had some limitations, too. Were it not for these limitations, I would have gathered more valuable data. The most important limitations of this fieldwork are as follows:

High Costs: As mentioned earlier, the cost of staying at Uall hotels, which Iranians generally choose, was so high that I could not stay more than two nights.[60] If he stayed in these hotels for two weeks (for example, every three or four nights at one hotel), a much better result would have been achieved.

Distrust: As explained in the Istanbul section, Iranians have a difficulty trusting researchers. So, it is normal in Antalya, the city known for its debauchery by the Iranian authorities and traditional conservative class, that many Iranian tourists refused to answer and sometimes even avoided me. Some of those who agreed to cooperate either gave short answers or refused to continue the interview in the middle of the conversation on various pretexts. For example, when I spoke to a 45-year-old man at the Terra City Shopping Center and he reluctantly agreed to speak, the first question was: *"How many times did you come to Antalya?"* He answered: *"Your question is very personal, and I am not going to be interviewed by you"*. Because of these kinds of sensitivities, I did not record their voices (except the tour guide's voices); but he wrote notes during the interviews and verbally explained and recorded his voice, immediately after being separated from them. Due to this problem, the interviews with men were more than women. Only 5 interviews (from 31) done with women and 6 interviews done with both of women and men. Similar to the Istanbul interviews, a conversation and interview with a woman -while her man is there- is not a good idea. So, I started the interviews with the men and tried to have their wives contribute. This weakness was partially compensated by examining the travelogues of Iranian women that visited Antalya.

60. But for the same two nights the researcher paid 1280 lira which was roughly equivalent to one month his scholarship. He spent 3250 lira for the fieldwork at Antalya.

3.3.2. Documentary Data (Travelogue):

Unlike Istanbul and Konya, where there are novels and travelogues about Iranian experiences, no Persian book has been written about Antalya so far. But many Iranian travelogues about this city can be obtained on the internet. For example, on 21 November 2019, 909 Asian travelogues, 207 European travelogues, 16 African travelogues, 11 American travelogues, 3 Oceania travelogues, 3 cruise travelogues and one Antarctic travelogue were found on Last Second, the biggest Persian website for introducing tour packages. Among the Asian travelogues, Turkey had the highest number of travelogues with 256, even more than Iran itself with 241 travelogues. Among the destinations in Turkey, after Istanbul with 133 travelogues; Antalya was ranked second with 32 travelogues on 11.21.2019 and Konya with 7 travelogues in the ninth place on the Last Second website. Antalya is, of course, one of the cities and destinations of Turkey most famous for seaside travels, so if we include other travelogues of similar cities (Aydin 22, Marmaris 19, Bodrum 10, Izmir 8, Olodeniz 4, Fethiye 3, Esparta 3), the number of travelogues in this group will be 101.

The first Antalya travelogue was written on October 12, 2012 and the last was October 20, 2019. The last 20 travelogue were reviewed (since some travelogues were 2 or 3 parts, more than 25 travelogues were actually reviewed). 7 of the 20 Antalya travel writers, traveled to Antalya by their cars, and Antalya was one of the many cities they visited. Sometimes they stayed for a few nights and sometimes only a few hours, without spending even a night there. 13 travelogues were written by men and 7 by women. 13 travel writers (both men and women) travelled with their families and 6 travel writers went with their friends (5 single boys and one single girl travel writers). One travel writer did not specify who they had gone with. Each travelogue had an average of 4,108 words and 52 pictures. Of course, some travelogues used more than 10,000 words in three parts describing their full stay in Antalya, and the others that were on their way to Antalya during their journey, used only about 500 words. Also, some travelogues had close to 300 photos, while others had less. For example, one of them had only had 1 photo of Antalya. Much of the texts and photos of the travelogues of

Antalya were about the food of the Uall hotels. Feiz-Allahi (2017), for example, had 57 photos only of the breakfast in Rexus Premium Hotel.

Besides the travel writers, some are professional travel readers (who are of course sometimes also travel writers about the same destination or other destinations), and generally under the travelogues they write their complementary, thankful, or critical reviews. In the Antalya travelogues section, Makvandi, Shafi'i, Sepideh (who writes under most of Antalya's travelogues that one of her dreams is to go to Antalya), Varzesh-Nejad and some others are comment writers. Some of these comments and views are similar in size to a travelogue and have scrutinized a very detailed topic related to the travelogue (such as a hotel, food, recreation area, etc.). For example, Soltani's comment under of Fakhar's (2016) travelogue, describes the *Rexus Premium Hotel* in 1658 words. This study also benefits from the views of the professional readers who have traveled to Antalya and have written commentary on the travel writer's refusal, approval, or incompleteness. Most of the comments sought details in the travelogues that were not stated and could be applied to their future journey. For example, they would say, *"We want to go to Antalya, but we don't know what the weather is like?"* or *"Would you please compare hotel X with hotel Y? because we have doubts on which hotel to choose"* or *"Is this hotel also suitable for children?"* or *"How did you get cabotage documents for your car?"* Many also ask the author's and others' views on some related topic under the travelogues. For example, *"We want to go to this destination next month. Which hotel would you recommend with such conditions?"*.

That is why in the title of some of the travelogues, words have been used in order to attract more information seekers: *"A Memorable Journey to Lovely Antalya (Comprehensive Travel Guide to Antalya)"* (Hussein Nejad. 2018), or *"Trekking around Turkey by car (useful and necessary information)"* (Yazdani. 2018). Some travel writers (such as Zaker Ja'fari, 2016) have also mentioned in their travelogues that they have read and gotten guidance from previous travelogues on the Last Second website before their travel.

But like the Istanbul travelogues, there were limitations on data collection in the documentary section. One limitation of Last Second travelogues is that they are based on site guidelines that try to provide the most explanations and guidance to future tourists and thus mention their own experiences less (in our anthropological sense).

Pictures are also generally impersonal, especially when their clothes are ones that may go against Iranian rules. As Kikha (2016) pointed out: *"As usual. one of the hardest things was getting a photo that I could use with the cultural points in the travelogue".* So, in most of these travelogues we know what activities and behaviors they participated in, but we did not get to know much about their personal experiences. Summarizing some of their activities that are not accepted by Iran rules in a row and without having photos is another limitation that we find in some travelogues. For example, Fakhar (2016) writes in a part of her travelogue: *"The second day was full of excursions and good moods with swimming and relaxing in the pool and under the trees, strolling along the broad shore, lunch, and a little beach volleyball".*

But there are still ways to get closer to the experiences of these tourists in Antalya. For example, their sense of Antalya, which is evident in the titles of some of these travelogues, brings us somewhat closer to their senses and experiences: *"The Relaxation Experience of Travel Kind"* (Negar. 2017), *"Delicate Senses, Gentle Senses"* (Ghazi Zadeh. 2016), *"So Far, So Attractive"* (Kikha. 2016), *"Antalya: A Like Aramesh (Relaxation), B Like Bahar Narenj (Orange Blossom)"* (Ghorbani. 2018), *"A Delicate Journey to Antalya"* (Tavalla. 2018), *"Esparta Hell, the Gate of Sungate[61] Paradise"* (Sepahi. 2016), *"Antalya Further than Luxury Hotels"* (Feyzallahi. 2017), *"Antalya Further than Your Imagination"* (Karami, 2017), *"A Memorable Journey to Antalya and Istanbul"* (Shima. 2018), *"A Memorable Journey to the Lovely Antalya (Comprehensive Travel Guide to Antalya)"* (Hussein Nejad. 2018), *"A Happy and Unforgettable Journey to the Orange County Antalya Hotel"* (Zaker Jaafari. 2016), *"A Journey to Antalya and the Land of Legends"* (Abbasi. 2016), *"Antalya, A Journey to the Blue Heart of Turkey"* (Sabaghi. 2017).

Alongside this, one can also notice the signs that many of these travel writers have implicitly pointed to despite their limitations. For example, some one that uses the term *"Iranian visual art"* instead of dancing (Tavalla, 2018), or finds it necessary to wear a life jacket on a ferry tour *"in due to what they had drunk"* [alcohol] (Kikha. 2016), practically apply what is referred to in William Beeman (1986) in his ethnographical study: *"Language, Dignity and Power in Iran"*. Maybe the term "Dor Zadan" (passing from beside) in Persian language would be appropriate here. It is used when you want to

61. Sungate Rexus, name of their hotel in Antalya

commit something illegal, without direct illegal action. The travel writers explain their purpose, without using key words (i.e. dancing, drinking etc.).

3.3.3. Why Antalya?

Some of the tourists, either in the interviews (No. 6, 7, 9, 11, 16, 20, 22, 24) or in travelogues, mentioned that this is not their first travel to Antalya. Their reasons are different; some of them come to visit their families (No. 9, 22 and of course 17, that is her first time) or their friends (No. 6). Some of them explain that they come every year or so to Antalya, because here their time is full of relaxation (no. 20), it is made like paradise and you pay once, you have no concern for food, recreation, your children etc. for one week (no. 7). At least in one conversation (No. 7: *"Something like Paradise is provided in Antalya"*) and one of the travel writers (Sepahi. 2016) the term *"paradise"* itself was used to describe Antalya hotels. As some other travel writers (Karami, 2017; Feyzollahi, 2017) point out, Antalya is beyond imagination, some tourists (i.e., No. 16) were amazed at the excellent serviceability of these hotels. Paradise is a place where all kinds of food and drink are available, and elysians get their hands in everything they want; similar to the restaurants that are available in Uall hotels and the staff that is walking in the hotels providing travelers with the food and drinks they need quickly.

Even their travel to Antalya does not need any reason, one only needs to search for destinations in Turkey and immediately Antalya is shown (No. 21). Interviewee No. 11, who is a middle-aged woman, came for the second time, because she wants to run from the limitations in Iran and Antalya was the superior option. No. 24 is a middle-aged man and came with his two friends, he said that they came several times with their families, however because their wives always wanted to go shopping and they had to accompany with them, so this time they decided to come without their wives so that they rest in the hotels. No. 16 came for the first time after his wife travelled to Antalya and asked him to go together the next time and after that they came 3-4 more times. There was only one different outlook, although No. 12 liked Antalya so much, he will not come again, because his wife does not like to travel to a destination twice.

3.3.4. The Iranian Tourist Experiences in Antalya:

Similar to Istanbul, the Iranian tourist experiences in Antalya can be divided into two groups; experiences that are directly related to freedom, and experiences that are indirectly related to freedom. In fact, what Iranian officials have called Antalya a place of “debauchery” for has been called the experience of freedom by Iranian tourists. Both groups are described below.

3.3.4.1. Freedom Related Experiences:

The six experiences of feeling of freedom, clothing, and the veil, drinking, water sports, third destination tourism, and relaxation fall into the group of experiences that are directly related to the freedom of Iranian tourists in Antalya.

3.3.4.1.1. Feeling of Freedom:

It must first be noted that the feeling of freedom can be different from freedom itself. That is, there may not be freedom, but there is a sense of freedom among citizens through propaganda. Or vice versa, there may be freedom, but people do not feel free because of the propaganda of other nations. Here, as the first experience relates to freedom in Antalya, most Iranian tourists mentioned feeling freedom.

When asked about his experiences in Antalya, interviewee no. 24 says the most they have experienced was *"this freedom"* and casually shows around with his hands that it seems freedom is a present entity in all the streets, beaches, and shops of Antalya. *"Here's a country where I'm free,"* says the middle-aged woman and when she is asked "which freedom?", she wonders.

But why some may not say exactly what they mean by freedom, because many do not know what is legal or illegal in Iran. That is, there is no clear boundary between which activity is free to be done and which is not. Zakai (2012: 48) points to the lack of specific spaces for leisure, criminal view and ambiguity on the youth subcultures, silence and uncertainty about some forms of leisure, etc., which shows some problems with domestic tourism. In fact, part of the *"relaxation"* experience –which is explained

in the next pages- can be found here. There are some activities that are also allowed to be done in Iran, but in Antalya it is done without stress. For most of the activities in Iran, the government has not yet delineated the exact boundaries, and that is why some police make personal judgements on whether an activity is deemed illegal or not. Or some other concerns like women riding bikes, although not legally prohibited, are not approved by the clergies.

There is plenty of Antalya entertainment in Iran for interviewee No. 12, but in Iran *"you always expect one to come and tell you something"*. They rented an apartment in Antalya for 15 days and borrowed a bicycle from one of their relatives and sometimes ride it. Every day he and his wife walk a few kilometers to the beach, but "relax".

Doing sport and leisure activities with the family (from cycling to running, etc.) is one of the experiences mentioned in several other interviews in Antalya. Interviewee no. 13 points out that he should go alone, and his wife should go alone: *"Ladies on this side, gentlemen on the other side."* That is why Antalya, according to interviewee No. 16, is a good environment for families to have security with each other.

Because of the remarkable presence of these kinds of sports and activities in Antalya, interviewee No. 13 says many Iranians think Antalya is a place for sex, like Thailand, while it looks like the city of sport. As No. 8 and No. 11 point out, the city's name for them was equal to debauchery and *"Nudists Islands"* before they came to Antalya.

Interviewee No. 19 believed the government has yet to let its citizens choose their lifestyle. He explained that they were about 10 comrades in the Shah period, 7 of them were generally at the "Shahre No"[62] and taverns, and two or three of them were in mosques. He then explained that Antalya is the same. Everyone who wants to have a cover, and anyone who does not want to have one have no problem with each other.

Perhaps it is this criticism of Iranian style of Islam that has led Christian missionaries - who are themselves new Christians- to Antalya to spread Christianity. Interviewee No. 20 is surprised to see so few Christian missionaries this time, while there were a lot of

62. A neighborhood in Tehran where there were prostitutes, women and was destroyed in the early days of the revolution.

them in his previous travels to Antalya[63]. He was very upset that the Iranian authorities saw Antalya as a place for debauchery. He was in fact upset because this view sees him as a corrupt man. He exaggeratedly said there were much more prostitutes in Tehran, and Antalya had not even a fraction of the amount Tehran has. In Tehran everybody can find tens of prostitutes in just a few seconds, as he believed.

Of course, many religious Iranians still refuse to go to Antalya. In the comments section of Tavalla's travelogue (2018), he answered to one reader: *"Of course, some families do not consider foreign coastal cities to be appropriate for their children depending on the religious and cultural level."* Also, although interviewee No. 14 was happy with his travel to Antalya, Malaysia was for him better than Antalya, because he had more Islamic views and in Malaysia, they were more interested in Islam with regards to their recreational activities.

No. 17, who was a part of a martyr's family[64] and wore a veil, confirmed that before she came to Antalya, she had read a lot about the atmosphere of Antalya on Instagram[65], but *"when I came here, although they were free, they were not unrestrained. They are respectable people and their attitude towards Iranians is very good".* She emphasized that Islam is the religion of freedom. But what is now in Iran is not a religion of freedom. Her grandchildren are young, and they always tell her that she spent her own time in love in the "Shah period"[66] and now "prescribe" for them (youth). She disagreed with the situation of Iran and said that they should give the youth freedom so they would not have to go to this or that country. She feels this freedom in Antalya. We can also point out the freedom to dance that is not allowed in Iran except at home and for confidants. But in Antalya during the two days when I was at the Grand Park Lara Hotel, dancing Iranians at the hotel's nightly concerts was notable. Especially the single Iranian men

63. Of course, I did not see these Iranian Christian missionaries in Antalya.

64. In Iran, the casualties of the war between Iran and Iraq are generally referred to as the martyr's family, which is respected by the government and the people. Of course, this lady's brother is missing; he was among those whose bodies were not found.

65. Therefore, it seems that her connections in Instagram are also with religious individuals and groups.

66. A term to refer to the period of the last king of Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and used so much, especially for comparative situations.

who danced near the stage. Dances are also mentioned in travelogues, but generally the word dance itself is not used (except once). For example, Jorfi (2019) writes:

> *In the middle of the mall [Mark Antalya's] corridor there was a stage, and a banner signaled that two singers would be invited to here at 3 PM tomorrow. Farsi songs were played in the hall and gave a special thrill to the compatriots and they were thrilled.*

Also, Tavalla (2018) depicts the Iranians dancing in his ferry:

> *The ferry was half an hour far to the beach and so we insisted to playing Iranian music. There were about 10-15 Iranians on, all the tourists were seated and enjoyed from "the Iranian art" surprised.*

3.3.4.1.2. Clothing and the Veil:

Hijab is another aspect where some tourists experience freedom. Interviewee No. 27 said that it was a fun experience for him that his mother would wear a veil and his wife would not. Ghazizadeh (2016) explains in her travelogue the activities of the hotel photographer:

> *His photographs were ordinary, and I think in our country there are better and more creative photographers and overall beautiful atmosphere. But the important difference was that with any cover you could take pictures, especially on the beach, etc.*

However, a significant number of Iranians in Uall hotels are without hijab. Especially those who use the pools and water sports of these hotels, usually men come with shorts and women with bikinis and swimsuits. The biggest problem of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the Iranians' travel to Antalya is related to this section. As mentioned in the introduction to this section, Iranian officials, in response to Turkish officials requesting the resumption of flights between Tehran and Antalya, made it a condition to prevent Iranian women in swimsuits and bikinis from appearing on the beach or in hotel pools. However, it is rare for Iranian women to swim in pools in Islamic swimsuits or shirts and pants. Also, another group of Iranians, although staying in hotels, do not go to the pool and water sports at all because of the hijab. Because this issue still seems to be

taboo for many Iranians, so it is not possible for me to guess what percent of Iranian women tourists swim in hotel pools or on the beach in Antalya. During my stay as a researcher at the Grand Park Lara Hotel, I saw no Iranian families at the pools of this hotel. While the two groups of single Iranian men I spoke to were in the pools from morning to evening, every day. In addition, the women of a family I spoke to at the same hotel also wore Iranian hijabs, so they do not appear to be swimming in the pool, which is also for men. On the coast of Kenya Alti alone, I once saw two young Iranian women swimming in swimsuits at sea, and once I saw an Iranian family of four lying on the beach and sunbathing. Due to the sensitivity of the issue - as I mentioned - it is still taboo for many Iranians, and therefore even those who do not find it taboo do not seem willing to talk about it so it was not possible to interview them.

3.3.4.1.3. Drinking Alcohol:

Although because of publication restrictions, specifics are not mentioned in travelogues, but there are some indications of eating and drinking things in Antalya that are forbidden in Iran. For example, as mentioned above, several nightclubs in Antalya (i.e., Inferno) are known to Iranian tourists. Two travelogues mention that they went to Inferno, without explaining what they went there for. Zaker Jafari (2016) did not write anything in the main text of his travelogue and only mentioned $60 when he answered to a reader in the comments section on costs. Tavalla (2018) also briefly pointed out: *"Then we went to Inferno last night and we were there until 4 AM"*. Drinking also is mentioned in the travelogues in the other ways, too. Kikha (2016) wrote:

> *After about two hours of stomping in the ferry, it stopped near the Dedeman waterfall and we were allowed to go swimming. Of course, the use of the rescue vest was mandatory for everyone, which is due to the potable in the ferry, I think it being mandatory was very appropriate.*

But alcohol was more freely mentioned in the interviews. For interviewee No. 13, who was a lawyer, it is not important to have alcohol in hotels in Antalya and in Turkey in general, but its illegality in Iran is a problem. Or, for interviewee No. 29, who's most interesting experience in Antalya was that they could drink alcohol with their family

freely. It is also interesting, as No. 31 said that they can have some beer or wine together with food. He also asked me the address of Gaga Club and explanations about going there with his wife that night. I have a night experience of being in this club that is described below.

Box 3.	**Gaga Night Club:**	**July 2. 2019**

There is usually a special program for Iranians on Tuesday nights at Gaga Club (Lara District). Most agencies and tour operators sell the night for $ 30-$ 35 (more than 150 liras at the time). Their service is only round-trip in front of the hotel, plus a club entrance with a glass of beer. Whereas if you go to the club personally, its entrance is 25 liras and a beer is sold there for 35 liras. That means a total of 60 liras plus the fare, which is still less than $ 30 even if you commute by taxi.

In the evening I went to the Juppi Bufe in the same area of Lara and talked to some Iranian tour guides. Then I headed to Gaga Club, which was about a kilometer away. I first entered a hall of about 100-meter space and then there was another gate that I had to enter. In front of it I paid 25 liras and they put a colored stamp on my forearm that I could show if I go out of the bar and wanted to come in again.

A hall of about 300-meter and there was a bar in the middle of the hall for selling drinks. There were tables and chairs around this hall and of course, some areas of the hall were for something like VIPs. I found an empty double table and sat down. The hall was not too crowded, but it was also not quiet. Maybe about 30 people came before me. The music was playing. But sometimes, another group came in, signaling that they came with a minibus.

The program got serious at about 11pm. That is, dancing and pumping steam into the hall and etc. By this time there were perhaps 150 people in the hall. Sometimes Iranian and sometimes Turkish music was played and rarely English. Almost everyone was young (under 40), with family or single group. There was also a European boy who was standing near the bar, but an actively group of Iranian singles was trying to accompany him with their selves. He was sometimes dancing with them but would usually stand near the bar and drink beer. The same group of singles sometimes dragged married men into their ring and danced with them. At this time, the women with the married men gathered around them and clapped. Also, there was a family with five members near me, one of the women in that group was very active, dancing almost from the beginning to the end of program, encouraging the rest of her family to dance. Occasionally, she danced with the single group that was close by and dancing together.

In the bar, the cost of the drinks was very high and almost twice the price of the outside. For example, a 15-lires beer would sell for 35 lire. But because it

couldn't be brought in from outside, customers had to buy and sales were not bad.

It was about 12 o'clock when four girls entered the hall with two bodyguards, each in a four-cornered platform and began to strip dance. Many guests, especially single men, started filming, as they got closer to themselves. They danced for about 20 minutes and then went down one by one with the guards. But they came again in about half an hour and danced again for about a quarter of an hour.

Guests began to leave at 2 am. More than half of the guests were gone, and I came out at 2:30. Some sat in the 100-meter entrance hall and smoked. A few minibuses were still in front of the bar, and it was left for guests to take them to their hotels.

3.3.4.1.4. Water Sports:

Not only the "Blue Flag"[67] beaches in Antalya, but also the roaring rivers that are suitable for rafting tours, the water parks with large slides and the possibility of diving, alongside hotels with many pools, slides, water sports and recreational activities have become inseparable from the destination of Antalya. Although Iran has many lakes and rivers in the north (Caspian Sea) and south (Persian Gulf and Oman Sea), they are not standardized for swimming (including not having a blue flag and not being clean in many cases) and especially the religious restrictions on men and women swimming together, water sports in Antalya have become a special experience for Iranian tourists. Of course, the issue about the unclear legal and illegal activities of Iran come up again. Perhaps one example is the sprinkling of water of youth in Tehran's *"Water and Fire Park"* in the summer of 2011. This spontaneous program, held by a Facebook call, was followed by a serious reaction by police and authorities to arrest some of the offending people.

67. "The Blue Flag Programme for beaches and marinas is run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education) [...] The Blue Flag Programme promotes sustainable development in freshwater and marine areas. It challenges local authorities and beach operators to achieve high standards in the four categories of: water quality, environmental management, environmental education and safety". There are 463 Blue Flag Beaches in Turkey and 203 of them are only in Antalya state, while the others are in the other 16 states (for more information: www.mavibayrak.org.tr).

Even on Iranian shores, families sitting together and not swimming is not forbidden, there is less of a suite-like place to sit. Or, although Iran has many rivers that are suitable for rafting, there are rare occurrences for this sport, while after searching for rafting in Persian on the internet, many advertisements and explanations about this sport are displayed in Antalya. So, it's not strange that it is such a good experience for interviewee no. 10 to be with family together at the pool; or when no. 7 was asked about his best experience in Antalya, his wife who was sitting nearby says *"For me, water sports";* and for no. 21 the symbol of Antalya after her travel, will be sitting on the Konyaaltı Coast; and one of the travelogues (Sabaghi. 2017) is entitled *"Antalya, A Journey to the Blue Heart of Turkey"* and finally, the best experience for no. 22 is the rafting in Antalya.

I once experienced with other Iranian tourists the rafting tour, which is explained here.

Box 3.	***Rafting Tour:***	**July 7. 2019**

7th of June 2019 at 9:20 I was in front of the Lara Caravanserai Hotel.The minibus arrived at 9:50 and picked passengers up from several other hotels. Half were Iranian and half Arab, specifically a Lebanese family. The minibus air conditioner was broken and occasionally brought in dust. Several times the passengers protested it. According to the guide, the company was supposed to send a bus, but it was wrecked in the morning, and they had to send two minibuses instead. Our minibus and another.

Ours stood somewhere for 20 minutes for shopping and souvenirs. It was 85 km to the city center. The name of the rafting area was "Konak Basi". Again, it went uphill and then stayed at another station. Everyone was loaned a life jacket and a helmet. Anyone who wanted a shoe would be given a rubber shoe for water that would cost 20 lire for its rent or 40 lire for buying. Small mineral water also 5 lire, it was much more expensive than usual (normally it was 1 or 1.5 lire). From there the minibus went uphill for 14 kilometers and finally we arrived the last and main station.

Every 10 people were aboard a boat and one man was accompanying and leading them. Our group of 25 was divided into three groups of eight and one group of nine. There was a family of three besides me in our boat, who had visited each other here; a Kurdish man residing in Tehran, a family of four (male and female, 14-15-year-old boy and 3-4-year old boy). One of the other

boats was puncture and they had to pump it up with air.

In some places the river was roaring, there was more excitement. There were two places on the way to rest, but in fact it was a place for shopping. The prices were expensive and some passengers who were thirsty or hungry had to buy something. Swimming places could also be found at these stations. In some places, when the water was deep, the boat leader would say that whoever wants can swim here. Our guide was an Arab from Hatay because there were many Arab tourists coming.

The boat occupants spray water to each other as they approached one another, which was one of the most exciting times in rafting. Our boat's occupants said when we were spraying other boats, "We are like Iran, we have a war with everyone, but everybody outpaces us". But the atmosphere of the boat was so joyful.

After three and a half hours we returned to the place where we took a life jacket and helmet. We then took the boats upstairs and returned the equipment we had taken. The lunch was a very thin roast chicken, but we got as much rice and macaroni as we wanted. The salad was finished before we got there. Other than that, we had to buy anything like water or soda. The photos and videos they took of us on the boat in the river were showed in the lunch time and given to anyone who wanted to buy them. A picture was for 20 or 30 liras, but the cost of the videos was not found out. There was also a young Iranian lady who was promoting the "Inferno Club" tonight for a hundred liras.

Then we went back and get everyone off in front of the hotel. During most of the trip back, I was talking to the Kurdish man. He was around 45 years old and has a carpet store in Tehran. He had come here to do something. One of his acquaintances had bought a house in Antalya and he had come to give some money to the seller. He thought it would take too long time and trouble. Otherwise, his 9-years-old daughter would have liked to come, but he did not bring her, and now he was sorry. He spent 11 million Toman (around 950 $) for his tour, in a single room in U-all services Caravanserai Hotel, but he was not satisfied, because he was sick and could not go anywhere or eat anything. Even seeing others eat made him nauseous. He only could eat yogurt. It was worse in the hot weather.

There was also a 30-year-old couple in our minibus wanted to go on a ferry tour tomorrow. But the guide said they will send a minibus tomorrow that is not similar to this one. Also, they hope the ferry will not be like their boat, with a puncture! They were a resident in Caravanserai Hotel and wanted to go to Gaga Club tonight. So, they asked me some questions about it.

3.3.4.1.5. The Third Destination:

Like in Konya and Istanbul, in Antalya several interviewed Iranians designated the city as their third destination. Namely that they were Iranian, but residing in another country for reasons described in the previous sections (such as restrictions on going to Iran) and decided to come to Antalya to see their family. That is, two people or groups from two different places designate a common middle ground to meet. This can be good on the one hand (because they see their family after a long time) and on the other hand it can be bad (because they usually prefer to see their family and other friends and acquaintances in Iran, but for some reason cannot go to Iran).

Like interviewee No. 17 the woman whose son and daughter-in-law came from England to Antalya to visit with their family, that came from Iran. They said that they could not go to Iran, because they were just doing their residence permit in England, and according to her son, they could not go to Iran until their residence is determined. They have been living in England for about 18-19 months. Also, interviewee No. 15 was a 20-year-old student boy who came from England to Antalya and his father came from Iran to Antalya to visit each other. They did not talk about this matter, but I guessed they had the same problem. However, this type of tourism is more common for Iranians in Istanbul. Because traveling to Antalya is more expensive than traveling to Istanbul, direct flights to this city are less common and Antalya is less known to Iranians than Istanbul.[68]

3.3.4.1.6. Relaxation:

Gaining relaxation, the lost aspect that many Iranians are looking for these days, is one of the experiences Iranians gain in Antalya. The relaxation is somewhat different for the two groups of Iranian tourists: those who seek this relaxation after a year of hard work in Iran and those seeking this relaxation in Turkey. There is a little difference between the two; the first group actually needs a break after a year of effort and is therefore looking for a place to stay away from work. As Fakhar (2016) Wrote in her travelogue: *"Due to a stressful job, my husband and I decided this time to take a relaxing travel (no worries*

68. Also, the last was no. 21, a 40-year-old couple from Sweden came to Antalya for fun, but no one came from Iran to visit them and this was only a normal travel.

about planning, sightseeing, food and eating, shopping, commuting etc.)". Or interviewee No. 19 says in his interview that they are dealing with production problems in Iran for one year, so it is their right to have a good week after a busy year. He added that he also has an Iranian friend living in Germany and Antalya's situation is so good that he will one year try to save money to come here and rest.

But for the second group, the environment of Iran generally seems to be tense, and on the contrary, the environment of Antalya is full of relaxation. So, although the first group is looking for more calm, and Antalya is one of the places where they can find it, the second group can't find it in their home country and so they are looking for some sort of escape from Iran. For example, interviewee No. 10 mentions in his interview that he is free of thinking and worrying in Antalya, so he does not want to be involved with his work and worrying about news in Iran during his travels, and so his cellphone is off in these few days. No. 23 repeats the phrase *"for the relaxation that flows here"* several times. On the streets here, he said, there was no news of a fight, no car overtaking and overusing its horn, the things that we were dealing with in Iran. Even his elderly mother, who was standing there, emphasizes this relaxation when her son talked about it. The mother also said that they were far from the concerns here, and that is very good.

Interviewee No. 6 says Antalya is peaceful and came to the city more than 20 times to sunbathe and have fun. *"What do you mean fun?"* when I asked her, she explained: *"Anything that brings me relaxation,"* she answered. No. 20 noted that Antalya gives them a sense of calm and they are comfortable here.

This tranquility is especially evident in the Uall service hotels. According to No. 7, because they have something like a paradise here, they no longer have any concerns, not for food, nor for entertainment or child safety. That is why most of their time is spent in hotels. Sepahi (2016) writes: *"Unfortunately, I could not visit the sights of Antalya and Kemer and join the tours, because of the comfort we had at the hotel"*. The same people looking for peace and relaxation are less likely to explore and visit different parts of the city, especially cultural and historical attractions. None of the interviewees were familiar with the historical attractions near Antalya (such as Perge, Side, Aspendos,

etc.), and only some of them had gone to Kaleici[69]. Similar views were dominated by travel writers. For example, Feyzollahi (2017) writes in his travelogue:

> *We arrived at the first destination which was Perge. It was not a remarkable sight to visit at all and each person's entrance was 20 liras which was not really worth it. We preferred not to go there because it was some sort of historical area that might be important to the Turkish people.*

The others visited only Kaleici (Abbasi. 2016; Feyzollahi. 2017; Shima. 2018), because their hotel is in the same area.

There were only two exceptions: Fariman (2018) visited some historical places of Antalya and took a lot of photos of them, because of his university degree (architecture). And Ghorbani (2018) visited Kaleici and Phaselis historical sights, both of which were far from her hotel. Ghorbani is one of the best travel writers and she received an Antalya tour as the award for a travelogue competition. Also, she went to Antalya in March, when the water sports centers are closed, so she had enough time to visit the other sights.

In general, these tourists see Antalya as a place to relax and this is a common point for both groups. As for some (No. 11 and 23), the main picture that remains in their minds after their trip to Antalya is the peace and relaxation. This is even quoted by Negar (2017) in the title of his travelogue: *"The Relaxation Experience of Travel Kind"*.

Of course, this search for relaxation is likely to lead to more Iranians in the coming years towards Izmir, Kusadasi and Bodrum, where they can feel more solitude than Antalya and more peace can be gained. Those who traveled to both destinations believed Antalya was a bigger city, but Bodrum etc., are better for those looking for more peace, especially since they are cheaper.

3.3.4.2. Indirectly Freedom Related Experiences

3.3.4.2.1. Food:

69. The old part of the city in the center of Antalya, whit a lot of souvenir stores, small café and restaurants.

The food experience of Iranian tourists, as noted in the Istanbul part, has two categories: the first is the variety of foods and especially the foods that are not in Iran (such as McDonald's); and the second –that was surveyed in the previous pages- is the freedom to eat and drink foods and beverages that are forbidden in Iran (like alcohol). Here, only the first group is explained.

Namely the variety of foods in Turkey, some may become customers of brands that do not have a branch in Iran. For example: *"At the end, like all of our outdoor travels, we went to the McDonald's and ate 2 Max Burger"* (Karimi, 2017). But beside of this and in general, the variety of food available to tourists in Antalya is particularly high, especially for those who go to Uall hotels that includes a large portion of Iranian tourists, and most of the Antalya tours sold in Iran also go to these hotels.

The Uall hotels have one or more large halls that categorize foods around their spaces: types of bread, Kebabs, steaks, pizzas, pickles, pastries, salads, fruits, drinks and etc. There are no restrictions on eating and drinking and the passengers can take as much as they want. The diversity within each category is so high that it can satisfy any taste of any culture. So, the highlight target of the travels to such hotels is the variety of foods.

Ghazizadeh (2016) calls drinks and food as *"One of the most fascinating and enjoyable part of our journey."* That is why most of the travelogues were dedicated to describing the variety of foods and drinks and including many photographs of them. For example, as mentioned, Feyzollahi (2017) had 57 photos only of kinds of cheeses, butter, jams etc. at the breakfast of the Rexus Premium Hotel. Iranian photographing of the foods of these hotels is part of their travel experience, though sometimes the intensity of their photography makes some of the other Iranians feel discomfort (i.e. Fakhar, 2016).

3.3.4.2.2. Shopping:

Although the shopping experience in Antalya is not as prominent as it is in Istanbul, it is an important part of the experience of Iranian tourists in the city and constitutes the most important attractions outside the hotel. As interviewee No. 12 mentioned, Iranians who reside at Uall hotels only get out of the hotel once, it's definitely to go shopping.

The shopping is usually a family, or only feminine activity. Women who come single or with family definitely go shopping, but at least two single male groups were interviewed who were not looking to buy and a three-person group (No. 24) said there was the reason to come single this year unlike the previous years. They have not brought their wives, so they don't get bored because of shopping (which is required for women) and want to spend this year relax at the hotel. No. 19 and 20, who were interviewed for more than an hour and a half at the Terra City Shopping Center, were waiting for their spouses to make a purchase. And both were angry that their wives had been so late and delayed them.

Of course, those who had come to Antalya many years ago (for example No. 7 and 26) said that this year's purchases were very small due to the devaluation of the Iranian currency. Even No. 17 who came to Antalya for the first time, says that a few years ago when they were traveling to Syria by bus (and so passed from Turkey), they were shopping in Turkey and were given real discounts. But now it is different. They bought two pieces of clothing, one for 35.99 lire and one for 24.99, with no discount. Seven years ago, when she went to Istanbul, a lira was worth a thousand Tomans and appropriate for shopping, but it is expensive now.

More or less, the interviewees generally bought (or decided to buy) around $300 worth of clothes, and for a family it can go up to $ 4,000. Some have not predetermined what to buy and just buy whatever they liked (such as No. 10). But for the No. 11, who was a middle-aged lady, it is important to see *"Original Brands"* like LC Waikiki[70] in Turkey, because in Iran they do not have these brands, and if they do, they are the old-fashioned models. However, as No. 22 says, having a variety of stores and having all the famous and fake brands in Antalya shopping malls is a serious advantage for Iranian.

All of the above were about buying clothes and shoes. But some were looking to buy a home. No. 20, who bought about 20 million Tomans worth of clothes for himself and his wife, was looking to buy a house in Antalya because he was very fond of the city. Also No. 23, who himself is a real estate agent in Damavand city (near Tehran), was

70. "LC Waikiki" although is the cheapest cloth brand in Turkey but is the most famous for Iranians and some of its branches were opened in Iran in the recent years.

looking to buy a house in Antalya, because –as it was mentioned in the previous pages- he and his family liked the peace and calm in this city.

3.3.4.2.3. Avoid or close to Iranians:

Perhaps the closeness or distance of the Iranians to each otherr during the travel is also one of the Iranian experiences in these travels. Does being away from Iran and its stressful environment (as some Iranian tourists claimed) also mean being away from Iranians? Or is it enough to just be away from Iran? There were two categories of views among Iranian tourists in this regard:

A) The group that liked to be away from the Iranians, generally their reason was related to the abominable behavior of some Iranian tourists. This issue has been mentioned in several travelogues, and of course, these discussions have generally been raised in the views below those travelogues.

B) But after all, there is another group of Iranian tourists who prefer being in an Iranian group for reasons such as companionship, being happier, more excited, and so on.

Because of the varying views on this issue discussed with each other, it would be more useful to express these two opposing views together.

Karimi (2017) in his travelogue he was happy to say that he was unlucky at first:

> *The Adalya Elite Hotel was modern and excellent, but unfortunately, they said they would not accept single passengers and we either unfortunately or perhaps fortunately went the Crystal Tat Beach in Belek area*.

That was because they did not see any Iranians at the Crystal Tat Beach Hotel. *"Try to choose hotels that the Iranians rarely go to,"* he wrote openly.

Fakhar (2016) is also surprised that the minibus for transfer from airport, put a family off in front of the Lycia World Hotel, which is far from accessible places. So, she asked the them why they chose such a hotel? They answered: *"We chose a hotel that would have no Iranians."* Fakhar, herself of course, also complained about the Iranians' behavior in Antalya. For example, she wrote: *"We hated the filming and photographing our compatriots*

did regularly at various food and dessert tables etc. I didn't think it was interesting." The same criticism was expressed by the readers to this issue, too.

But in the other hand, for example one comment below on Fakhar (2016) travelogue writes:

> *The sad thing about some of comments is that they feel bad about the Iranians in foreign hotels, which really makes me wonder why an Iranian is upset when they visit their compatriots in a foreign country? This kind of xenophilic behavior is only for the people of our land unfortunately.*

This shows us that some abnormal behaviors (whether in the authority's view, or in the perspective of the Iranians themselves, or even from the Turkish perspective) are seen among Iranian tourists. Some have mentioned their abnormal behaviors in their travelogue, without being aware of the falsehood of their behaviors. For example, paying extra for hotel services to give them a better or earlier room (that are mentioned above) or taking pictures of places where it was forbidden (Fariman. 2018).

Some are also approached by me during an interview or observation. For example, when I was interviewing with two young men (No. 18) outside the Terra City Shopping Center, while they had given up on avoiding incorrect and inaccurate responses, when either women or girls passed in front of us, they taunted and mistreated them. They also said that they wanted to stay away from the Iranians because *"the Iranians are worthless"*. Interview No. 28 took place at the Grand Park Lara Hotel with four men (two young and two middle-aged, one was the father of one of the young boys). The young one was looking for a place to have sex with women. He asked me several times and when I said I really do not know, he wanted me to look for him. The next day, too, I met the middle-aged father in the Turkish bath of the hotel. He asked me about massage, when I explained it to him, I realized he was looking for sex and sex massage, and when I said it was not here for that, he said *"No, I only look for woman for these guys".*

Of course, none of these behaviors are specific to Iranians. At the restaurant of the Grand Park Lara Hotel I saw that tourists from other countries occasionally took a lot of photos of the variety of foods. Tourists from other countries may also look for sex in destinations. But in destinations and hotels with more Iranians, these behaviors may be seen as more specific to Iranians. In fact, these grievances can be seen as a continuation

of Iranian self-criticism that appeared in many books, media, articles, etc. in recent years. As well as the term *"We Iranians"* that is generally followed immediately by a cultural critique, is heard a lot.[71]

3.3.4.2.4. Feeling Humiliated:

One of the first Iranian experiences of traveling to Antalya, especially for those traveling indirectly to the city, is the humiliation. Antalya's direct flights are banned and many travelers who prefer Iranian flights to Denizli or Esparta due to cost differences finds it a disgrace for themselves to travel by bus to their hotel. As Esparta and Denizli airports are very small and military, with only Tehran flights and lacking the minimum amenities (such as seating on the floor of lounge) so travelers sometimes must stand for several hours (Sepah. 2016; Sabaghi. 2017; Hossein Nejad. 2018), these are indications of this sense of humiliation. A comment under the Sepahi's (2016) travelogue states:

> *I really don't understand. This is self-abuse. People are being abused. It's a "religious hat"[72]. So why do you abuse the other people? Let them go direct. Finally, I didn't understand what they wanted to show.[73]*

Due to this atmosphere of misunderstanding, the other problems seen are related to the Iranian authorities' plans to abuse the Iranian tourists in Antalya. For example, some believe that Iranian flights are deliberately set at midnight to arrive early in the morning, so they must sit in the hotel lobby for hours until the rooms are delivered, while they are very tired because of traveling by plane and bus for several hours. Interviewee No. 19 said: *"Our government likes to hurt its people"*. While some of these problems are sometimes due to the airlines or tourism agencies looking for cheaper flights, airport services or hotels. They want to spend less, and it may have nothing to do with the decisions of the Iranian government (Tavalla, 2017).

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71. The researcher has also heard the term "We Turks" in Turkish cultural criticism in the country.

72. A Persian term for cases where religion is used as a means of irrationalizing or deceiving others.

73. Some travel writers have misunderstood this; for example: *"Because no Iranian could have the Antalya stamp on their passports, it [plane] stopped for half an hour in Istanbul or a nearby town and again headed for Antalya flew"* (Negar. 2017).

There is also the lack of Iranian banking system connected to foreign banks, and the lack of MasterCard for Iranians who travel abroad for hotel and airline reservations. Some travel writers (such as Abbasi, 2016) wrote detailed descriptions of how to purchase a MasterCard Temporary (albeit at above-average prices) to buy foreign flights or book foreign hotels; however, following all these travelogues, many questions were still being asked of authors and other readers.

This feeling of humiliation caused many Iranian tourists to construe any kind of treatment with themselves in the hotel, city, etc. as an insult. Some tourists, for example, believe that the staffs of hotels at Antalya pay attention to Iranians less than the other tourists. A comment under the Sepahi's (2016) travelogue writes: *"They do not give the room sooner than its time (14 o'clock) to Iranians, but if you are non-Iranian, they do it in a way. This issue had so much mental pressure to us."*

Interviewee No. 24 also believes that his hotel gives Iranians a blue bracelet, while giving other passengers a different color bracelet, based solely on discrimination; a belief that was wrong and that due to the price, the blue bracelet was for full-service.

Also, some travel writers who had went to Turkey (Antalya and the other cities) with their cars pointed to the bad roads of Iran near the border. For example, Fariman (2018) writes: *"There were 3-4 Iranian two-way roads near the borders (Armenia: Jolfa and Norduz, Turkey: Razi and Bazargan). Road quality was similar to the rural roads: ruined and bumpy. It's sad for an oil-rich country"*. Perhaps this is related to Iran's tourism policy (inhibition of recreational tourism and development of religious tourism). The Iraqi border road is four-lane and convenient.

3.3.4.2.5. Feeling frustrated:

Like in Istanbul, Antalya provides an opportunity for most Iranian tourists to think about Iran's position in relation to Turkey and other countries in general, and to compare the conditions of Iran with Turkey. In all comparisons, the scale is unequal, Turkey on top and Iran on the bottom. So, the feeling of anger on the one hand, and frustration and disappointment on the other hand, is constant on Iranian minds. Whether true or false, most Iranian tourists believe that Iran is at least on par with Turkey in terms attractions,

if not better in terms of monumental and natural environments. But while Turkey has made good use of these conditions, Iran not only does not attract foreign tourists, but also because of its cultural policies, Iranians flee to Turkey to spend their money there.

Sometimes these comparisons make too busy the Iranian minds. For example, Mohammadi (2019) throughout his travelogue uninterruptedly was comparing Turkey with Iran and giving superiority to Turkey, which in many cases was in fact an excuse and nonsense. Comparisons of the two countries' tourism are generally based on a few points:

A) Iran's tourist attractions are on par or even higher than Turkey's. For example, interviewee No. 16 says that if the ideology in Iran would allow tourism to develop, the tourism in Turkey would depress. No. 24 said, *"What does Turkey have that we do not, and have us come here?"* No. 31 said that *"Our Iran"* is much better than here. There is nothing special here. Of course, he explained that the pool and the other entertainments in hotel are interesting to them, as well as the very high variety of its foods. But he immediately added that they prefer the taste of Iranian food and he was not very interested in Turkish food. *"Our tourism"* could have been much better, and here there is nothing for them. *"We are not here for food"*. *"Our tourism"* could close the nozzle of oil wells and the Iranians do not have to spend so much money to come. No. 30, who was sitting beside of No. 31, continued the same thing, saying Iran is much better than Turkey and instanced "Ramsar"[74] that is much better than Antalya, *"but only if they let it"*. No. 20 was upset and thought what would have happened if the Iranian tourists had spent their money in Iran? He said that he is disturbed when he sees the progress of Antalya, then he corrected his statement and explained that he is not sad about the progress of Turkey, but because of *"our retrogression",* and that they are so far behind. No. 16 did not even think Turkey was developed that much.

   Both patriotism and economic nationalism are evident in these statements. There is a clear dissatisfaction that Iran is lagging behind its neighbors like Turkey, that its

74. Ramsar is a touristic city in the north of Iran, ashore of Caspian Sea. Before the Islamic Revolution, it was so developed as a touristic destination and even Mohammad Reza Shah made a palace for himself there.

capabilities for tourism development are being ignored, and that they are forced to bring their money and spend it in Turkey. Such comparisons and dissatisfactions, of course, are not only in this section, but can be seen and heard in the expression of almost all the experiences of Iranian tourists in Antalya.

B) The ability or competence of Iranians to develop their tourism is greater than Turkey. Interviewee No. 16 believed that unlike the Iranians, the Turkish people do not have an economic sense. He came to Turkey before the revolution. During the *"Shah Period"*, he bought a BMW from Germany, and when he crossed the Turkish territory he was in awe. The people ran barefoot and threw rocks at the car and he had to throw them cigarette out of the car.

   This story of the Turks' strange treatment of Iranian tourists or extortion from them in the past few decades is very common and I have often heard it from other Iranians, both in Turkey and in Iran. In this point, the answers are generally ethnocentric.

C) Deliberately or not, Iranian authorities do not permit to development of tourism in Iran. *"They [Turkish authorities] used well their indigenous capacities to attract tourists. We have a lot of these capacities in our country and I wish we were using them more"* (Ghazi Zadeh, 2016). Interviewee No. 13 also believed that the country was deliberately kept closed and that is one of the reasons why Iran was not touristic.

   Of course, according to the evidence - which will be shown more in the fourth chapter - it seems that the Iranian authorities welcome the development of religious tourism. However, with some other types of tourism, especially recreational tourism, they do not agree with it and do not invest much in that area.

D) The cost of travel to Turkey and Antalya is equal to or even less than travel inside Iran with the same services. The cost of commuting (fly, bus, taxi, etc.) in Iran is cheaper than Turkey (because of the cheap gasoline), but the cost of hotels is higher than in Turkey (because the number of hotels is much lower than Turkey and so there is not much competition between them, and there are not many tourists to cover the current costs of the hotels). So overall the cost of Iranian hotels is higher

than in Turkey and when this factor comes along with more Turkish hotel services (such as water sports in Antalya hotels) and restrictions in Iran, traveling to Antalya vis-à-vis the domestic travel in Iran seems more reasonable. Both Kikha (2016) and Abbasi (2016) have indicated in their travelogues that they initially intended to have a domestic travel, but when they estimated the costs, they found that traveling to Antalya was more economical.

E) Expanding the tourism situation to the whole of country: In addition to discussing tourism, tourists also point to other things in Turkey that could and should have been in Iran but are not. From social and cultural freedoms to business, employment, and international relationships and so on. Interviewee No. 30, who was in the rafting tour when he found out that my doctorate was coming to an end and he decided to return to Iran afterwards, highly recommended me to stay here and not return. In his opinion, the conditions in Iran are not suitable at all.[75] They always turn on the television and Internet and watch this channel or that website to find out when they will be attacked. If Iran is attacked right now, it is not unexpected for any Iranian. He looked at the Turkish tourism that employs a lot of people, from young children (like the leaders in the boats) to old men (like the sellers in the way of rafting). But unemployment in Iran is now 25%, and is expected to increase to 50% in a few months, not even a few years. He believed it is to the benefit of the Iranians if they close the oil wells and boost tourism; *"But they [authorities] do not let it happen".*

3.3.5. Conclusion:

While Antalya is a destination for debauchery in the Iranian authority's minds and rules, it is a place to have freedom from the restrictions in Iran, having calm relaxation and entertainment that is forbidden in Iran. Although freedoms in Antalya are important to Iranians, it seems more important than anything else for Iranian tourists to be clear about the concept of freedom and follow the rules in Turkey. They do not know exactly

75. When Iranians returns from abroad, "they are repeatedly asked why did you return?" This question raises a clear and obvious presupposition: Staying abroad is a success that does not require reasoning; But returning to the country needs a reason "(Arabestani. 2018: 68).

what is allowed and what is illegal in Iran. That is why even doing some of their allowed behaviors is often stressful. On the other hand, the scope of freedom in Iran is not very precise, and therefore the interpretation and determination of the span of freedom or breaking the law fully up to the police, clerics, and so on. Therefore, a large part of their experiences in Antalya is related to behaviors that are not illegal in Iran but are prevented or very limited by using extra-legal means. Activities such as family cycling and rafting.

Regarding Cohen (1979), the most Iranian tourist experiences in Antalya are recreational and diversionary. As mentioned before, he says if the tourist pursues mere pleasure and entertainment for restoring themselves and going back to their center (for Cohen, tourists are Westerns), their touristic experiences are recreational. But if the center is not important and target of travel is only to escape from the routine everyday life, this is a diversionary experience. As we saw in this section, most Iranians come to Antalya to be far from the stresses of everyday life, especially the many stresses of life in Iran (recreational experience). In addition, some side activities such as swimming, rafting, dancing, etc., provided diversionary experiences for them.

3.4 PART KONYA

Introduction:

As it was mentioned in the first chapter, Konya is a destination for the Iranian tourists in Turkey who prefer cultural attractions. Historically there was a relation between Turk dervishes and Iranian dervishes. On the one hand, regarding the elderly people of Khoy city (in the north-west of Iran, which according to the old resources (i.e. Mitrakci, in Reis Nia. 2000: 50), the tomb of Shams-i Tabrizi is there), until a few decades ago, every year Mevlevi dervishes came to Khoy from Turkey and visit the tomb, and after that go back to Turkey to visit the Rumi's Tomb (described in a written panel next to the tomb of Shams.). On the other hand, as the deputy general manager of Culture and Tourism Organization of Konya says in the interview:

> We know every year a lot of Iranians participate in the formal ceremony. But in 1990's, the first tour was arranged, moderated and led by two young Iranians who came to Konya before of the ceremony and investigated the situation (i.e. hotels, ceremony etc.). After that, the number of Iranians increased significantly each year. In the 2000's, the Iranians began to operate some informal and marginal events in Konya by themselves. So, now the most visible activities are held by Iranians in the ceremony period.

Therefore, now, during the anniversary of Rumi's death in Konya, a large number of Iranian tourists can be seen coming to this city. The presence of Iranians in Konya these days is so obvious that it is easy to recognize them in the tomb of Rumi, in the streets, in shops, in hotels, etc., they speak Persian to each other, read poetry, they listen and etc.

3.4.1. Field Work (Participant Observation and Interview):

Almost all of Iranians go to Konya for the Sheb-i Arous Ceremony which is held from 7th to 17th of December. I went there one day before the ceremony (6th Dec.) and left there one day after the ceremony (18th Dec.), at 2018. For the interview with two people who were not available during the ceremony period, I went there again on the 9th of January 2019. Due to having already participated in the ceremony four times in the previous years (for the purpose of gathering data for my targets, i.e., essays in the

newspapers, as well as for my interesting to Rumi, too), I had old data and initial familiarization with the ceremony and the Iranians who visit it.

While I was in Konya, I stayed in different hotels, mainly ones that were popular among Iranians. The hotels were Baykara, Mesnevi, Beyzade and finally Sheref (Şeref) Hotel. In the last one, I only met a few Iranians; but due to the lack of vacancy in the others, I had to stay there.

Every day from morning until evening, I spent my time in Rumi's Tomb and the big tent which this year was raised up for the first time. A lot of Iranians were in these places during the day and it was possible to observe and interview them. From evening until midnight, I spent my time in the hotel lobbies (especially Baykara and Mesnevi) in which Iranian concerts and readings of Mesnevi poems were held. I also sometimes spent my evening time in the Zikr House No. 25 or concert halls. From around 11 o'clock at night I spent my time in the Zikr House No. 5, which a lot of Iranians go to, staying there until 2, 3 or sometimes 5 o'clock in the morning.

Besides my participant observation, in total I did 15 interviews with Iranian tourists in Konya, 2 Iranian tour operators, one Turk tour guide (who had the key of House No. 5 with him), one Turk Sufi (who arranged Zikr ceremony in the Zikr House No. 25) and the deputy general manager of Culture and Tourism Organization of Konya. In this chapter, I also used three interviews with Iranian tourists that I conducted in 2016 in Konya for a personal study. In all three cases, I have distinguished these old interviews in the footnote.

No	Gender	age	Education	Job	with	By	from	Time	Days
1	m	67	bachelor	Teacher	family	temselves	Maraghe	2	7
2	m	35	bachelor	Book saler	alone	Tour	Tehran	+20	--
3	f	57	Phd	Doctor	alone	Herself	Germany	3	--
4	m	43	Master	Lawyer	alone	Himself	Tehran	3	7
5	f	56	bachelor	housewife	alone	Herself	Tehran	15	--
6	f	26	master	kindergarten	alone	Herself	Tehran	6	--
7	m	20	diplom	Basketballist	family	temselves	Tehran	2	7

8	f	56	diplom	Housewife	friends	themselves	Tehran	13	--
9	m	41	master	Architect	alone	himself	Tehran	2	--
10	f	40	diplom	Housewife	alone	Tour	Tehran	2	7
11	f	54	diplom	Hairdresser	--	Tour	Karaj	first	5
12	f	40	master	Employee	alone	Tour	Tehran	first	5
13	f	65	bachelor	Nurse	alone	--	Tehran	7	--
14	f	40	bachelor	Teacher	family	Tour	Tehran	2	7
15	m	47	bachelor	Nurse	family	themselves	Qom	6	15
16	m (2016)	60	Ph.D	Faculty member	family	--	Shiraz	first	--
17	f (2016)	50	diplom	Housewife	family	themselves	Tehran	First	
18	m (2016)	38	bachelor	Worker	alone	walking	Mazandaran	first	60

It was noteworthy that the best interviews in this study were conducted in Konya for several reasons. The interviews were conducted very simply and without hassle. That is, the participants usually agreed to cooperate without hesitation, especially after I explained that I need these interviews for my doctoral dissertation. This is due to the prevailing atmosphere of empathy among tourists in Konya who tried to help their fellow human beings. Also except for one case, all tourists simply allowed the conversations to be recorded. They also explained as much as they could in a friendly and intimate atmosphere to make sure they answered my question.

In addition, it should be noted that both because of this atmosphere of empathy and the fact that I had seen many of them in Konya over the years, a friendship developed with some of them that continues. This relationship led me to consult them again in some cases where I needed additional information, or to make sure that my findings were correct and valid. This friendship made it possible for me to go to Masnavi reading sessions in Iran as well. Many Iranian tourists come to Konya from these classes and meetings.

Only two short interviews with the tour operators were difficult. They seemed not interested in providing information about the number of Iranian tourists they bring to Konya or other similar information. These two travel agencies have been providing special flights between Tehran and Konya for several years, and almost monopolize travel tours to Konya.

3.4.2. Documentary Data (Travelogue)

This section is limited to advertised Konya tours in cyberspace or brochures, and especially Konya travelogues. While for each of the other surveyed destinations, Istanbul and Antalya, more than a hundred travelogues were published on the *"Last Second"* website, only seven travelogues were written for Konya. This is amazing. As we will see later, a significant part of Iranian tourists in Konya are very literate. That is, they are well acquainted with Persian literature, especially Rumi's poems and writings. Some prominent Iranian writers also travel to Konya. People like Karim Zamani, who wrote one of the most famous commentaries on Rumi's Masnavi. Some in Iran teach Masnavi in private (and of course free) courses. The author had also talked to some professors of Persian language and literature at Iranian universities during his previous travels to Konya. So why are so many literary lovers less likely to write about their travel experiences in Konya while travelers to Istanbul or Antalya have written tens of times more travelogues to those two cities? Perhaps the main reason for this lack of work is the inability to write about the deep and esoteric experiences of Iranian tourists in Konya. As will be shown in the following pages, most interviewees say that they cannot explain their experiences to me. Or, in other words, *"The taste of sweetness cannot be shown by explanation, until you eat it."* At the same time, many of them do not want anyone to come to Konya out of curiosity. Therefore, they may not like to encourage others who are not mystics or, in their own words, *"people of the heart"* to travel to Turkey by sharing their experiences of traveling to Konya.

3.4.3. Description of the Ceremony:

The Sheb-i Arous ceremony is related to the day of Rumi's death on 17th December 1273. After that date, every year a ceremony was held by Mevlevi dervishes for his death. But after the formation of the Republic of Turkey, the ceremony became illegal in 1925 as a religious ritual (Riyahi. 2011: 96). In 1937 one Rumi devotee called for a day to commemorate Rumi and a few years later in 1942, a small ceremony was held in the Konya Halkevi (folk's house). In 1945, a crowd of some fifty people was reported in the ceremony. A few years later in 1949 because of crowding and the limits of the Halkevi, the ceremony moved to a cinema theatre. In 1953, sema was performed for the first time, in an impromptu manner, but after that sema became one of the main elements of the ceremony. The ceremony became famous as a cultural ceremony, so much that Pope John XXIII sent an empathy message to the ceremony in 1958. Until 1967, sema was held by Mevlevi dervishes, but in this year a contention between a semazan[76] dervish and a photographer who wanted to take a close-up photo of him, caused the Mevlevis to be no longer invited to the ceremony and professionals replaced them. Finally, in 2004 the *"Mevlana Cultural Center"* with the Sema Hall was opened and the sema ceremony was held there ever since (Soileau. 2018: 142-145).

In the last few years, the ceremony began on the 7th of December which according to some resources, is the day Shams-i Tabrizi and Rumi met each other for the first time. In the opening of the ceremony, from the first meeting place (near the Ala'addin Square) the urban officials (like governor, mayor, head of cultural heritage organization of Konya etc.), Mevlevi dervishes, Rumi's grandchildren, some tourists and people of Konya start their walk to Rumi's Tomb, after turning on a light which is called Kandil. The walk is like a carnival with a parade of men in Ottoman soldiers' uniforms and dervishes playing the instruments. Although the recent ceremony in 2018 was a little different (i.e., it started from Shams Mosque, it was smaller and less crowded etc.).

From the first night until the last one, every night at 8 o'clock the sema is held in the Cultural Center of Rumi, near Rumi's Tomb, except on the last night in which it is held in the City Stadium. In the last night, the president or prime minister of Turkey

76. Somebody who does Sema.

participates and gives a speech. In the first night, some Konya urban officials give a speech before the sema in the Cultural Center of Mevlana.

Every day there are lectures about Rumi, his poems (i.e. Mesnevi), Sufism, mystical music etc. in Seljuk (Selcuk) and Erbakan universities. Sometimes there are also exhibitions in related subjects in cultural centers, concerts in municipality halls and in the recent ceremony, lectures and concerts in the tent in front of Rumi's Tomb.

The above activities are formal and prepared by the Culture and Tourism Organization a few months before the ceremony. But besides those, there are some informal activities which are held by the Iranian tour operators, hotel owners and Sufis in Konya. Some of them are listed below:

Every night there is Zikr ceremony in the House No. 25. It is in fact a "Tekke", but because Tekke activities are illegal in the Republic of Turkey, it is known as House No. 25 (the number of its plaque). Some Mevlevi dervishes gather there every night between the 7th and 17th of December (and every Saturday night during the year), eating dinner, praying, saying zikr and finally doing sema with mystical poems (especially from Rumi) and playing music (especially Ney and two small drums). It begins at around sunset and finishes at 11 o'clock at night.

Every night there is a Zikr ceremony in another place called House No. 5. It is not lawful like House No. 25 and there is no ceremony held there, except when the foreign tourists come. Its owner (which himself is a Sufi and simultaneous tour guide), gives its key to the foreign dervishes or friends that he knows. The foreigner dervishes or tourists are free to shape the ceremony however they want. The ceremony in this house begins around sunset and finishes after midnights (ordinary at two or three in the morning, but it can last until five o'clock).

From the 4th or 5th night, every night there is a concert, a lecture, a Zikr and a sema in some hotel lobbies. In the recent Sheb-i Arous, usually Baykara hotel was the host of this ceremonies between 21:00 until 23:00 or a little later. Also, every night in Mesnevi Hotel lobby there was Mesnevi reading by a Persian language professor from 23:30 until 1:00.

Especially in the last nights, in front of Rumi's Tomb, there was sema with playing Daf. The groups were small, and every group was there for around half an hour and left there because of the cold weather, although in the last night, it is more crowded and can be a little different, as well as in the other places are (i.e. House No. 5, House No. 25, hotel lobbies, etc.). For example, at the last night of Sheb-i Arous in 2019, the first group in front of Rumi's Tomb which was formed and became bigger and bigger and continue until 3 AM.

Box 5. A ceremony in the hall of Baykara Hotel: 14th December 2018

It was around noon when it became clear that tonight's program would be held by Bashir Mirzaei and his group in the basement of the Baykara Hotel. Basically, all programs were arranged such that on the same day it is determined who will hold what and where. But Bashir Mirzaei is one of the most popular. Three years ago, his father, who was one of the elders of the Khaksari dervishes in Tehran, came to Konya. But after his death, Bashir replaced him. With his tall stature, thick beard, his hair tied back and his clothes, which, like many other Iranian tourists in Konya, were completely white, Bashir is the favorite of many tourists. He has only 2 Dongs sound[77] and does not use the chitter, that is an integral part of Iranian singing in the song. But what is important for the dervishes is that *"his breath is warm"* that means it sits in the listener's heart. That is why all or part of his travel expenses are paid by the agencies that organize the Konya tours. In other words, the presence of Bashir Mirzaei himself is a kind of pull factor of Iranian tourists.

It was about 10 pm and many Iranians had gathered in the lobby of the Baykara Hotel. When the basement door opened, they went down. Many people, especially the elderly, preferred to sit on the two rows of chairs arranged around the hall. Those who did not get a seat, their priority was either on the wall or on the pillars that they could lean on. They knew that sitting on the floor for two hours would make them tired. Of course, the floor of the hall was carpeted. The hall has an area of about 150 square meters. Almost near the entrance stairs, a sound system and several chairs are set up for performers. Less than two minutes was enough time to fill the entire hall. There should be about 50 square meters of empty space in front of the scene for musicians and Sema. But as it got busier, the area got smaller and smaller. The dominant atmosphere was feminine. Many were yoga practitioners and wore white yoga uniforms. The white cotton clothes are a common symbol by a lot of Iranians in Konya. Maybe around 30% of them wear these clothes in Konya.

It took about 10 minutes to start the program. Bashir Mirzaei took the microphone and recited verses from Rumi's Masnavi. Then he greeted everyone and reminded his father that he had

77. The power of the Iranian singer's voice is six Dongs, that it means s/he can sing any song or poem with any amount of detail. It is said that those who do not have such power have two Dongs. Of course, some famous singers also perform beautiful songs, even though they only have two Dongs.

participated in these programs in previous years, but his place has been vacant for two years. He then explained that no one should sit in front of them, because the Sema needs enough space. Then he asked women who want to do Sema to have a headscarf on their heads. Because when they return to Iran, he, Bashir Mirzaei, may get in trouble and be interrogated. Seyed[78], a middle-aged dervish who was always with Bashir and now stood by him, laughed and told the participants to have mercy on Bashir and not to cause him any trouble. This Seyed is also from the Khaksari and was once a disciple of Bashir's father in Tehran. But he has been living in the Netherlands for a few years now, coming to Konya for the Sheb-i Arous ceremony, and generally stays in a hotel room with Bashir. During Bashir's performance, he sometimes accompanies him. That is, at the end of each verse that Bashir recites, and before the next verse, to provide Bashir with the opportunity to refresh his breath, he repeats a stanza or one or two final words. Sometimes he gives Bashir water to make his throat wet and sometimes he wipes his sweat with a handkerchief.

Then Bashir recited a "Bahr-e Tavil"[79] poem in his memory, without looking at the paper, in praise of God. After that, he started reciting a lyric by Rumi, which begins with "I am a slave to the moon, do not say anything except the moon".[80] Bashir reads this murmur almost always and everywhere. Three daf musicians were standing next to him, playing the daf. A lady and a gentleman dressed in Sema clothes also came in the middle. At first, they crossed their arms over their shoulders and slowly began to spin around. But their speed gradually increased, and their pleated skirts opened up, forming a large circle that spun around. At the same time, their hands were lifted from their shoulders and went up.

Those sitting on seats or on the floor also generally shook their heads left and right or forward and backward as they recited the poem and the sound of the dafs. Little by little, tears flowed. And it did not take long for some to turn their cries into sobs. Some, who were crying a lot, were hugged by the persons who sitting next to them, while they were still sitting. Sometimes you could see two people sitting together and sobbing, and then hugging each other and continuing to cry. Most women sobbed, but in general, many cried; From old to young. For example, a 20-year-old girl who was crying a lot. Or a sixty-year-old woman sitting next to another man and woman, hit her head with both hands. Sometimes she prostrated on the ground.

Except for the front, which was for Sema, in two or three places in the hall, some women were standing and slowly did Sema. It was clear that they do not know Sema. They just raised their hands and spun around. Those sitting near them also tried to gather and sit in smaller spaces to provide more space to her Sema. A middle-aged woman who did Sema in a corner, was more like a dancer and there was a slight difference with the normal dance. So, if someone did not know what the ceremony or sema is, they might have thought she was dancing.

Those who were doing Sema in the scene usually slowed down at the end of each song, and

78. This word, Seyed, is used to address those who are attributed to the Prophet of Islam. That is, there is a belief that they are the children of Hz. Zahra, the daughter of Hz. Muhammad.

79. A kind of Persian poetry that is actually rhythmic prose and after two, three or four words, a rhyme comes and that is why it is melodious and beautiful.

80. The "moon" here can refer to a specific person.

again placing their hands crossed on their shoulders and sitting on the floor when fully stopped. And the next one or two people came to scene. Sometimes three or even four people was doing Sema at the same time. Because their skirts were so big and the space was so small, they got stuck to each other. So much so that Bashir once asked everybody do Sema only once and not come back to give a chance to others to doing Sema.

Sometimes, of course, the daf players also changed. That is, one person came in the scene with a daf and one of the daf players sat on a chair. Apart from daf players, there was also a Tanbour player. But the sound of the Tanbour could not be heard among the dafs, even though a speaker was placed in front of it.

In the middle of the program, a relatively young woman (perhaps about 40 years old) suddenly shrieked two or three times. Then she fell on the lady's feet next to her and started shaking. The women around tried to calm her down. The others raised their heads a little to see what was going on. Some looked at her sadly. That is, they did not believe that this was her inner sense and thought that she had done it to attract attention or in other aims. I had seen similar scenes in a few other shows in other places the nights before or years ago. And there were always those who did not like these behaviors. Anyway, the program continued, and the lady returned to normal after two or three minutes. But she was still crying.

Among the poems that Bashir recited, he finally came to the poem *"Sanama [Idol]! Make your heart empathy with me"*. This poem of Rumi has been read by many prominent Iranian singers. But there is a special style and song that is very popular among Iranians in Konya[81]. When Bashir started reading this poem, there was a lot of enthusiasm among the participants. Many liked to listen to that song. As they sat on the floor, their cries became louder and shaking their heads became more. But almost everyone whispered that poem in harmony with Bashir. Bashir usually reads this poem at the end of his performances. It was about half past eleven pm. The ceremony at the Baykara Hotel usually ends at 12 pm.

Bashir then asked the participants to stand up and accompany the Sema players. This part is always very attractive for the participants. They stand on their feet, holding the hands of the people standing to their left and right, and bringing their heads left and right, or up and down, as they recite. Some shake their heads more and some less. Most Zikrs are either saying *"Hou"* which is for their dervishes, or *"La Ilaha Illa Allah* [there is no gods but God]". This part of the ceremony lasts for about 10 minutes until finally Bashir recited the final prayer in which he asked God that the people present in this gathering could come to visit Rumi tomb next year; Also have mercy on those who were among them years ago and are now dead (like his own father); And he asked God for peace, friendship and health for all Iranians and the world.

The crowd slowly climbed the stairs, and the basement was deserted. Instead, many stood and talked in the hotel lobby, as well as outside the hotel and in front of the door. Some old friends who met each other here years ago also hugged each other. Almost all of them sooner or later left in groups to house number 5. Like other nights, there was a program there until 2, 3 AM or

81. I have even seen that the Turks, even though they do not know the meaning of the poem, like it very much, and for example, once a Turkish mother and daughter, who realized that I was Iranian and know Turkish, asked me to write the text of this poem for them.

even later and they wanted to participate in those programs as well.

Outside the hotel, two young men, about 30 years old, stood and approached some Iranians and talked to them, giving them a pocket-sized copy of the Bible. Some people who went to them said that they took it from them last nights. It was clear that every night they were coming here and preaching. The young men usually argued that *"God loves you so much, God loves all His servants"* and etc. started their preaching. They converted from Islam to Christianity and now were preaching. I went to them. They started the same conversation with me. One of them came from Adana city and the other from another city. I was told that I was very similar to Reza, an Iranian who lives in Eskisehir city. They took a photo and said they wanted to show it to him. One of them said that he had become a Christian four years ago. Before that, he recited the Quran and usually fasted for forty days. But, for example, he said bad words so much at that time. Suddenly this light was found in his being. After that he left insults. If somebody bothers him, he wishes him happiness. I asked if anyone among those who came to Konya for the ceremony had ever become a Christian? They said yes, many of them become Christians (of course, in the few years that I went to Konya, and especially after this conversation, when I became more curious about this issue, I did not find anyone who had become a Christian). They said that all ways are only one and everyone is looking for the right path, and when the light of Christ shines on the hearts, they are led to this path. When I asked if you were advertising here? They said no, this is not an advertisement. Advertising means we give you a brochure and go. This is the good news that because we have tasted, we want you to taste, and no one will notice until they taste it. They said we are the church of Ilam. The name of a branch of the church that has nothing to do with the province or civilization of Ilam in Iran. They have 44 churches in Turkey, which are supported by the United Kingdom, but they do not receive money, they said.[82]

3.4.4. Typology of Iranian Tourists in Konya:

Some types of Iranians in Konya can be recognized as well. The below typology is based on their motivations.

1- Sufis: The formal ideology of Republic Islamic of Iran does not allow Sufism activities (see next chapter). So, unlike the past, now Sufism is illegal in Iran. So, Konya and its mystical ceremonies let the Iranian Sufis be free from the limitations in

82. From then on, I also asked about this way of preaching Christianity in interviews. Many said they received the Bible from those young men. But because the path is the same and all religions have the same goal, these young men are also respectable, because they do not preach anything other than what they themselves have found in Islam. This answer was very similar to what the Christian youth said. The difference was that the goal of Christians was to invite people to Christianity, but the respondents did not need to this conversion.

Iran. Two groups of Iranian Sufis come to Konya: Gonabadi dervishes and more than them, Khaksari dervishes. Because in Gonabadi Sufism Sema is not done[83], but in Khaksari it is done, a lot of Khaksari dervishes and even some of their Sheykhs come to Konya every year. Also, some of Iranian dervishes who are living in the other countries (like European countries) come to the Sheb-i Arous ceremony.

2- Yoga, meditation etc. course students: Although the courses like Yoga were illegal in Iran after Islamic Revolution until 2 decades ago, but after their legalization, a lot of Iranians welcome them and now, there are a lot of courses in Yoga, Meditation etc. which are crowded by participators. Because in these courses spiritual exercises are a main part, so some of them are interested in other spiritual activities, like mysticism and go to Konya because of its spiritual atmosphere.

3- Fans of Persian Literature: This group can be divided in two sub-groups: Masnavi readers and professors of Persian literature. In a lot of cities in Iran, especially big cities like Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz etc. the reading of Masnavi are held every week. But some of the others like professors of Persian language who necessarily do not participate in the Masnavi reading programs, go to Konya, too. While for the first and second group (Sufies and Yoga players) Rumi is a universal figure, the third group usually know him as an Iranian and Persian poet. A Persian literature professor, while his wife and another member of their group sometimes were confirming his words, says[84]:

> *With due attention to the situation of identity between recent Iranians, I think a lot of Iranian tourists come for this. I came for this, too. However, Rumi is a part of our identity. Of course, in comparison with some of the other poets like Ferdowsi, he is less important [for Iranian identity), because he didn't believe in nationality and he was one of the internationalists. As he said: "This mother country isn't Egypt, Iraq and Syria". In spite of all that, we like Rumi to be for us. There is no other famous Persian poet in outside of the borders of Iran… Rudaki (in Tajikistan) and Nezami (in Azerbayjan) didn't have a world view. But Rumi had it.*

83. The Gonabadi is most similar Sufism to the current Shitte in Iran, but because of their stylish and systematic structure which potentially can be dangerous for central government, and because all of its dervishes give 10% of their monthly income to their Pir, which in the Islamic government the religious funds should belong to the government, the government is worry about them.

84. An intervire from 2016

This language-based nationalism view is common in a lot of Iranian professors in Persian literature. For them, Persian language is so important, and it is one of the most important of Iranian identity characters.

4- The others: finally, some of the Iranians go to Konya, because of the other reason. For example, they see Konya like the other touristic destinations. Some of them heard about the ceremony in Konya and became curious about it. Also, some of Iranians go there only as a companion tourist with their parents or their children. In this category, that is the third tourism destination, the Iranians who live in the other countries and come to Konya and participate in the ceremony, while their families come from Iran in the same time and meet each other there, can be classified too. A mother[85] came to Konya to meets her boy –who lives in USA as a refugee and cannot go back to Iran. She even was worry about her boy, because: *"He wasn't like this. He was so normal boy until the last year. But I don't know why he absorbed to Sufism and these kinds of things"*. So, in her mind, Sufism and participating to Rumi's ceremony are not normal. Like the third group, the language-based nationalism is prevalent among this group and they believe Rumi is Iranian poet, too.

Of course, some Iranians in Konya can be put in several categories simultaneous. For example, a Sufi who participates in Masnavi reading programs.

3.4.5. Most Iranian Activities in Konya:

The activities of Iranian tourists are different from other tourists in Konya. For example, when entering the tomb space, many Iranians, instead of wearing plastic socks on their shoes, take off their shoes and respectfully enter barefoot in the cold weather of December in Konya (Konya is one of the coldest cities in Turkey). Also, many of them enter while putting their hands on each other and their heads down. Some sit in a corner, take the Masnavi or parts of it out of their bag or pocket and read it slowly. Instead of reading his poems, some people sit in a corner and think for a long time or slowly shed tears. It is normal to see Iranians shed tears in such situations. As one of the guards said,

85. An interview from 2016.

there are almost only Iranians crying inside. They also sometimes take a handkerchief out of their pocket, give it to the guard to draw on Rumi's tombstone, bless it and take it back. It is also sometimes seen that some Iranians prostrated in front of Rumi's grave, remained in the same position for a few minutes, probably for praying. Almost all of these behaviors are specific to Iranians, and no one other than them performs such behaviors in the tomb.

If we want to provide a list of the Iranian activities in Konya, they are respectively like below:

- Sitting in the cells of Rumi's Tomb (meditation or reading Masnavi)
- Participating in the activities of House No. 5
- Participating in Zikr and Sema in the hotel lobbies
- Going to concerts (in the hotel lobbies or city halls)
- Going to lectures in the hotel lobbies.
- Buying clothes and souvenirs (Kent Shopping Center, stores in the Mevlana street)
- Participating in the activities of House No. 25
- Participating to the activities in front of Rumi's Tomb
- Visiting the other attractions (e.g., Ateshbaz Vali, Tavus Baba, Cappadocia etc.)

3.4.6. The Iranian Experiences:

In each activity, one or maybe several experiences can be experienced, as well as one experience can be experienced in some activities. For example, the experience of "good mood" can be experienced by sitting in Rumi's tomb, or by doing Sema in House No. 5. So, an activity is not necessarily the same as an experience. Since the nature of the experiences of Iranian tourists in Konya is different from the experiences of Iranian tourists in Istanbul and Antalya[86], it seems that a different category is needed. Although

86 For several reasons: First, many Iranians either consider Rumi as their own or feel a very close relationship between themselves and him; Second, many ceremonies in Konya are run and performed by the Iranians themselves. Third, the type of activities that take place in Konya involve experiences that are deeply related to the transcendental power.

they can still be categorized based on their relationship to freedom, the following category seems more appropriate. The Iranian experiences in Konya can be classified in 3 types, each one is explained below:

3.4.6.1. Individual Experiences:

This type includes the inner experiences that occur inside of tourists; so necessarily it has no external signs. Some of them are:

3.4.6.1.1. Relaxation:

Every day, from morning until the last hours of Rumi's Tomb (which in the ordinary days is 9:00-17:00, but in the ceremony period is 9:00-19:00) a lot of Iranians sit in the cells in the tomb, while their eyes are closed (or sometimes are open) and thinking, relaxing, weeping, reading poems by themselves etc. For some, it is like the relaxation that can be found in other similar places. Of course, there may be slight differences. For example, a 26-year-old woman who has been coming to Konya for several years, says:

> *There is a sense of calm here that may be experienced elsewhere in other forms. I can't say it feels very different to me here, but the calmness and serenity it has here, the sound of the reed that always comes, give my soul a tenderness that it seems like sometimes during the year I want to be here.*

But for others, the experience of relaxation next to Rumi's tomb is much different and better than similar experiences elsewhere. In a way that is unique. A 65-year-old woman who came Konya for the 7th time, says that she experienced this relaxation in Konya and tomb of Rumi nowhere else:

> *I always get more esoteric experiences when I come here. I fall in love more. fantastic. Rumi is one hundred percent first in the world for me. Here I experience passion, warmth, love, many things. My experience here is really first. It's very heartwarming here.*

I should mention that although I was present at this place as a researcher, sometimes when I was mentally exhausted, I would sit in a corner of the cells, close my eyes and

without trying, the relax covers my whole being.[87] It seems to have its roots in the cultural history of Iran, which generally took refuge in holy places (shrines, mosques, Tekkes etc.) to soothe their souls and achieve relax.

3.4.6.1.2. Ecstasy:

This experience (or kind of experiences) occurs generally in sema, Zikr and poem reading, but sometimes can be seen beside their relaxation (usually before or after it). Unlike relaxation, the signs of ecstasy are visible: crying loudly, shouting (mentally tasty/ Na're-ye Mastaneh in Persian), moving head or bodies to right/left or top/down, feeling free in sema and ignoring its rules (i.e. lopsided head to right, palm of the right hand and palm of the left hand to down) are some of its signs. When I asked a 26-year-old girl why she suddenly got up in House No. 5 and started Sema? She answered that this was not so much her own want, suddenly a sensation forms inside her and the subconscious begins to spin and do Sema. Also, once in House No. 25, I was sitting next to a 45-year-old Gonabadi dervish who sometimes shouted *"Aliiiii"* in the middle of reciting poetry or Sema by others, and then, while crying loudly, her head continued moving left and right.

3.4.6.1.3. Pilgrimage.

Some of the experiences of Iranians in Konya is the same (or at least, like) as a pilgrimage. Praying, making a wish from Rumi (which Shiite wishes only from God, 14 Innocent –includes Prophet Mohammad, his daughter and 12 Imams), Tavaf /circumambulation (that as I saw once in 2016, a few of Iranians did it 7 times around Rumi's Tomb and museum in the nights), walking from long-distance to Rumi's Tomb (a man who walked 1800 km from Tabriz/Iran to Konya/Turkey).[88] As Zarrin Kub

87. In a similar experience, when I was a graduate student in Tehran, I sometimes took refuge in the shrine of Imamzadeh Saleh when I was mentally exhausted. Although I was not very religious man, I sat there for half an hour, without doing any special activity, while my eyes closed or even with my eyes open, looking at the pilgrims praying, mirror work and decorating the interior of the tomb. I did, it brought me relax.

88. The last one case, who walked 1800 km from Iran to Konya, explained me some miracles in his travel, that it was because of Rumi. I met him 2016 in Rumi tomb. But 2 years later, when I arranged an appointment and did an interview with him in his house in the north of Iran (Mazandaran province), he

(2004: 97) mentioned, people attribute strange miracles to the tombs of the elders buried in monasteries.

3.4.6.1.4. Good mood.

An experience after and the outcome of the other experiences. A lot of responders mentioned their *"Hale Khosh"* (good mood) or *"Masti"* (kaif). Some of them even kept this mood for some days or some months. One of them who came to Konya for the first time, after a week then returned to Netherland, sent me a message, and wrote that he is loaded and tipsy because of the ceremonies and Rumi. Another man says he is in this good mood for a few months and when it ends, he is restless for the next ceremony. For example, a 42-year-old woman was sitting in the tomb and communicating (as herself said later). She put her phone in a selfie mode on her feet, sitting on her knees in a yoga position, filming herself, and reciting poetry as she looked up. I waited for about half an hour for her to get out of that mood and then I went and got permission to interview her. She explained that she was suddenly put in a good mood that was indescribable. This was the best time she experienced on her travel. Because when she feels like this, she subconsciously starts reciting poetry, so she put her cell phone selfie camera in front of her face to watch the recorded video later and write the poem; otherwise, she cannot remember the poem.

A forty-year-old woman compares the mood of Rumi's tomb with the mood of the Kaaba Hajj and says:

> *As soon as I set foot here, I am in a very good mood. Of course, it also relates to our country. Because there is full of stress and worries, it is calm in any other country you go to. But there is a spiritual state here. I went to Mecca too, but believe me, it's better here. […] Believe me, the hour and a half I was at House No. 25, I became so empty, I was so happy. This is really a matter of human nature.*

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corrected some of his previous attitudes and said me he walked to Konya because of his nationalistic views. But when he arrived in Konya and saw that spiritual atmosphere among the Iranians, he was impressed. Although there were both aspects in his travel, but it seems that the purpose of his travel was more nationalistic, but during the travel, mystical and pilgrimage aspects became more prominent, and after distancing himself from that travel, its nationalist aspect became more prominent again. The full text of the interview is published at the following address:

https://www.mehrnews.com/news/4619480

This good mood is related with the energies of others and Rumi's tomb, that is another experience, which will be explained below.

3.4.6.2. Social Experiences:

Unlike to the individual experiences, this type relates to the experiences which is created between tourist and the others.

3.4.6.2.1. Getting Positive Energies.

One of the most important reasons of *"good mood"* experience in Konya, is related to the positive energies that they receive from the other tourists or the tomb of Rumi. Most of the interviewees mentioned that they receive the positive energies from the other people that are sitting next them or visit the tomb. A 43-year-old man says:

> *It has a good energy level here. All people here have empathy to each other [so they share their energies]. The place also has energy. The feeling we experience here is different. We also have many religious places in Tehran. But I do not get that feeling there. Because I think there is no empathy there. There, you cannot receive the energy that you want.*

A 41-year-old man said about his energy:

> *I am especially working on energy. Once while I was meditating here [at the tomb], someone came from across the hall and said, "I felt your energies on the soles of my feet. I understood that the source is also from you". Our energies and our frequency became stronger here.*

A 35-year-old man who has been coming to Konya for several years and always brings the instrument with himself and plays it, believes that not only does Rumi's tomb have positive energy because of Rumi's presence, but it is probably the energy of the place before Rumi came. The place had positive energy and Rumi, like many other elders, chose his place of residence because it had such energy.

These are generally experiences of subconsciously receiving energy from each other. But sometimes a person may deliberately try to get or give energy to someone. I once saw two women in the cells of the tomb who were sitting next to each other and started talking. Then they became intimate and they said heartache to each other. A veiled woman while crying told the other (who was an Iranian refugee in Turkey) about one of

her children who was angry with her mother and left her. The refugee woman first hugged her a little. Then she got up, stood behind the veiled woman, and put her hands top of the veiled woman head. So that the back of her hands was facing the sky and the palms of her hands were facing the head of veiled woman. Then from a distance of about half a meter above the veiled head, she placed her hands slowly and tremblingly close to the veiled woman's head. By doing so, she wanted to transfer her energy to the veiled woman and calm her down.

Of course, two of the respondents also referred to the negative energies there and actually criticized. A 56-year-old woman who has been to Konya 17 times:

> *In recent years, I feel that bad and negative energies have also increased a lot here. Because we, the people of Iran, became very bad. Part of it is due to the oppression of the government in Iran. I do not want to judge. But somebody who has gone all over the world, like Antalya, because it is fashionable, s/he says let me go to Konya, too. Years ago, only those who loved Rumi came. But now the impurities have increased a lot. Some come for fun and unhealthy. These energies repel one."*

3.4.6.2.2. Finding Friends.

It is one of the most important experiences that mentioned in almost of interviews. Some of them talked about old friends who meet together every year in Konya. Some of them meet their old friends in Konya, while they did not expect it. But the new friends is important, too.

A 67-year-old man who has come to Konya for the second time, when I asked him what made you come to this destination again, states one of the reasons:

> *People who come here from different places to visit Rumi, all they are empathetic, and everybody can find best friends here, from different cities and even other countries. Both learn and teach. It becomes a cultural exchange. We get acquainted with other books, people and programs. That is why it is so important for me to come here. Because I am learning new things.*

Part of it can be related to the receiving positive energy from them. But one of the amazing events in this type, is meeting between Iranians and foreigner tourists who feel they have known each other for a long time. They hug and kiss (face or hand of) each other. A Gonabadi dervish who I meet every year in Konya, said:

> *Once I was sitting in house number 5, and as they were playing music, a tall boy with long curly hair, whose face resembles that of the Kermans, was sitting next to me, and he was beating on my thigh with the rhythm of the music. I talked to him several times, but he just smiled and did not answer. When the program was over, we hugged each other, and I realized he is from Morocco. It was because of empathy that we sat next to each other and our hearts were together. This year I also saw a girl who I thought was there last year. When I asked, she said it was her first time there. So, the girl who's from Bahrain hugged me and cried.*

Rumi by his universal point of view, helps others to feel universal and be close together. But the atmosphere of this relations in Konya, reminds us of the *"Communitas"* which Turner (1978) mentioned in the liminality phase of rite of passage. Social and class distances disappear, and a kind of equality is formed. Although there are still inequalities among Iranian tourists in Konya (for example, in which hotels they stay), the prevailing atmosphere during the ceremony is of empathy and equality.

3.4.6.2.3. Seeing and Maybe Meeting Famous Persons:

For the ceremony, other than the Iranian tourists, some famous Iranians –generally related to the mystical music and literature- go to Konya, too. Seeing them in concerts, hotels and the tomb and even sometimes having a short conversation with them and taking photo, is an interesting experience for Iranians. For example, Shahram Nazeri who is one of the most famous Iranian singers and almost always use Rumi's poem in his concerts and albums, goes to Konya most years and holds concert there. Also, Keyvan Saket who is so famous in playing Tar, came to Konya for the recent ceremony and has private playing in a hotel lobby for some Iranians. Commentators on Masnavi and the other poems of Rumi (i.e., Karim Zamani and Elahi Qomshei) is the other group who seeing them is possible in some years in the ceremony. The 67 years old man says:

> *If we return as we have come [that is, we gain nothing] or even lose [something], this journey will not be attractive to us. For example, last year, when we came here, several prominent masters of Masnavi, such as Master Badkoubei, Master Etehad etc., came, and every hour they talked, was equal to reading two hundred pages of a book to me. They transferred their reserves.*

The 35-year-old musician says that one of the reasons he came back to Konya was to see the masters and greats of Iranian traditional music:

> *Those who are valuable to us, come and run the program here, well, it is valuable to us. For example, Master Nazeri, Elahi Ghomshei, Master Shajarian and those who have a special place in our mystical and traditional music.*

The author, as an Iranian, must admit here that these meetings and attending the concerts of the greats of Iranian music were also valuable to him. As he saw the greats of Iranian music such as Shajarian, Nazeri, Saket and Alireza Ghorbani and Masnavi scholars such as Karim Zamani in Konya for the first time and participated in their concerts and lectures. For example, as a fan of Keyvan Saket and someone who had installed one of his melodies as mobile ringtone for many years, his presence and playing Tar for a small group at the Masnavi Hotel and my brief conversation with him was a special experience for me as well.

3.4.6.2.4. Freedom:

This freedom is different from ecstasy which was mentioned in the "Individual Experiences" part. Ecstasy is drop her/himself off, but here freedom is escape from the social, political, and religious limits of Iran. Although some of the Iranian individual experiences in Konya can appear because of freedom, freedom experiences refer to those experiences which occur in public places. For instance, Sema and Zikr in the midnight in front of Rumi's Tomb, is a freedom experience for Iranians, because of illegal status of these experiences in Iran (playing instrument in the street, Sema and night activities although are not mentioned in the law as illegal activities, but usually police do not let people do them). For example, when I asked the 35-year-old musician what the difference is between playing an instrument in Rumi's tomb and playing an instrument in Iran, he answered:

> *In Iran if I go and want to play an instrument, the police will come and take the instrument. But here the police come and watch over the people who play the instrument.*

3.4.6.3. Cultural Experiences.

This type includes experiences which is related to the Iranian culture, like:

3.4.6.3.1. Seeing and Hearing Iranian Music in the Concerts.

Every night, especially in the last nights of ceremony, one or sometimes two concerts are held in hotel lobbies or city halls. For example, in 2018 (as in some other years) the Culture and Tourism Organization of Konya invited Shahram Nazeri to hold a concert ceremony in the city hall. Almost all 1300 seats of the hall were filled, even though it was far from city center and the concert goers needed to take taxi to get there. As mentioned in the experience of *"seeing and maybe meeting famous people"*, the concert of the greats of Iranian music is one of the most important and valuable experiences for many Iranians in Konya.

3.4.6.3.2. Doing Iranian Sufism:

As it was explained before, Sufism is illegal in Iran and the ceremony is an opportunity for Iranian Sufis or whom that interest to experience some Sufism activities like Sema and Zikr. But a lot of Iranians (tourist or scholars) believe that Iran is the origin or at least, one of the most important origins of Sufism (Zarrin Kub. 2004). So even though Iranians cannot do Sema or Zikr in Iran, in some houses they gather weekly or monthly secretly. But even in the other countries, they continue Sufism, as well as the Khaksaris do in Netherland.

3.4.6.3.3. Reading and Hearing Persian Poems.

In the reading or hearing Persian poems (usually poems of Mesnevi), a person who has a nice voice, reads a poem in the cells of tomb and the other sit around that person, matching with a quiet voice, weeping, moving their head etc. Reading and hearing poetry, especially in this atmosphere, is an experience; because poetry lets everybody interpret it with regards to their own life. But there are some limitations to reading poems in Iran, too. The wife of the Persian literature professor says[89]:

> *It is better that Rumi is not in our country. If in the recent situation of Iran, his tomb was located in Iran, it became forgotten. While every year we arrange two months for Arbain Walking, so … [it is normal that nobody considers to these kinds of ceremonies]. Even we hold our Masnavi reading meetings precautiously, because it*

89. an interview from 2016

> *is seen as a competitor of some [relegious] values in our country. But because of our meetings is in religious style, it continues.*

However, the use of poetry in Iranian people's daily lives can be found in less countries of the world. All Iranians, without exception, memorize a considerable amount of poetry and use it in everyday conversations. Even those who are illiterate memorize many local poems. Shayegan (2016: 2) explains this situation:

> *Ever since I was a child, I was amazed that those around me remember so much poetry and each one is like a treasure trove of poems. Later, while living in other countries, I realized that it is rare to find a French or English person who can read from their memory the poems of Racine, Victor Hugo and Baudelaire, or Shakespeare, Milton and Byron.*

3.4.7. Conclusion:

*1. Listen to the reed how it narrates a tale *A tale of all the separations of which it complains.*

*2. Ever since they cut me from the reed-bed * Men and women bemoaned my lament.*

*3. How I wish in separation, a bosom shred and shred * So as to utter the description of the pain of longing.*

*4. Whoever becomes distanced from his roots * Seeks to return to the days of his union.*

(Rumi. Masnavi, Book 1: Lines 1)

This is the beginning of a Masnavi poem that, as Shaygan (2016: 67) rightly says, *"is memorized almost by all Iranians"*. But this poem can be considered the language of the hearts of Iranians, especially the group that comes to Konya. That is, they can be considered as the same bewildered people who have come to this land in search of themselves. Those who feel distanced from their roots. For one, this root in mysticism, for another, its precious literature, for another, the relativism and tolerance of the ancient Iranians, of which Rumi is an example, and for everyone, it is part of his historical identity. Things that are now thought to be lost or are disappearing. As the 56-year-old woman says:

> *It is much better here. God bless the Turks that they have preserved this place [Rumi's tomb]. There [Hafiz and Saadi's tombs in Iran] will be ruined.*

He does not mean the apparent destruction, but the destruction of their heritage. Because the tombs of Saadi and Hafez are now in good physical condition. Like the

Western tourists, who seeking to experience *"Authenticity"* in the other places (MacCannell. 1976; Shepherd. 2015), Iranians are seeking it in Konya. But unlike the Westerners, Iranians do not do it to escape the modern world, but to escape the religious/political limits of seeking authenticity in the other place (here Konya). Also, Iranians are seeking Iranian culture in Konya, more than other's culture (like the Westerns).

Following Cohen (1979)'s typology (recreation, diversionary, experiential, experimental and existential tourist experiences), the Iranians have more experimental and existential experiences in Konya. He explains experiential tourist experience is accorded to the tourists who think they lost meaning in their life and try to experience the authenticity in the life of others. But while in experiential mode, tourist enjoys from observing the authenticity in the other's life, in experimental mode relates to those tourists who are not completely passive, but engage in the authentic life, although not completely. Finally, if the tourist is fully committed to an elective spiritual center, it is existential tourist experience, which as Cohen (1979: 190) writes, is closest to a religion conversion. So as Iranians are not passive in the ceremony and generally participate in some parts of it, they have experimental mode of experiences there, as well as some of them having existential experiences.

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One of the problems of the findings section was the categorization of Iranian tourists' experiences in each of the destinations (at least, Konya is different). Because 1- the main attractions of each destination, 2- the typology of tourists in each destination, and 3- the purpose of traveling to each of these destinations were different, so the experiences of Iranian tourists in each destination were different and of course the possibility of the same classification is not available for all three destinations. But in the next chapter, an attempt is made to make a preliminary comparison between these experiences in order to better understand the similarities and differences and after that, the analyzing data will be easier.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION:

Although due to different destinations, the experiences of Iranian tourists in Turkey are also different, but along with these different experiences, significant similarities can be found in. This can be started by comparing these experiences in different destinations and then coming up with a list of similarities and differences.

A point that I have to remind again, and of course this time, more obviously, it refers to the heterogeneity of Iranian tourists in Turkey. I mean, I am aware that Iranian tourists are heterogeneous in Turkey, and in some cases (for example in Konya) I have shown some of these differences. But in the other two destinations, Antalya and Istanbul, it was more difficult and unnecessary to show differences and heterogeneities. Because I have focused on experiences that were shared by a significant number of Iranian tourists, regardless of their homogeneity or heterogeneity. For example, as shown in Section 3, both religious and non-religious Iranian tourists, after seeing the freedoms enjoyed by Turkish citizens, preferred the experience of freedom in Turkey and criticized the behavior of the Iranian government in this regard.

However, based on data from Table 4.1 (shared experiences) freedom (or feeling free), frustration (seeing Turkish progress and comparing it to the situation in Iran), consumption of Iranian culture (especially in concerts and music), visit or even talking to Iranian celebrities (especially traditional and pop singers), buying clothes, and traveling to a third destination were experiences that Iranians experience in more or less all three destinations.

	Konya	Istanbul	Antalya
Feeling frustrated:	Comparative Iran vs. Turkey	Comparative Iran vs. Turkey	Comparative Iran vs. Turkey
Freedom:	Sema, Zikr etc.	Night out and Soiree; Street Music, Concert and Dance; Clothing and the Veil; Drinking Alcohol;	Water Sports; Sunbath; Family Activities; Clothing and the Veil; Drinking Alcohol;
Participate in the Iranian Culture	Iranian Music & Concerts: Iranian Sufism; Reading and hearing Persian poems	Concerts of Forbidden Iranian Signers	Concerts of Forbidden Iranian Signers
Seeing-meeting famous persons	Writers, Researchers, Orators, Iranian Traditional Music Signers.	Iranian Pop (Los Angeles) Signers	Iranian Pop (Los Angeles) Signers
Shopping:	Clothes and Souvenirs.	Clothes and Shoes (almost as primary tourism purpose)	Clothes and Shoes
The Third Destination	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 4.1: Common experiences in the different destinations

But as Table 4.2 (Different Experiences) shows, some experiences, such as food diversity, cultural diversity, and the experience of relaxation/ well-being, are ones that exist in two destinations and are absent in one destination. Based on the data, some experiences such as pilgrimage, ecstasy, being in the cinematic locations, being deceived and finally being humiliated, have been experienced more in one of the destinations. Also, two experiences of being close or distant to other Iranians during the

trip, as well as the feeling that Turkey is becoming more Islamic, although present in more or less all three destinations, but because each is so different that they cannot be categorized as similar experiences.

	Konya	Istanbul	Antalya
Food Diversity:	---	McDonalds; Turkish Foods;	U-all Hotel Services
Cultural Diversity:	Foreigner Dervishes and Mystic Music.	Foreigner People and Music (especially in the Istiklal street)	---
Relax:	Mystical (good mood)	---	Recreation
Pilgrimage:	Pilgrimage of Rumi's Tomb.	---	---
Be in the Cinematic Locations:	No	At the Turkish films and Series Locations (Topkapi Palace, Buyuk Ada etc.)	No
Be Deceived:	No	Pay much in the Bars;	No
Feeling Humiliated:	---	---	Lack of Direct-Flies; Using Military Airport; Delay at the Airport; Feeling discriminated at Hotels;
Ecstasy:	Synchronic Their Mystic Activity	---	---
Avoid/ close to the other Iranians	Finding friends who meet each other every year	Generally avoid them	Almost Avoid them
Increasing of our Islamic experiences in Turkey:	So-so	Slow Motion of Turkey Toward an Islamic Country	It is a Sign that Antalya is not a Sin City.

Table 4.2: Uncommon experiences in the different destinations

Still, behind all these differences and similarities, there are signs of alignment. That is, behind this diverse list of experiences of Iranian tourists in different destinations in Turkey, one can see signs of a desire, a wish, a protest or a movement that is hidden behind these experiences.

At first glance, most of these experiences seem to related to the same issue of freedom. That is, although the experience of freedom or the feeling of freedom is categorized as a separate experience and can be understood in all three destinations, but many other experiences in these purposes also return directly or indirectly to the same freedom. For example, the consumption of a part of Iranian culture that cannot be achieved in Iran due to restrictions; Or meeting famous Iranian figures who are either restricted to meet in Iran, or who cannot come to Iran at all; Or the third destination tourism, which is done for fear of being arrested in Iran or causing problems in the country of residence; Or being deceived and insulted because of the same restrictions imposed in Iran; Or the feeling that Turkey is becoming more Islamic, which seems to be a concern for Iranians to lose the atmosphere of freedom in Turkey (as a refuge for temporary or permanent escape from restrictions in Iran); Or buying clothes and food variety, which is due to the limited activities of Western companies and brands in Iran, are all somehow related to the feeling of lack or lack of freedom in Iran. But as the author believes, they are in a - reciprocal relationship with nationalism. That is, most of these experiences are either rooted in Iranian nationalism on the one hand, or after gaining these experiences, their nationalist feelings are aroused, on the other hand.

As it mentioned in the third section (findings), many Iranian tourists expressed why should they spend their income and money in Turkey? Whereas, if there was better management in Iran, the same money could be spent in Iran itself to help Iran's economy (economic nationalism). Or more radically, why they should come to Turkey instead of tourism destinations in Iran? In other words, why can Turkey attract so many tourists and Iran cannot? They also felt frustrated and disappointed as to why Turkey, as an Islamic country, could make so much progress, but Iran is now so far behind Turkey although they believe that Iran was once more advanced than Turkey. These remarks generally referred to the management situation in Iran in the form of grievances and

criticisms. Most of these statements were expressed in the context of the following statements:

A) If the Iranian historical, cultural and natural monuments is not more than Turkey, certainly it is not less.

B) Iranian civilization and culture is much older and more prolific than Turkey (which was sometimes expressed ethnocentrically as "Iranians are more cultured than Turks").

In addition, in connection with the feeling or claim of seizing some tourist attractions in Turkey, especially about Rumi or to some extent about Sufism and its belongings such as Sema, the obvious and hidden traces of Iranian nationalism can be seen, which sometimes goes to extremes. Therefore, it is necessary to point out nationalism in Iran, its roots and signs.

4.1. THE ROOTS OF IRANIAN NATIONALISM:

Nationalism in Iran has always been closely related to the history of Iranian culture and civilization, and the views of Iranian nationalists are based on their interpretation of this history. Therefore, it seems necessary for a briefly refer to the history of Iran and the ways of its interpretation that have led to nationalism or opposition to.

The land of present-day Iran has seen many civilizations and cultures in the past, some of the most prominent of which are the Elamite, Lulubi, Silk, Marlik, Hasanlu, Shahr-e Sokhteh, Jiroft, etc. civilizations (Takmil Homayoun. 2007: 11). A branch of the Aryan tribes in the second and first millennia BC probably migrated to this land from Siberia (on the controversial origin of the Aryans, see: Ravasani, 2001). These settlers overcame the natives by war or peace, and their first rule was the Median civilization with the center of present-day northwestern Iran in the eighth century BC. In the sixth century BC, Cyrus the Great founded the Achaemenid Empire. Cyrus' successors not only expanded the empire, but also organized a network of roads, postal services, magnificent buildings like Persepolis, etc. With the invasion of Alexander, the Great, the Achaemenid Empire collapsed and the land came under Seleucid rule for nearly a century. Then the Parthians, who were part of the Aryan, defeated the Seleucids and

took their place. In the third century AD, a Zoroastrian cleric rose from Persia[90] region and defeated the Parthians and founded the Sassanid Empire. During this period, Zoroastrianism became the official religion of Iran. Also, at this time, for the first time, the name Iran / Iranshahr was used in the formal texts to refer to this land.[91] Nearly five centuries passed from the Sassanid rule until in the seventh century, Islam emerged on the Arabian Peninsula and the Muslim Arab army broke the Sassanids in several battles and gradually occupied all of the Sassanid lands. The arrival of Islam in Iran may be considered the most important historical event throughout the country. This is why the history of this country is divided into two important periods before and after Islam in most of Iranian history sources (for example: Pirnia. 1999; Shabani 2008; history books of schools etc.). Less than a century after the arrival of Islam in Iran, revolts broke out against the Arabs, especially in eastern Iran. Some of these revolts were against the arrogance of the Arabs and some against the new religion of Islam. From the ninth century AD, local governments were formed in Iran, especially in the east and north, which were generally against the central caliphate. Tahirids, Buyid, Ziyarids and Samanids are some of these governments. The Samanids employed Turkish slaves and armies who had been captured or allied in wars. Gradually, some of these Turks gained power and overthrew the Samanids, and the first Turk government in Iran was formed by the Ghaznavids in the tenth century. Then came the Seljuk and Khwarezmians governments, which following the latest's dispute with Genghis Khan, the Mongol army invaded Iran and left many ruins. Genghis Khan's sons founded the Ilkhanid dynasty in Iran, which soon disintegrated and the Iran cleaved to powerful rulers in every part of Iran. In the early of 16th century, one of the descendants of Sheikh Safi al-Din, a respected Sufi, named Ismail, along with his followers called the Ghezelbash, founded the Safavid dynasty and was able to reunite Iran again. He also made the Shiite religion official and compulsory in the country. Two and a half centuries later, the dynasty was overthrown by Afghan insurgents due to its internal weakness and the rise of extremist

90. Fars/ Pars/ Persia is actually the name of a region in the south of Iran from where the Achaemenids rose from there, so the name of their dynasty and all of their empire became known as Persia. The Sassanids also rose from the same region. Today, Fars is still in the same region, the name of a province from Iran with the center of Shiraz.

91. The name probably goes back to the word Arya, which was previously used in Zoroastrian religious texts – Avesta (Daryaei. 2009: 12).

Shiite clerics. But Nader, an unknown military, soon defeated the Afghans. After his death, the Zands came to power, which was the first non-Turkish government from the time of the Ghaznavids (tenth to eighteenth centuries). Their life was also short and they were overthrown by the Qajarids. During the Qajar period, many parts of Iran were lost in the war with Russia, and this government continued to weaken until the end of the nineteenth century, with widespread popular protests, a constitution was formed. But the constitution and the establishment of the parliament could not improve the situation until a military officer named Reza Pahlavi staged a coup and after a few years of the Ministry of War and the Prime Minister, in 1925 established the Pahlavi dynasty which he and his son ruled for 54 years. During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, although Iran had significantly developed more than its neighbors following oil sales and extensive ties with the West, there were widespread protests (due to the same extensive ties with the West, the prevalence of non-Islamic phenomena, political restrictions and etc.) that eventually led to the Islamic Revolution and establishment of Islamic Republic led by clerics, especially Ayatollah Khomeini (this abstract is taken from the following sources: Pirnia. 1999; Zarrin Kub. 2009; Shabani. 2008; Abrahamian. 2012).

This brief review of several thousand years of history of this land mentioned above are approved by almost all historians and experts in other fields that deal with history (including in the studies of nationalism). But in the discussion of Iranian identity and nationality, it is important to observe the ways this history is read and interpreted. We can discuss at least two main views in this regard:

First view: The dominant perspective that formed from the middle of the Qajar era and with the support of the Qajar court and princes, is proud of the history of pre-Islamic Iran (especially the Achaemenid dynasty) and believes that the Iranian civilization and culture much older, more stable and more prominent than its neighbors and respects the Persian language. It should be noted that until the middle of Qajar period (beginning of the nineteenth century), the history of Iran was generally known from its mythological point of view (especially it was narrated in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, which is an epic and semi-mythical/ semi-historical book). It was in the middle of the Qajar period that modern nationalism is formed in Iran. In fact, several factors cause the growth of

nationalism in this period in Iran. The first reason is Iran-Russia wars, which lead to the loss of large parts of Iran and the Iranians are faced with the question of why they were defeated (Ahmadi. 2004: 199). The second reason is that some Iranians travel as ambassadors, students, pilgrims or political fugitives to other countries (especially Europe and to some extent the Ottomans) and compare the more advanced situation of the other countries with the backward situation of Iran. These two options evoked a sense of humiliation among Iranians (Nasr. 2007: 194). Third is the studies of Iranologists on pre-Islamic Iran, which in many cases leads to the admiration of them or other Western thinkers, and this attracts the attention of Iranian intellectuals (Ashraf. 2016; Bavand. 2004: 255; Ahmadi. 2004: 199). As Hegel, for example, in his book *Philosophy of History*, refers to the Iranians as the first historical people- and considers the Achaemenid Empire more prominent than all the empires before and after it (Hegel. 2006: 304). To these can be added puzzle-like pieces of Iranian history that Iranians were proud of: Zoroaster-- whose life span is generally considered to be a thousand years before Christ (Amoozgar, Tafazoli. 1991: 20) founded a ritual that some (like Sumer. 2010: 87) consider it the first monotheistic religion that many of its teachings entered other monotheistic religions. Cyrus' non-violent entry into Babylon and his reverence for the Babylonian shrines (including the god Marduk) in the Babylonian Cylinder led many, including the United Nations, to consider it the first human rights declaration and to put a copy of it at the UN office in New York. (Vakili. 2013: 652; Ansari. 2011: 1074). The Achaemenids formed the largest empire of their time, dominating most of the civilized world of the day (Armstrong, 1982: 132). Since the Achaemenid period, the historical and territorial continuity of Iran has more or less continued. The name of Persia/ Pars has been used for more than 2500 years and the name of Iran for more than 1800 years used for this land and it is recent name is the same (Daryaei. 2009: 12). With the arrival of the Arabs in Iran, libraries were burned and Iranian thinkers and people were killed and no achievement was created in this land for two centuries (Zarrin Kub. 1999). But from the very beginning, on the one hand, the Iranians were able to take over the court and administrative affairs of the Abbasids, to the extent that some consider the Abbasids to be Iranians (Maki, 2001: 65), and on the other hand, they opposed the Arab rule; Whether in the context of successive uprisings of Sanbad, Ibn Muqaffa, Babak Khorramdin, Abu Muslim, etc., or in the Shu'ubiyya

movement, which although accepted Islam, but fought against the supremacy of the Arabs and humiliated Arabs by conquering cultural positions in the Islamic world (Ghanei Rad. 2018).[92] So much so that Ibn Khaldun (2003) has mentioned the role of Iranians in Islamic civilization everywhere in his book. Also, some foreign thinkers (Armstrong. 1982: 291) and Iranian (Tabatabai. 2001: 153) point out that despite all the influence of Iranians in the Abbasid caliphate, they have always been outside the caliphate and they have not been inclined to a transnational Islamic view. Armstrong (ibid. 240) considers the largest belief gap in Muslim civilization to be Iranians' distinctive identity. This desire for a distinct identity and even the revival of ancient Iran culture and civilization has been prevalent among Iranians since the first centuries of Islam until today (Naficy. 2008: 211). This is why, although the Iranians (except for a very small minority who remained Zoroastrians until now) became Muslims, they have the most research on Zoroastrianism, and this continuation of the ancient Iranian religion, according to Fakouhi (2010: 10) is *"a cultural thing is being done by Muslim Iranians"*. Tabatabai (1996: 131-129) argues that unlike other Islamic countries in which *Shari'atname* writing flourished, *Siyasatname* writing flourished in Iran, which was based on the ideals of pre-Islamic *Iranshahri*. It was in the first centuries of Islam (tenth century) that Ferdowsi's Shahnameh (2004) was written in the subject of defending Iranian culture against the Arabs, in which he depicted the history of Iran in the form of poetry, which was ended its glorious period with the Arab invasion. The

92. Shu'ubiyyas citing verse 13 of Surah Al-Hujurat, which says: "O people! We created you from male and female, and placed you in different nations and tribes, that you may know one another better. Indeed, the best of you in the sight of your Lord, is the most pious of you." From the first part, which refers to the creation of mankind only in the form of two groups of men and women, they interpreted the equality of human beings; Where it refers to their classification into different tribes and nations, they refer to belonging to their own tribe and clan; Where it refers to better identifying one another, they resulted the surveys and sciences are important, and where it refers to the better of the pious, it refers to superiority. Therefore, the Sha'ubiyyas said that all human beings and Muslims, whether Arabs or non-Arabs, are equal; But anyone can depend on their tribe (like Iranians); While they must know and understand the other tribes, and be aware that the criterion of superiority is piety and not necessarily being Arab. Therefore, on the one hand, the Sha'ubiyyas considered themselves equal to the Arabs, and on the other hand, by trying to know the other cultures and peoples which is ordered in the above verse, they spread knowledge such as history, geography, ethnology, and so on. It was based on these studies that they showed that the Iranians had an ancient culture and civilization, while generally addressing the shortcomings of the Arabs and in a way pointing out their superiority over the Arabs. This hegemony was initially more in the field of knowledge and piety; However, with the independence of the Iranian governments, which was the ideal of many Sha'ubians, it also took on a political aspect (Ghanei Rad. 2018: seventeen to twenty-nine).

same Persian language of Ferdowsi is spoke by all Iranians today, and this is a sign of the continuity and longevity of the Persian language; and the Turks, who came Iran from the plains of Central Asia and seized power, absorbed Iranian culture and the Persian language and even promoted it (Bosworth. 1968); as the descendants of Genghis Khan did. It was in the Safavid period (beginning of the sixteenth century) that Iran was able not only to regain its territorial integrity again, but also the seed of *"Iran's future identity"* was formed in this period (Keddy. 2004: 138); So much so that some consider it the first national government in Iran[93] (Goodarzi. 2008: 38). In this view, even Iranian Shiism was a continuation of Zoroastrian culture, because elements of pre-Islamic Iran were seen in the Shiite religion (Kabiri. 2010: 84) and Shiites have long been interested in history and national tendencies (Khaleqi Motlagh. 1993). From this point of view,

> although national identity in its modern meaning is a new and innovative phenomenon [...], but a kind of collective identity" the idea of being Iranian "in its integrated political, ethnic, religious, linguistic and spatial meaning during the Achaemenid period and the Sassanids have been made and paid (Kabiri. 2010: 74).

This is why after Islam, almost all Iranian and even Turkish rulers (such as Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Khwarezmians) attributed themselves to pre-Islamic Iranian governments (Shabani and Zarei. 2012; Bavand. 2004: 249). This phenomenon is described by Tabatabai (2001: 154) as follows:

> It is surprising in the history of Iran that it seems as if among Iranians, the formation of a kind of national identity was possible before the emergence of the Iranian nation, and even more surprising that that national identity did not lead to the emergence of a new national government.

From what has been said above, it is inferred that the Iranians consider their nation to be one of the ancient ones, which is in fact a *"primordialism"* view. In the meantime, even the views of some believers in the nation as a modern phenomenon (such as Hobsbawm, 1992) or ethno-symbolism (such as Armstrong, 1982, Smith, 2010, and Smith, 2004) have helped to Iranians. For example, Hobsbawm (1992: 137) openly criticizes nationalist scholars whose views are European-centric; Otherwise, a country like Iran,

93. Of course, some Iranian scholars such as Seyed Eamami (2004) and foreign scholars such as Hintz (1999) consider the beginning of the national government in Iran in the period of the Agh Quyunlus, which was the background of the rise of the Safavids.

along with several other countries such as China, Egypt, Korea, and Vietnam, would have been considered "historical nations" if it had been in the West instead of the East. This critique is more or less the same as Smith's (2010: 121-122 and 2004: 130, 186, 229), albeit in the critique of modernists. However, in his critique of those who believe in the continuity and historical continuity of the Iranian nation from ancient times to the present, Smith (2010: 114) points to the break in the Iranian nation in periods of history when foreigners dominated. But both he and Hobsbawm refer, for example, to the two Sassanid and Safavid periods in which religion (Zoroastrianism in the first case and Shiism in the second) became the nation unifying factor (Hobsbawm. 1992: 69; Smith. 2004: 136-137).[94] But John Armstrong deals with Iran in more detail than these two and other theorists in the field of nationalism in his book *"Nations Before Nationalism"* (1982) and especially in the chapter eight of this book. Armstrong points out that in the first centuries of Islam, the Iranians looked down on the nomadic traditions of the Arabs, and in the ninth century AD, the Samanids revived Persian language by formalizing it. Even the Sufi movement in the Islamic world from Persia to Egypt was strongly Persian (Armstrong. 247). But his focus is more on religious identity during the Safavid period in the 15th century, which highlights Shi'ism in front of Ottoman Sunnis. This group of thinkers consider Iran as one of the countries that had a nation before nationalism. Some, such as Ashraf (2016), have distinguished between the national identity and the historical and cultural identity of Iranians, the former being a modern phenomenon and the latter has a long history, at least until the Sassanid and pre-Islamic periods.

As mentioned above, this way of looking at the history and civilization of Iran, which became popular at the same time as the advancement of nationalism in the country, generally saw glory in ancient Iran and collapse in the Arab invasion of Iran. This view gradually became more powerful until the end of the Qajar period and with the support of intellectuals, anti-Islamic and anti-Arab traces enter this trend, which continues until

94. Of course, Smith sometimes seems to make mistakes. For example, regarding the Achaemenid period, he believes that the role of a strong clergy in the monopoly of the cultural symbol and the creation of a cohesive ethnic kingdom was prominent (2010: 118). This is while there is not a consensus among scholars and experts of the Achaemenid period (Fry. 1998; Zarrinkub. 1998; Mary Boyce. 2007; Spring. 2012; Kristen Sen. 2016; Benonist. 2015); neither about the religion of the Achaemenids themselves nor about the role of Magus in this period. But almost everyone believes that in this period there was freedom of religion and religious beliefs.

the period of Reza Shah Pahlavi (Sadegh Hedayat, a prominent writer of that period, was one of the representatives of this current. e.g. *"Toop Morvari"/ Pearl Ball*).[95] In Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi era, although the attention to the history of ancient Iran was maintained, but unlike Reza Shah time, Islam and Shiism were also given some attention. In 1971, a glorious 2,500-year-old celebrations was held in Persepolis with the participation of the leaders of many countries, during which Mohammad Reza Shah stood in front of the tomb of Cyrus the Great and recited a text that said: *"Cyrus! You sleep that we are awake and will always be awake"* (Razi and Khazael. 2009: 454). Five years later, he transformed the origin of Iranian history, which was the Hijri Shamsi (the migration of the Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina, that time was 1355 and now is 1400, to the establishment of the Achaemenid Empire (that time 2535), although two years later, to appease religious dissidents, he re-established the origin of history. It goes back to the Hijri Shamsi, but issues such as this change of origin of history as well as the 2,500-year-old celebrations were reinforced by criticisms of the Shah's opponents who felt that Iranian identity was based more on pre-Islamic Iran than post-Islamic Iran (ibid).

The second narration: When these dissidents made an Islamic Revolution in 1979 and, in their own words, overthrew the Iranian monarchy after 2,500 years, they took the opposite path and removed the pre-Islamic Iranian identity, and even any part of Iranian identity, which was not directly related to Islam. They only dealt with the Islamic identity of Iran (Ahmadi. 2004: 204; Naficy. 2008: 211). They believed that Iran became prominent with the advent of Islam. In one of the first actions and only a few days after the victory of the revolution, most of the topics related to Iranian celebrations, respect for the Iranian flag[96], mythological history of Iran, pre-Islamic kings, etc. were

95. Due to the strong critique of Islamic beliefs, which is expressed in the form of a story, this book was never officially published. Neither before nor after the revolution.

96. From the first days I settled in Turkey as a doctoral student, the prevalence of nationalism in this country was amazing to me. While in my own country, Iran, nationalism has never been seen at this level. For example, everywhere in Turkey, I saw the flag of this country. The flag was seen in universities, offices, gyms, windows, shops, etc. This colorful presence became even more colorful in Turkish national celebrations, for example, very large Turkish flags were hung in the streets. However, I have not seen the Iranian flag in any house or shop in Iran, and the flags that are installed in offices are very small and incomparable to the number of flags in Turkey.

removed from textbooks (Kayhan newspaper. March 31, 1979).[97] The names of streets, squares and places that referred to pre-Islamic Iran were changed to Islamic names; Attempts were made to destroy some monuments of ancient Iran, such as Persepolis (Seyfi and Hall. 2019), which, of course, failed due to the resistance of the local people; The use of names such as Cyrus and Darius, two of the most powerful Achaemenid kings, was banned for infants in some parts of the country (Molavi. 2002: 12); According to an unwritten law, the production of films and series about pre-Islamic Iran was banned, which continues, and although Iran spends a lot of money on religious films and series and the lives of the prophets and elders of early Islam,[98] no films were made on pre-Islamic Iran; other films were produced in Iran after the revolution, Iranian names can only appear in a negative role, and all ordinary or positive people in films and series must have Islamic-Arabic names;[99] *"The Lion and Sun"*, which was the symbol and historical flag of Iran and was also registered in the Red Cross as one of the three official symbols (next to the Red Cross and Red Crescent), were replaced by the word Allah100; In the national anthem of the country, there is no sign of history,

97. In some cases where topics related to the history of pre-Islamic Iran remain or added later in textbooks, attempts have been made to remove the names of kings, pre-Islamic dynasties, and so on. For example, on page 57 of the third grade Persian textbook, there is a story about Anoushirvan, the king of the Sassanid period who was known for his justice, but instead of his name, they wrote *"In very distant times, a ruler ..."*. Also, in one of the last actions and recently (academic year 1399), the photo and description of the tomb of Cyrus th Great as an Iranian tourist attraction were deleted from the 11th grade Arabic book.

98. For example, the serials of Imam Ali, The Loneliest Sardar/ Tanhatarin Sardar (about Imam Hassan), Mukhtarnameh (about the uprising of Mukhtar Saghafi), Province of Love/ Velayat-e-Eshgh (about Imam Reza), The Gospel of the Savior/ Besharat Monji (about Jesus), Holy Mary/ Maryam-e Moqaddas, Yusuf the Prophet/ Yusof-e Peyambar, The Men of Angeles/ Mardan-e Anjolos (about Seven Sleepers), Job the Prophet/ Ayub Payamber, etc. are some of the religious serials made in Iran about the Abrahamic religions or the history of the beginning of Islam, which have generally been among the most expensive serials in Iran.

99. In recent years and for this case, this situation has slightly changed and in some movies and series, neutral or even positive people may have Iranian names.

100. Iranians now use one of the following three flags according to their political views: 1- The official flag with the word Allah in the center. 2. The flag with the lion and sun logo in the center, and 3. The green, white and red tricolor flag with no sign in the middle. The first flag is mostly used by the government and is often seen in government-related celebrations. Of course, for example, in football games or street celebrations after the victory of the Iranian national football team, the same flag is seen in the hands of young people. The Lion and Sun flag is mostly used by Iranians abroad, especially by the proponents of the monarchy and is a symbol of opposition to the government of the Islamic Republic. Therefore, it is not seen in public places in Iran at all. The unmarked flag, which was used almost in the first year after the revolution and until the design of the new sign of Allah, is still used in some cases, especially by supporters of the disbanded National-Religious party that came to power in the first year

culture, civilization, language and other elements of Iran's identity, and it only deals with how the Islamic Republic came into being; and so on.

It is in this period after the revolution that another narrative of the history of Iran is given, which generally tries to negatively portray pre-Islamic Iran. The first religious judge of the country after the revolution, Ayatollah Khalkhali (1981) wrote a book called *"The false and criminal Cyrus"*.[101] Other writers, with the support of the government, also made extensive efforts during these years to portray pre-Islamic Iran negatively. Nasser Purpirar may be considered the most famous of them, who tried to respond to the famous book *"Two Centuries of Silence"* by Zarrin Kub (1951/1999) with a multi-volume collection of *"Twelve Centuries of Silence"* (2000). Zarrin Kub, a well-known historian, wrote a book called *"Two Centuries of Silence"* in 1951, which based on historical documents shows that after Arab invaded Iran, horrific massacres were committed by the Arabs and Iranian libraries were burned in the fire or thrown into rivers by order of the second caliph. That is why until two centuries after the Islam, no valuable and outstanding works of science or art were produced in Iran. But Purpirar argued that after the Achaemenids, who came to the throne with the conspiracy and support of the Jews and worked to secure the interests of the Jews and was associated with the destruction of local civilizations, twelve centuries before the rise of Islam in Iran, we have no significant artistic achievements and what has been said in this regard is the forgery of Jewish orientalists to show Iran was glorious before Islam.[102] This opposition to the history of pre-Islamic Iran and its prominent personalities has spread to many areas of daily life. Now the largest chain stores in Iran are called *"Ofogh-e Kourosh*" (in literal translation it means Horizon of Cyrus), which people call *"Kourosh Store"* for short. However, in the city of Qom, the religious center of Iran and the main

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after the revolution and was later ousted. They are almost both opposed to the return of the monarchy and critical of the Islamic Republic.

101. Most of the contents of this book use negative attributes about Cyrus by falsifying history. For example, some historical sources state that Cyrus was a bandit as a teenager. Khalkhali separated the word bandit (Rahzan in Persian) to Rah Zan and interpreted it as "Rah-e Zan" which means *"the way of be a woman"*, which means that Cyrus was gay and lived through prostitution.

102. Ali Asghar Ramezanpour, who was once Iran's deputy minister of Islamic Culture and Guidance and head of the book department at the ministry and now has joined the banned media outside Iran, told the researcher in 2016 that Purpirar was led by Iran's security agencies and the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance was had to buy his books in high circulation and send them to libraries across the country. The researcher has referred to this conversation and claim in some media essays.

cıty of the mullahs, these stores are not allowed to write their full names on the boards, and only the word "Ofogh" is written. In fact, Cyrus the Great is a kind of symbol of ancient Iran. Vakili (2013), who considers Cyrus as one of the foundations of Iranian identity, has enumerated one of the reasons for opposing Cyrus' character after the Islamic Revolution is to take the opposite path that the Pahlavi kings followed; That is, because the pre-revolutionary government glorified Cyrus and pre-Islamic history, the post-revolutionary government opposed it. But Reza (2008) has a more general view of the story. According to him, this is the characteristic of any revolution that is against culture. Culture is related to hierarchy and borrowing qualitative and spiritual dimensions, while the revolution removes the hierarchy. That is why the Iranian revolution, like any other revolution, first went to the war of culture and works that have survived from ancient times. According to him, *"revolutionaries are ready to use the name of the people for their mercenary purposes and to destroy all the values that are relics of ancient culture. history is witnessed of this claim"* (2008: 132).

Of course, it can be said that the Islamic Revolution of Iran was also a kind of nationalism. Most of the protests against Mohammad Reza Shah were related to what they claimed Shah surrender completely to the West and the Westerns plunder Iran's national resources to the West. Even after the victory of the revolution, the first government was formed by the *" Religious -National"* with Bazargan as prime minister. The religious nationalists were in fact supporters of Mohammad Mossadegh, a prime minister who was able to nationalize Iranian oil and cut off the British hands from Iranian oil wells 27 years before the Islamic Revolution. The religious nationalist did not last more than a year, and purely religious forces who opposed nationalism took over all elements of the government. Perhaps it can be said that this can also be considered a kind of nationalism, but only on the basis of religion (or at least a narrative of religion). In critique to Anderson, Klass (1991: 48, cited in Ozkarimli, 2004: 186) argues that religion does not always give way to nationalism. He refers to the cases of Ireland, Poland, Armenia, Israel and Iran, in which the religious institutions of nationalism have been strengthened. Contrary to the claims of the Klass, however, the evidence in Iran demonstrates that religious institutions are systematically undermining nationalism in all its dimensions. That is, in fact, the tendency of the government of the Islamic Republic in Iran cannot be called nationalism; rather, it is essentially Islamic

internationalism. Ayatollah Khomeini's messages to the Muslims of the world were a kind of globalization or cosmopolitanism within the Islamic world (Calhoun. 2014: 181). Many extreme mullahs also wanted to establish a kind of Islamic internationalism before the revolution and strongly opposed nationalism (Hojjati Kermani. 2005: 13). Naficy (1993) offers sounder analysis of the relationship between the Islamic Republic and nationalism. On the one hand, he believes, religion and religious movements can contribute to the waves of nationalism, especially when these waves turn into mass movements. On the other hand, when the religious movements themselves come to power, they want to break away from nationalism and even try to neutralize it. Religion in power sees nationalism as a serious challenge to its monopoly claim to the idea of a "nation." This is exactly what happened in Iran after the revolution. Upon gaining power, Ayatollah Khomeini considered the concept of nation (Mellat) as secular and condemned it and tried replace it with the religious concept of ummah (Ommat) (Naficy, 1993: 164).

From what has been written above, it is understood that there is now a dichotomy about the Iranian identity, which regarded to the interpretation of history and civilization of Iran, shows itself in nationalism or ummaism in the country and a significant part of society does not accept the current ruling narrative about history (both before and after Islam). A clear example which can be seen in the ceremony of *"Cyrus the Great Day"*, the 28th of October next to the tomb of Cyrus in Pasargad. For some years, some citizens from far and near provinces, on such a day that they believe that Cyrus conquered Babylon peacefully, came to his tomb and chant slogans such as *"Cyrus is our father, Iran is our homeland"* or *"We are Aryans, we do not worship Arabs."* On the other hand, the police and security agents are trying to prevent this gathering in various ways, and so in the last few years, one or two days before this date, they close all the roads leading to the tomb of Cyrus and arrest its activists.[103]

103. In one of the latest cases of this conflict, in the first days of January 2021, news was published in the media that showed that part of the roof of the Kasra Arch had collapsed near Baghdad. This arch, which is known as the tallest earthen arch in the world, was part of the palace of the Sassanid kings, because Baghdad was their capital. Following the news, many Iranians on social media criticized the Iranian government why it spends no money to care and repair of remainded buildings of pre-Islamic Iran civilizations, including the Kasra Arch, while spends billions of dollars in various Iraqi cities on renovating and caring for the tombs of Shiite imams?

Fazeli and Kalani (2020: 32) call this *"reduction of the idea of culture to political ideology"* which was reduced in the pre-revolution period in the form of ancientism and in the Islamic Republic in the form of extreme political Islamism. In fact, this can be considered as the confrontation between nationalism and ummaism. After the 1979 revolution, nationalism in Iran was condemned (Ahmadi. 2004: 204; Naficy. 2008: 211) and emphasis was placed on the Muslim and Shiite ummah. For example, Ayatollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic, had repeatedly directly attacked and condemned Iranian nationalism. He even instructs the authorities to look for Islamists instead of nationalists. At the very beginning of the revolution, for example, he suggested to the president that he has to find a prime minister who

> *seeks to implement the rules of Islam, not to revive the nation. Those who say we want to revive the nation, are against Islam. Islam has come to eliminate these irrelevant words. National people do not benefit us, Muslims benefit us. Islam is against nationality. The meaning of nationality is that we want the nation, we want nationality, and we do not want Islam (Khomeini. 2013: 1-30).*

Many other officials share this view, too. Nonetheless, a significant part of Iran society and people tend to nationalism and the use of symbols of pre-Islamic Iran and the religion of Zoroastrianism is especially common among young people (especially the symbol of Fravashi). This issue can be related to a different reading of Iranian identity. The elements of Iranian identity are almost confirmed by most experts and researchers (Shaygan. 2001: 16; Naraghi. 2003: 8) that Iran, Islam and modernity are the three main parts. The Iranian part of identity includes usually in Persian language (Nasr. 2007: 188; Seyed Emami. 2004; Bigdeli. 2004), customs and celebrations of ancient Iran (such as Nowruz, Shab Cheleh, Chaharshanbe Souri, Sizdah Be Dar, etc.), Persian mythology (Ahmadi. 2004: 195), the Iranian government or the imperial institution (Ahmadi. 2004: 196; Tabatabai. 2001: 115) and etc. Islam is seen especially in the context of Shiite religion (Jafarian. 2004: 270). Modernity is also a tendency utilizing the technological and intellectual achievements of the West, or what is called *"Westernization/ Gharbzadegi"* in the official version of the current Iranian government. But as Iranian thinkers (Rajaei. 2006; Naraghi. 2003: 31) have shown, when one of these factors is

weakened in favor of the other, a kind of identity crisis occurs. Erickson (1956, quoted by Higginbotham. 2012: 193) conceptualized the identity crisis as a vital period of growth that is closely linked to historical and cultural changes in modern society. Before the 1979 revolution, the emphasis was more on pre-Islamic Iran and modernity. But after the revolution, Islam and tradition became very prominent, modernity was marginalized and pre-Islamic Iran was rejected.

Of course, for several years now, another dimension has been added to the Iranian identity, and that is ethnicity. Kowsari and Habibi (2009) criticize studies conducted in Iran that generally do not consider the dimension of ethnicity in their studies. In fact, after the revolution, with the denial of the ancient history and civilization of Iran and the Iranian aspects of Iranian identity, a vacuum was created in this field. The foundations of identity in Iran were damaged, and some ethnicities, who saw strong foundations of identity outside the borders, tended to the other side. As Seyed Emami (2004: 169) said:

> *Ethnocentric reactions [...] are due to the fact that in conditions of rupture, chaos and anomaly, human beings are always inclined towards achievable identities, so that they can achieve it.*

Especially in an atmosphere where neighboring countries, which sometimes had cultural commonalities such as language with some ethnic groups in Iran, great efforts were made in this regard (Ahmadi. 2004). On the other hand, a lot of freedom was given to ethnocitists currents to highlight their ethnic narrative against the Iranian narrative. Thus, ethnocentric narratives and currents also grew significantly, and with successive attacks on the Iranian nationalism and the history of ancient Iran and even contemporary Iran[104], they give another narrative of their identity. For example, the Azeri ethnicitists consider the Turks as the main owners of this land that has lived here since seven thousand years ago and all the civilizations of Sumer, Urartu, Manna, etc. have also been Turks. In a survey (ISPA. 2006), about half of Azeri respondents said that ethnic identity is superior and more attractive to them than their national identity. Also, the political participation of Azeris in several recent elections in the country has been much

104. For example, they deny the longevity of Iran and, citing Reza Shah's 1935 letter to Western countries about the need to replace the name of Iran with the name of Persia, claim Iran to have been created by Reza Shah Pahlavi.

lower than other Iranians. That is, although in general we have had a decrease in the participation of all Iranians in the recent elections, but the decreasing trend of Azeri participation has been more rapid (Ramezanzadeh. 2020: 9). This distance of Azeris from Iranian identity can be considered as one of the consequences of ignoring nationalism after the revolution. Especially since Iran is located in the Middle East region where Pan-Arabism and Pan-Turkism are very active (Ahmadi. 2004: 204). Of course, this growth of ethnic identity not only in Iran, but also in any other country, makes the expansion of national identity difficult (Bigdeli. 2004: 185).

The role of Iranian intellectuals in this context cannot be ignored. The intellectuals of the late Qajar period (when nationalism became a hot issue in the modern sense) and especially the period of Reza Shah Pahlavi, along with the government, highlighted the dimensions of culture and civilization of Iran, especially ancient Iran. Mirza Aga Khan, Akhundzadeh, Kasravi, Taghizadeh, Kazemzadeh, Sadegh Hedayat, etc. are examples of these intellectuals. During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, due to the expansion of the influence of the Tudeh Party, which was the Iranian branch of Marxism, Marxist ideas became common among intellectuals, of which even intellectuals who were not at the center of Iranian Marxism, such as Jalal Âle-Ahmad and Ali Shariati, are two prominent examples. Of course, although Shariati is better known as a religious intellectual who ideologized Islam (Kaji. 1999: 51) and some even considered him anti-Marxism, the effect of Marx's views on him was so much that as Abrahamian (2008: 575) and Naraghi (2003: 23) mention, he is called an *"Islamic Marxist"* by some. After the revolution, Iranian intellectuals were generally divided into two groups: religious intellectuals and non-religious intellectuals. Religious intellectuals such as Soroush and Mojtahed Shabestari were mostly active in the field of religious pluralism,[105] and non-religious intellectuals, in general, focus on the nature of the West and the Iran situation in the face of it; which Shaygan, Davari, Zibakalam, etc. fall into this category. Many of these intellectuals ask, *"Who are we?"* They have argued that *"it seems to be an important manifestation of the problem of our confrontation with modernity"* (Kaji. 1999: 30). The discussion of Iranian identity was generally viewed either from a religious point of view or from the perspective of facing the West. The nationalist

105. Soroush's book *"Straight Ways"* (2001) is the most telling example of such works.

intellectualment current, unlike to the Qajar and Reza Shah periods, had no place in the Iranian intellectual discourse after the revolution. In the meantime, Seyed Javad Tabatabai was an exceptional example. He was expelled from the university in 1994, because authorities believed he is nationalist.[106] He is known as the *"philosopher of Iranshahri"* who has studied the philosophy and history of political thought in Iran for many years and considers "Refusing to Thought" as the reason of Iranian civilization decline. However, he does not consider himself a nationalist and does not believe in the existence of nationalism in Iran. In his view (2017: 24):

> *Nationalism is a concept that observes the historical reality of Europe and nationalism, in the strict sense of the word, has no meaning except in the case of European history. The application of this concept and its Persian equivalent, 'melligerai', has no role on the historical transition of Iran and is completely incorrect and unhistorical.*

He writes elsewhere (Tabatabai. 2001: 155-154):

> *It is surprising in the history of Iran that it seems as if among Iranians, the formation of a kind of national identity was possible before the emergence of the Iranian nation [...] There is no doubt that this new Iran is a much older reality that can be obtained with analyzes based on new social sciences.*

4.2. IRANIAN NATIONALISM AND TOURISM:

Tourism can be a kind of identity commodities or services. Identity commodity, as Fakouhi (2010: 201) defines, *"is a commodity whose production or consumption is positively or even negatively associated with belonging to an identity or avoiding such an identity."* He explains that within Iran, only ethnic tourism has been able to succeed to some extent in terms of commodification (ibid. 212). In fact, using *"our heritage"*, the tourism industry becomes a tool that creates concepts related to nationality (Palmer. 1999: 313). Therefore, although tourism is a means of discovering and verifying one's identity, there are usually nobody travels with direct goal of verify their identity and this is an indirect effect. In fact, tourism generally causes us to rethink our identity (Higginbotham, 2012: 199).

106. https://www.tabnak.ir/fa/news/654301

One of the main disagreements between Iranian tourism officials is what is our heritage and who are we? In other words, which of the two options of ancient Iranian civilization or Islamic civilization should be considered as the main tourist attractions of Iran (Mozaffari, Karimian and Mousavi. 2017). During the reigns of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, especially after 1962, when the first development plan was developed in Iran and tourism was also discussed, the focus was on pre-Islamic Iranian history and civilization as the main tourist attraction to attract foreign tourists. In fact, the development of tourism during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah was one of the ways to introduce Iranian culture and civilization (Seyfi and Hall. 2019). That is, as Baum and Ogorman (2010) say, the beginning of tourism in Iran was based on Iranian nationalism. Until 1979, when the Islamic Revolution took place, most of the incoming tourists to Iran were Europeans and Americans. Of course, religious attractions were also considered during this period. But after the revolution, this identity was largely and deliberately ignored, and attempts were made to focus on religious attractions, especially in the three cities of Mashhad, Qom, and Shiraz, for the neighboring Shiite-populated countries as the first tourist markets. Especially since there was a kind of security look at Western tourists. However, the use of Iranian civilizational attractions has always been a point of contention between the two fundamentalist and reformist factions of Iran, and in some periods (such as the Khatami government and the Rouhani government) has been somewhat prominent. However, the stances of the fundamentalists against the West, US and Western sanctions against Iran and insecure conditions in the region, along with the fundamentalists' opposition to the civilization of ancient Iran, have kept the incoming tourism of Iran in the weakest possible state (Mozaffari, Karimian and Mousavi. 2017).

Moderate Shiite officials, along with Iranian nationalists, have very different views on tourism and institutional arrangements than the conservative clergy. For example, a senior Iranian tourism official says:

> *This contradiction in the identity of the government has led to a contradiction in foreign policy [...] while for a long time, the country's tourism managers have been focusing on valuing Iran's ancient history and culture to attract the attention of tourists interested in Iran's cultural treasures. Conservative elements do not agree with this and they have a significant investment in the pilgrimage market* (Seyfi and Hall. 2020: 11).

However, in the late 1990s, there was a slight reversal in this field and the emphasis on Iranian culture, which included both pre-Islamic and post-Islamic to attract tourists (Mozaffari, Karimian and Mousavi. 2017: 190). Of course, this shift to Iranian identity was once again used during the tenure of Iran's fundamentalist president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. When he tried to confront domestic rival factions, he promoted the *"Iranian School"* as a school of thought associated with higher culture that transcended geography and race. Therefore, he praised Cyrus the Great and pre-Islamic Iran. He also borrowed the Cyrus Cylinder from the British National Museum and exhibited it at the National Museum of Iran, which was widely acclaimed. But he was immediately confronted with sharp criticism from fundamentalist factions (Mozaffari, Karimian and Mousavi. 2017: 193). These occasional rotations are mostly due to the geopolitical realities and historical background of the country, which cannot be ignored. In the Iran-Iraq war, for example, Saddam regularly used pan-Arab propaganda and references to the first Arab / Muslim-Iranian wars, which inadvertently led Iran to pay more attention to its Iranian identity (ibid. 195).

These resistances against the use of ancient Iranian civilizations, on the one hand, affected the tourism entering Iran and on the other hand, the Iranians themselves. That is, in fact, it was an attempt to control and counter nationalism. Anderson (2006) emphasizes the role of museums in consolidating and spreading a sense of nationalism among visitors. According to Perts (2003: 127), archeological sites have the same function as museums in Anderson's view; because they have a deep connection with the history and land of each nation. With the Islamic Republic's cultural policies in restricting pre-Islamic (and in some cases even post-Islamic) monuments, it is practically an attempt to limit tourists' nationalist choices. But in the meantime, the Iranians are not passive either. Lowenthal (1975) described how the onslaught of modernity on heritage sites and monuments strengthens people's sense of nostalgia for the past, which in turn leads to greater appreciation of family heritage and a desire to search for roots (quoted by Higginbotham. 2012: 196). Instead of the word modernity, any other phenomenon can be substituted and a similar result obtained. Here, we can replace the modernity with a religious government that emphasizes religious identity and ignores the historical and civilizational heritage, and sees the same reactions from the people. Mozaffari, Karimian and Mousavi (2017: 195) consider the widespread

visits of Iranians to Pasargad and Persepolis as a patriotic reaction to the promotion of Islamic tourism in Iran. In fact, this is one of the ways to deal with Islamic tourism, or in other words, to limit tourism and visit the relics of pre-Islamic Iranian civilization. Another way is to show Iranian nationalism and defend Iranian culture in a place where government restrictions do not have access and are far from the control of the Islamic Republic. The nationalism of Iranian tourists in Turkey is near and similar to the *"Long-distance Nationalism"* concept by Anderson (1992), more than the other concepts. Whether tourists who come to Turkey from Iran to consume Iranian culture, whether Azeris who come to Turkey from Iran, or Iranians living in other countries who for some reason prefer to see their families in Turkey instead of Iran. Anderson (1992) deals with distant nationalism with an example of the famous short story of Mary Rowlandson (first published in 1682) and the story of her short captivity at the hands of the Indians. He saw the *"English lands"* where the Indians quickly settled after being emptied of the British. As she saw the *"English cows"*. These were signs to her of the indestructible roots of an English woman in the depths of her being and those of others whom she could well have imagined. This sample is significantly comparable and generalizable to Iranian tourists in Turkey, especially in places like Konya. An Iranian poet who is present in Turkey, and of course, because Iran emptied the field, Turkey has filled it well.

It can be said that although traveling to a foreign destination such as Turkey is not consciously aimed at defending Iranian culture and Iranian nationalism, it is unconsciously related to it and will undoubtedly have serious consequences for Iranian nationalism. Self and identity are social products that are formed and maintained through confrontation with others (Higginbotham, 2012: 191). Gellner (1964: 61a, quoted in Ozkirimli. 2004: 164) says labor migrants, who encounter people other than their compatriots and become aware of indifference or hatred's others to their own culture, try to become more aware of their own culture and love it more. In tourism, these collisions occur in a different environment and have the same consequences. These attitudes cause tourists (here, Iranians in Turkey) to rethink their culture and national identity and further strengthen or weaken their national identity. For example, the national symbols for Smith:

> *[...] include the obvious attributes of nations — flags, anthems, parades, coinage, capital cities, oaths, folk costumes, museums of folklore, war memorials, ceremonies of remembrance for the national dead, passports, frontiers — as well as more hidden aspects, such as national recreations, the countryside, popular heroes and heroines, fairy tales, forms of etiquette, styles of architecture, arts and crafts, modes of town planning, legal procedures, educational practices and military codes - all those distinctive customs, mores, styles and ways of acting and feeling that are shared by the members of a community of historical culture* (Smith. 1991: 77).

Many of these national symbols of Iran have been distorted and invalidated: popular heroes such as Cyrus the Great who are denied; Rituals such as some Iranian celebrations that try to be diminished; National entertainment that is prohibited; And especially in the field of tourism, Iranian passports that become less valid; Borders that are generally closed to Iranians and etc. Thus, Iranians rethink their national identity on the one hand, and the conditions in which they live on the other. Schiller (2005: 575) explains that in one of the distance nationalisms, the dispute of the nationalists outside their territory is not with the territorial borders of the country in which they live, but with the individual or political party that it controls. Iranians travels to Turkey in general, on one hand, it seems to provoke the nationalist sentiments of non-Azeri Iranians, and on the other hand, it arouses the ethnocentric sentiments of Azeris. But both groups blame the Iranian way of governing.[107] This political/ cultural dissatisfaction and stimulation of a sense of identity can continue even after the travel and form a kind of post-travel tourism experience for them. It is reminded again that many tourists may not see themselves in a nationalist or ethnic context. At least it can be said with certainty that both groups expressed emotions related to their national or ethnic interests are aroused. In fact, contrary to what has been shown in studies on tourism and nationalism, the nationalism of Iranian tourists in Turkey is reversed. That is, while other people are aroused or satisfied by their nationalist sentiments due to the existence of historical monuments as tourist attractions and progrese in their countries, nationalist sentements of Iranian tourists are incited after seeing these progress and

107. Apart from nationalists and ethnic tendencies, ummatists were also mentioned. But the latter group usually does not travel to Turkey because of their religious beliefs and because they consider it a destination for illegal behavior, and so it is out of the study.

historical monuments in Turkey and then comparing them with the situation Iranian historical monuments that are deliberately unloved by the government.

Here, an attempt is made to identify and introduce the manifestations of nationalism or ethnicity during the Iranians' travel to Turkey. Among Iranian tourists, nationalism can be seen better in some statements and behaviors. The propositions are:

4.2.1. These Are Ours:

The greatest manifestation of this belief can be seen among Iranian tourists in Konya. Where many say that Rumi was an Iranian poet and wrote his poems in Persian, which is the literary, historical and official language of Iranians. As shown in the third part, the same Persian language is one of the main reasons for Iranians to consider Rumi as an Iranian. They wonder or sometimes taunt that if Turkey says that Rumi was a Turk, then why not say a poem in Turkish? And if the Turks say he is our poet, then why can't they read even a bit of his poetry in the language he composed? When President Erdogan introduced Rumi as a Turkish poet in his speech in 2008, he provoked a lot of criticism in Iran, and many media outlets in Iran criticized him for this statement.

However, Iranians' criticism of confiscation of Rumi is more to the Iranian government than to Turkey. It seems that the Iranian authorities not only do not care much about Rumi being Iranian, but also often utter words or behaviors against him. The Islamic government of Iran has nothing to do with Sufism and mysticism and focuses on life based on Shiite jurisprudence. Of course, this was despite the tendency of the founder of the Islamic Revolution to mysticism (Ramezani. 2000)[108], but in any case, the jurisprudential current prevailed even during his lifetime. In fact, the same mysticism and Sufism by some Iranian tourists is one of the cultural heritages of Iran, which now has no place in Iran itself, and therefore Turkey makes good use of it. In other words, Sufism and Islamic mysticism is another manifestation of "these are ours" from the nationalist point of view of some Iranian tourists. Zarrin Kub, who has a lot of books on

108. For example, while Ayatollah Khomeini in one of his most famous sonnets analogyses himself with one of the most famous sufis, Mansour Hallaj (Khomeini. 1995: 142), many prominent Iranian clerics (like Makarem Shirazi. 2002; Torbati. 2011), have been sharply criticized Mansour and insulted him with derogatory interpretations.

Sufism and mysticism in Iran, considers Iran to be one of the main sources of Sufism, which introduced some of the principles of Sufism to Islam by Muslimized Zoroastrians from their previous religion (2004: 15). To clarify the discussion, the following are some examples of the Iranian authorities' stance against the Sufism and Rumi.

Many books on the critique of Sufism and Islamic mysticism, as well as personalities such as Rumi or his guide, Shams, are published with the support of official institutions in Iran (for example: Modarressi. 2007; Makarem Shirazi. 2002; Morteza Ameli. 2012). As well as conferences and meetings are held in this field. The *"Cloak of Deception"* (Kherqe-ye Tazvir) conference was one of the last conferences in this field that the Islamic Propaganda Office of the Qom Seminary held in 2017 in Qom. A look at some of the topics in the articles in the conference reveals to some extent the organizers' stance against it: "Sectarian Sufism, the rise of Islam in the form of secularism; Modern polarization or idolatry; Apostasy in Sufism and its causes; Sufism's confrontation with the Ahl al-Bayt (Prophet's family); Moral deviations in sectarian Sufism; The sanctification of the devil in Sufism; etc". Two years later, the same institution held another conference entitled "*National Conference of Sufism: Characteristics and Criticisms"*, this time following the widespread criticism of the previous conference (Cloak of Deception), at least they slightly softened its name. Nevertheless, the topics of the conference and the accepted articles (see the abstract of the articles of this conference. 2018) still clearly shows opposition to Sufism. There are also websites for the critique of Sufism, some of which are devoted to the critique of Rumi.[109]

In another example, after initial coordination between Iranian and Turkish artists to make the film *"Drunk of Love"* about the lives of Shams and Rumi, there was a lot of criticism from the Iranian clergy against this news. For example, a group of religious students wrote a letter to Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi, one of the most prominent Iranian clerics, asking questions about the film, to which Ayatollah Makarem replied: *"Given*

109. For example, the website *"Research on Ibn Arabi, Mysticism and Sufism"* at http://www.ebnearabi.com/, which, of course, did not explain its affiliation with institutions or personalities. Also it has no address or telephone number of its office. Its "Contact Us" did not respond my questions in this regard.

that this work (making a film about Shams), it promotes the heretical sect of Sufism, it is not legally permissible and it should be avoided."[110]

Also, Rumi's name was recently removed from one of poems in the ninth grade Persian textbook of the school and *"a poet"* was written instead. That is, the sentence *"Rumi said so ..."* was changed to *"a poet said so ..."* (Educational Research and Planning Organization. 2020: 31). This removal of Rumi's name, which, along with other deletions related to Iran's cultural heritage (such as photographs and descriptions of the tomb of Cyrus from the 11th grade Arabic textbook mentioned above) from this year's textbooks, provoked widespread protests and criticism in the media.[111]

These official oppositions to Sufism seem to have begun in the late Safavid period after the rise of Shiite scholars. Safavids who, of course, themselves were once Sufis. For example, in the period of the last Safavid Shah, Sultan Hussein, by order of Allameh Majlesi, who had taken over the affairs, monasteries were closed, prominent Sufi sheikhs left the capital Isfahan, and even if the Allameh Majlesi's students saw a jar with a narrow mouth in workshops pottery, they broke it, because if the wind blows in it, it makes a *"Hou"* sound, which is similar to the mention of the Sufis; Just as no one dared to wear woolen clothes because of its resemblance to Sufi woolen clothes (Qazvini, 1988). This is while Sufism can be considered as one of the pillars of Iranian identity (Naficy. 2008: 202; Henry Carbon quoted by Naraghi. 2003: 184). Sufism in Iran, especially after the Mongol invasion and the devastation they did, became common in Iran and became a common speech system in the field of Iranian thought, and the Sufis became the thinkers of the Iranian people (Tabatabai. 2001). Some scholars, such as Naraghi (2003: 13), consider the criterion of religiosity or non-religiosity of today's Iranians to be the prevalence of mysticism and mystical poems of great Iranian poets among these people. Because mysticism has entered the lives of Iranians through the poems of these poets and Nasr (2007: 189) considers the richness of Persian literature in the field of mystical poems unique in the world.

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110. https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1303101

111. Unlike other cases, this time the Ministry of Education responded to the critics and said that because the authenticity and attribution of this poem to Rumi is doubtful, it removed Rumi's name from it. But it seems that this omission was placed alongside other textbook omissions, and this justification was not considered by Iranians.

Naficy (1993) considers the place of poetry, especially Sufi poetry, in the worldview of Iranians in exile (and, as shown below, is very similar to Iranian tourism) to be very prominent. Of course, as someone who has years of experience living in other countries, in his anthropological work, he finds it natural for readers unfamiliar with Iranian culture not to believe in such a deep connection between Iranian culture and poetry and Sufism. He explains that many historians, anthropologists, critics of Iranian literature, and even daily life of Iranians themselves testify that their culture is the one that poetry embraces, and that the rich and the poor in their daily lives cite classical poets such as Ferdowsi. Saadi, Hafez, Rumi, Khayyam and sometimes contemporary poets express their words (p: 148). While according to other thinkers (for example: Shaygan (2016) and Naraghi (2003: 183)) in the lives of people of other countries, such a connection cannot be seen between their daily lives and their literature.

These old and strong roots of mysticism in Iran should be placed alongside the global tendency in various mystical ways, which according to Shaygan (2001: 9) *"seems to be the other side of the globalization coin [...] which seems to be a kind of new magic"*. Then the tendency of Iranians to mysticism will be better understood.

Of course, as mentioned, this is not the view of all Iranian tourists in Konya, and unlike the two groups of Persian litrature scholars as well as ordinary tourists (meaning non-literary and non-mystical) who emphasize Rumi's Iranianness, for Iranian Sufis Rumi's nationality and ethnicity is not very important and he is considered a cosmopolitan figure. But they are also critical of the restrictions on Sufism and in Iran.

4.2.2. Ours is Better:

The national feelings of Iranians at any destination in Turkey generally show themselves by comparing that destination with similar destinations in Iran. Below are these comparisons in all three destinations.

In Konya, it is mentioned several times that we in Iran have so many tombs of Iranian poets such as Ferdowsi, Hafez, Saadi, Khayyam, Attar or famous mystics such as Bayazid Bastami, Abolhassan Kharghani, Sheikh Safi al-Din Ardabili, etc., but why we

could not do act like Konya? In a telegram channel called *"Alijenab"*[112] and with nearly half a million followers, this comparison has been written several times in various ways. For example, its author once wrote:

> *This is the several times I have written this post: Turkey earns more than $ 2 billion annually from tourism of the tomb of Rumi, the great Persian poet. That is, Iran can earn more than selling oil with only nine of its great world celebrities (Ibn Sina, Cyrus the Great, Razi, Khayyam, etc.)!*

This post had 65,000 views as of the writing of this report (August 17, 2020). Although the argument presented in this telegram post is incorrect and inaccurate, it well reflects the expectations of Iranians for the development of tourism to destinations similar to Konya in Iran.

In Antalya, by comparing the situation of this city and region with the north of Iran, it means the provinces and coastal cities of the Caspian Sea, although from the climatic and geographical point of view (Hyrcanian rainforest, hot and humid climate in summer and temperate in winter, exist many rivers and lakes, etc.) is similar to Antalya, but the Iranian tourists have the question that why north of Iran did never experienced the development of sustainable tourism, like Antalya? Although the coastal provinces of the Caspian Sea in Iran are the most touristic destinations in Iran and attract tens of millions of tourists annually, but it is a perfect example of mass tourism[113] and many studies (Jafar Salehi, Eshtiaghi and Fazeli. 2012; Karroubi and Bazrafshan. 2015; Ghaderi and Arabi. 2019; Farhadian, Saatchi, Abbasi and Khosravani. 2016) show serious damage to its local culture, agriculture, deforestation, encroachment on rivers and the coast, sea pollution, serious problems in waste disposal etc. The city of Ramsar[114] was mentioned several times in the interviews that what does Antalya have that there is no in Ramsar?

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112. https://t.me/Aalijnab/159757

113. Tourism at a pointview can be classified into mass tourism and sustainable tourism. While in sustainable tourism, long-term development of tourism, respect for the local culture of the region, not harming the environment, not polluting the environment, etc. are considered, in mass tourism a large number of tourists and more than its capacity are attracted to one point and the culture of the region has undergone changes and acculturation of tourists, the environment has been damaged, etc. (Naumov and Green. 2016: 594-595).

114. Before the revolution, a lot of investment was made in the development of tourism in Ramsar, which stopped after the revolution. The remained hotels and facilities from pre-revolutionary in the city are tourist attractions yet.

The south of Iran is also completely coastal and attached to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, but has never been able to experience proper tourism development.

As well in Istanbul, the Iranian tourists remember cities such as Isfahan, Shiraz, etc., which have many historical monuments and of course are registered in the world heritage. They ask why we have not been able to attract tourists in those cities like the historical attractions of Istanbul? The comparison of Istanbul with Isfahan is more than the comparison of any other city between Turkey and Iran. As Asadzadeh (2018) says, once Istanbul was the capital of the Ottomans, Isfahan was also the capital of the Safavids and both have many similarities. Several interviewers in Istanbul, even Azeris, described the city of Isfahan as much more beautiful and attractive than Istanbul, which, if it were not for the restrictions in Iran, would have attracted many more tourists than Istanbul.

4.2.3. We are Better:

We hear this statement especially in words that show ethnocentrism and arrogance. As the findings show, there is a well-known example that Iranians who crossed the Turkish border to traveling to Europe before the revolution were confronted with uncivilized treatment by the Turks, for example, who had to give Turks cigarettes or money to do not damage their car. As we found in another finding, some tourists believed that the Turks were not as smart as the Iranians and, for example, they did not have much intellectual power, at least in the economic field. But because of the barriers to growth in Iran, Turkey has been able to overtake Iran.

4.2.4. Why Here?

All three above questions, and indeed the criticism, led to the criticism that why should we come to Turkey and spend our money here? While if we spent the same money in Iran, it would help the Iranian economy and create jobs and income for our compatriots.

This argument, which is entirely in the realm of economic nationalism, is common all over the world (for example look at: Chuin and Osman. 2017; Rawwas and Rajendran.

1996; Anet et al. 2015). Iranian tourists were more criticize the purchase of clothing from well-known brands that do not operate in Iran; while, as mentioned before, most of them buy Turkish-made clothes such as LC Waikiki. However, there were tourists who went to the branch of Western brands in Turkey. But on the other hand, they also referred to the money they generally spend on travel to Turkey (plane tickets, hotel reservations, etc.) that could have been spent in Iran.

In general, these criticisms do not seem to be related to the essence of the travel to Turkey, but rather to the large number of Iranians traveling to Turkey and the shopping tourism of Iranians in Turkey. This argument was also used by Iranian tourists more as a justification for the need to develop tourism in Iran.

An important point to note here, Iranian nationalism is generally contrasted with Turkish nationalism. Iranian nationalists regularly warn of the dangers of Pan-Turkism for the unity of Iran's identity and territory, and many books and articles have been written or translated from other languages (for example: Soltanshahi. 2009; Rouhi. 2002; Fatemi Nasab and Husseini. 2013; Ebrahimi and Shakeri. 2014; Bahmani Qajar. 2007). This fear of the division of the Azeri regions of Iran by Turkey is an old fear among the Iranian people and officials (for example see. Sendal. 2011: 40). But even the Iranians who call themselves ‘nationalist’ and hate Pan-Turkism and are concerned about Turkey's actions against Iran, still travel to Turkey, too. The question is, how can one be an Iranian nationalist and travel to Turkey, which one is considered a danger to Iran? Perhaps three reasons for this contradiction can be shown: first, that the issue of Pan-Turkism, nationalism, etc. is generally discussed in the Iranian intellectual space, and many ordinary Iranians, although very interested in Iran, but perhaps even once they did not heard term of Pan-Turkism. Almost, no Iranian tourist travels to Turkey with the conscious goal of nationalism; as mentioned, less tourism in the world travels with such a conscious purpose. The second reason is that even some Iranians who are familiar with the phenomenon of Pan-Turkism and feel threatened by it, come to Turkey. This group will probably separate the travel to Turkey with the discussion of Pan-Turkism. As shown in Chapter 2 (the literature on the subject), a group of Chinese tourists prefer to travel to Japan even after the border dispute with Japan, even though they considered themselves nationalists. According to them, tourism should be

separated from political issues. The third reason is probably related to the very limited options of Iranians' foreign travel mentioned at the beginning of the third chapter; so they have no choice but Turkey.

4.2.5. We Are Close to Each Other:

As it was mentioned, a significant part of Iranian tourists who go to Turkey are Azeris. On the other hand, we showed that after the Islamic Revolution and the restriction of Iranian nationalism, ethnicism grew significantly among Azeris. Therefore, the relationship between the nationalist sentiments of this group after their travel to Turkey can be different from other Iranians.[115] Of course, we did not see any clear signs of this in the interviews or in the travelogues, but at least three implicit signs were mentioned in the interviews. All three had one thing in common, and that was that they were better received by Turks than other tourists because of their linguistic proximity to Turkey, or that they enjoyed their travel more because of a better understanding of Turkish culture. But on the other hand, it can also be considered that some Azeri tourists may refuse to express their feelings towards Turkey due to the accusations that may be labeled at them by other Iranians.

At times, their views were both ethnic tendencies and nationalistic. For example, almost all three mentioned that Iran has more attractions than Turkey, but the government does not pay attention to tourism in Iran. In fact, they were in line with other Iranians in this regard.

A similar study focused on the discussion of the identity of ethnic tourists (Gholamian, Maleki and Rezaei. 2020) revealed that tourists' experiences of traveling to ethnic lands affect their post-travel behavior. They have shown that the Iranian Kurds are proud of being Kurds and feel closer to Iraqi Kurdistan when they travel to Iraqi Kurdistan and see the progress in the region. But on the other hand, after comparing their position with the Kurds in Iraq, they move away from their Iranian identity. Therefore, it is not

115. Unfortunately, this was not taken into account during the interview, and only after the end of the interviews and finding the points indirectly mentioned by the three Azeri respondents, as well as further investigation of the relationship between ethnicity and outbound tourism, such a discussion also became clear in the researcher's mind that it could be considered more in other studies.

unreasonable to expect that the Azeris, after traveling to Turkey and seeing the progress of that country, will feel more of their ethnic identity and their sense of closeness to Turkey and will move away from their sense of Iranian identity. Even if they are not far from their Iranian identity, they may rethink their identity. Marwiyama, Weber, and Stronza (2010) found unlike other studies on post-travel tourist identity, the second generation Chinese-American tourists after travel to China as their ancestral homeland, still considered United States as their homeland, but in their own identity they needed to be redefined.

Due to the prevalence of Turkish TV channels in competing with less entertaining TV programs in Iran, not only the Turkish-speaking minority, but also the majority of Persian-language groups and other language groups watch Turkish satellite channels, like many Azeris. Although there are differences between the Azeri Turkish dialect and the Istanbul Turkish dialect in Turkey, there seems because of a widespread using of Turkish TV channels in Iran in recent years, the Azeri Turkish and Istanbul Turkish differences were reduced. Some of the interviewees (for example, Nos. 1, 15 and 19 in Istanbul) who were Azeris mentioned that they always watch Turkish channels and do not feel their selves as foreign in this country.

This group of Iranians is close to pedigree tourists. Higginbotham (2012: 190) distinguishes between two groups of seeking roots and tracing lineages tourists: seeking roots tourists usually travel to this region in search of ancestral land; while a tracing lineages tourist has not necessarily traveled to such a country, but everywhere - where it may not be their ancestral homeland - they seek a trace of the pedigree or ancestral memories. Travel to Turkey known as the forerunner of common Turk culture and short living among people with a closed language can also be considered in the latter category (tracing lineages tourists). According to Cohen (1979: 193-192), such a journey, if it stimulates a sense of belonging to the destination of the travel, will cause them an existential experience in the travel. The more these Azeri tourists believe in the myth of the golden age of Turkish civilization (which according to some Azeri ethnicitists, Iran has been the land of the Turks for seven thousand years and has many civilizational relics by later civilizations, especially the Aryans and Persians it is gone) their existential experience increases, and so does their sense of closeness to Turkey and their distance from Iran.

At least the first four propositions (except the last one, which pertain to the Azeris), it means the propositions related to Iranian nationalism, can be summed up in one proposition: *"this is our right"* which Turkey now enjoys. In other words, *"it is not our right"* to have such a situation in Iran now. According to them, before the revolution, Iran was much more advanced than neighboring countries such as Turkey. In fact, the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah has become a golden age for many Iranians.

4.2.6. Golden Age Myth:

Modern nationalists, as Smith (2004: 221) puts it, generally resort to the myth of the Golden Age. In fact, the search for one's identity is always linked to the myth of the Golden Age (Alavi, 2005). In different periods, people wanted to imagine the times of their ancestors as the paradise of the earth. O'Neill Gross (1945: 7-8) provides a list of Golden Age myths in earlier human civilizations, including Persian mythology. Each of these introduced an important and superior feature for this golden age. For example, in Roman legal thought, this was the golden age when the situation was based on natural laws (and before the enactment of civil laws) and was therefore much better than it is now (Klosko. 2012). Many Iranians, like other peoples, are always longing for glorious periods in their past. The first of these periods is the mythical period of Jamshid Shah.

> *In his reign there is peace and there are many blessings. There is no cold wind, no hot wind, no death and no pain. No one grows old, and father and son both look like fifteen-year-olds. In his time, the world will be prosperous and full of happiness* (Amoozgar. 2002: 53).

As mentioned in the previous parts, the beginning of modern nationalism in Iran was accompanied by a regrettable look at the pre-Islamic period of Iran; periods such as the Achaemenids and Sassanids when Iran was the largest empire or one of the top powers in the world at that time. *"Iranians have never been able to forget that a superpower has fallen"* (Islami Nodooshan. 2007: 97). And, of course, this regrettable view has once again created about the before Islamic revolutionary era. Although no positive words can be said about the pre-revolutionary period in the official media of the country, but in social networks, it is shared a lot of historical clips, photos, memoirs and excerpts of newspapers and magazines of that time when the news showed (sometimes with great

exaggeration) Iran was developed more than its neighbors. However, many of them are true. For example, Seyfi and Hall (2020: 498) have shown that in the 1970s, Iran was the leading tourist destination in the region. Despite the very negative publicity surrounding the 2,500-year-old celebrations and their costs, these celebrations also had many beneficial aspects. Among other things, they greatly contributed to the significant growth of incoming tourism to Iran, and in fact the costs of these celebrations were offset. In addition, part of this cost was spent on setting up luxury and very modern tents, which after the celebration, were used to accommodate foreign tourists (and receive accommodation costs). All these tents were burned in the first days after the revolution. The number of tourists entering Iran in the last years of the Pahlavi dynasty was close to 700,000, which was unique in the Middle East.

Many Iranian tourists visiting Turkey now, constantly refer to the pre-revolutionary era, when Iran was more advanced than neighboring countries in many areas, including Turkey. Naficy (1993: 156) shows that the sea in Iranian TV video clips in Los Angeles, as a symbol of mother nature (motherland), is a reminder of sweet childhood memories of the Caspian Sea before the Islamic Revolution. Antalya brings to life these nostalgic memories for Iranian tourists more than anything else. As noted in part 2, a review by Brunner (1994: 398) of the New Salem Historical Site in Illinois found that tourists in New Salem engage in five activities, two of them are: a) feeling nostalgic for a simpler period from the past and b) buy the idea of progress and how far we have progressed. While each tourist is free to construct and use their own meanings, Iranian tourists experience these stages in a different way in Turkey. They generally compare Turkey's current progress, both in terms of tourism and in other areas, with Iran's past, and while evoking their nostalgic feelings about their past, they feel sorry for their country instead of celebrating (in Brunner's final stage). The frequent reference of Iranian tourists to this myth of their golden age is in fact a way of escaping from reality and taking refuge in the myth. According to Strauss, myth is a kind of *"collective dream"* (Leach. 1996: 70). In his view (Strauss, 1997), one of the main functions of myths is to give human beings the feeling that they can understand the world; while this is not the case. Rather, myth makes the world more bearable for human beings by resolving the contradictions of life (Storey. 2007: 148). And this is how Iranians try to alleviate some of the psychological pressure in this regard by recalling past memories or even exaggerating them.

Of course, another means of taking refuge in the golden age before the revolution and even pre-Islamic Iran is escape and acquittal from Iran after the revolution; that is, they are Iranians, but they have nothing to do with the revolution or even Islam. Naficy (1993: 130-132) points out that the situation of Iranians who went to the United States after the revolution, because of the Islamic Revolution (which tarnished Iran's image in the world), war (which destroyed Iran's human and financial resources) and the hostage-taking (which made the Americans hate the Iranians) was very frustrate. Therefore, on their televisions, they tried to protect the before the revolution and even pre-Islam Iran from the consequences of such exile. So they called oneself *"Persian"* instead of *"Iranian"* as a way of protecting oneself from negative views of Islamic and revolutionary Iran. This was a way of confronting the Islamic identity of Iran that is propagated by the government (Morakkabati. 2011: 109). Because in the *"Persian"* term, lies the history and culture of Iran, especially before Islam. As Seyfi and Hall (2019) explain, the failure of the Iranian clergy elite to keep Iranian youth under Islam has led many Iranians to consider themselves more *"Persian"* than *"Muslim-Iranians"*, and to want to trace their legacy back to the time of Cyrus the Great. This can be considered as one of the methods of resistance of Iranian tourists against the identity that is attributed to them.

This means that this travel is similar to time travel. The planes that carry Iranian tourists are like a time machine when they take Iranians to forty years ago of Iran instead of today of Turkey. As mentioned, Iranian tourists see and experience things in Turkey that remind them of a time when the condition of tourism services in Iran, the use and consumption of Iranian culture, respect for Iranian culture and civilization etc. was common in Iran itself. In fact, the travel to Turkey brings to life and in fact represents the *"imaginary"* memories of Iranians from the pre-revolutionary period. As Wagner (2017) points out, some tourists explicitly express their desire to return to the past, a past that is always remembered more positively than it was in real. But a significant portion of Iranian tourists not only feel they have lost the nostalgic past, but they also feel the same way about their country. The *"imagings of loss of place"*, as Saloul (2012: 2) puts it, can always accompany exiles. Although Marshall (2017) rightly points out that this experience of nostalgic memories can sometimes be *"a deeply unsettling experience"*, this nostalgic memory is not always negative, but can sometimes serve as a

cultural response to the situation of *"imagings of loss of place"*, which helps resolve the mental conflicts of the exiled (Saloul. 2012).

The same conflict can be seen in the feelings and experiences of Iranian tourists in Turkey. Where on the one hand they are sad and angry about losing those nostalgic memories before the revolution, and on the other hand they are happy to experience them in a place that brings those memories to life. In this regard, Iranian tourists experience Turkey more as a *"non-place"*. Anthropologist Marc Augé (2008) considers spaces such as airports, hotels, holiday clubs, etc. to be places that are *"transit points"* and, unlike *"places"*, do not have an identifying place; rather, it is de-identifies or the identity is ambiguous there. Where, according to Fakouhi (2008), the relationship between human beings and time-space has changed and the social activist gives meaning or de-meaning to them through his interpretation. In other words, non-places are now new places and identity-makers themselves, because in the current era, almost everything is in transition. Turkey, as a destination for Iranian tourists, can be a non-place which first is de-identified and then these tourists, with their nostalgic feelings and memories, give it an identity similar to pre-revolutionary Iran. Such a phenomenon is more or less seen in tourism. Marshall (2017: 23) says that some people travel to places that evoke memories of home, but geographically and historically have nothing to do with family origins. These destinations can be *"replaced home"* based on the similarity of tangible and intangible environmental features.

About Iranians abroad, Etemaddar et al. in their two articles (2016 and 2018) show how the Iranian diaspora experience their home away from home. Etemaddar et al. (2016: 511-512) explain that sometimes what evokes home atmosphere for diaspora tourists depends more on being with family than on geographical location. They propose the concept of "moments of home" for the diaspora to whom experience the home somewhere outside the home country. Diaspora networks (temporarily) "taste" different aspects of the home at different times in different locations and in many geographical locations that are not necessarily their country of origin or country of residence (Vertovec, 2009 cited in Etemaddar et al. 2016: 506).

Etemaddar et al. (2018) in another article show how Iranian families who want to celebrate their wedding in Turkey, do their best to make the venue of the celebration as

well as the wedding ceremony as much as possible be like their houses in Iran and completely Iranian ceremonies. For example, many of the items traditionally present at Iranian weddings are imported from Iran or elsewhere. They hire Iranian chefs and cook traditional Iranian food. They play Iranian music and so on. Also, because part of the ceremony is held at home, the bride's family, the groom's family and guests are scattered in various hotels in the city to make the wedding space look like Iran by attending a hotel that represents the role of the bride's house. This made them taste the “tasting home” elsewhere. Perhaps the situation in Turkey for Iranian tourists can be expressed in the words of the bride’s father: "Turkey was like a temporary “rental home” for us" (Etemaddra et al. 2018: 429).

Powers (2017) states the homeland of some tourist groups, such as VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) tourists, is based more on similarities than differences and they look at others as a representation of themselves. The same concept and idea can be extended to Iranian tourists in Turkey; That is, Iranians see their nostalgic homeland in similarities with Turkey (and even more developed than that) and see Turks as a manifestation of their nostalgic self.[116]

This feature of Turkey as a non-place brings the experiences of Iranian tourists as close as possible to the rite of passage in their travel, the Turner (1969)'s liminality state that is neither here nor there. This feeling of suspension is experienced by Iranian tourists both spatially and with their nostalgic feelings and memories, in terms of time. After returning from this travel, these tourists, as passengers of rite, undergo mental changes about their identity and their relationship with a government that sees itself outside this identity (according to the definition of Iranian nationalists). Lacan explains that when a child first sees his own image in the mirror, he acquires a coherent image of himself. Before that, he had a vague and fragmented image of himself. With the help of Lacan's words, Arabestani (2018: 45) raises the issue of coherent image of Iran, when Iranians facing the people of other countries; Where Iranians become frustrated. This happens to Iranians when and after traveling to Turkey. The same thing happened in the middle of the Qajar period and stimulated the nationalistic feelings of the Iranians. During the

116. This de-identified or making new identity of non-places, gives us another reason to understand why Iranian nationalist tourists still travel to Turkey, while they think Turkey is the enemy of Iran.

Iranian constitutional era, Iranian intellectuals, journalists, and libertarians who traveled abroad, rethought their identity on the one hand and on the other hand, the relationship between themselves, Iran and the rulers, after return to Iran. Similar conditions now seem to dominate the minds of Iranian tourists in Turkey. Therefore, it is not far-fetched to expect that consequences such as the Constitutional Revolution, which occurred following the numerous travels and deportations of Iranians abroad in the late Qajar period, await Iran in the near future.[117]

4.3. THE ART OF RESISTANCE WITH TRAVEL:

Previously, it was shown that what the Iranian government expects from its people (here, in the field of tourism and national identity), is violated in various ways by these tourists in Turkey. These are what de Certeau (1988) calls "*tactics*". In de Certeau's view, two concepts are more important: *"strategy" and "tactic"*.

> *I call a strategy the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an environment (de Certeau. 1988: xix).*

A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper and thus serve as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, clienteles, targets or objects of research).

Strategy is related to the sphere of power, to acquire or increase its wealth or power, it tries to dominate the place over time. Place is actually a position of power that has a *"panoptic"* function. But tactics are at the opposite end of the spectrum.

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117. Keddie (2004: 128) points out that in the *"Tobacco Movement"* (which took place before the constitution and the people and the clergy were able to force Naser Al-Din Shah to withdrawal and annulment of the tobacco contract with a British company) by telegraph, during the Islamic Revolution through audio tapes and in the coming years, through the Internet and satellite TV, which are banned in Iran, but it is common, to get acquainted with global developments, especially those related to Iran. Elsewhere (p. 99) she considers these communication tools as the aware makers of Iranians about *"the contradiction between the restrictions imposed on their lives and the freedoms that exist in many other countries."* Now another communication tool can be added to the list of communication tools introduced by Keddie, and that is nothing but tourism and seeing directly the progress of other countries and comparing it with the situation in Iran; a phenomenon that used to have major consequences, such as constitutionalism, even on a small scale (about exiles, students, diplomats, etc.).

> *I call a "tactic," on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a "proper" (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other (ibid).*

That is, since place is a position of power and consumers and ordinary citizens do not have access to it, so they try to get out of this place in the short time that is available and make use of the gaps in monitoring and controlling them. In fact, there is a difference between what is produced and supplied (strategy) and how it is used and consumed (tactics). de Certeau sought to find these differences. Consumption tactics are innovative methods in which the weak use the strong, thus giving a daily political dimension to their day-to-day work (de Certeau. 1988: xvii).

But Scott (2017) has an argument similar to de Certeau's argument, which he presents in the form of two concepts: *"public transcript"* and *"hidden transcript"*. Public transcript is about the relationship between the upper and lower classes in the public arena. According to Scott, in this public arena, the greater the power inequality between the upper and lower classes, the thicker the mask that the lower classes wear in public (p. 15). But the hidden transcript is a sub-narrative and includes words and behaviors outside the public sphere that confirm, modify or violate the public display (p. 17). He explains, of course, that these two areas are not always contradictory; As sometimes, in certain circumstances, a hidden narrative may appear in the public arena (which, of course, in this case, mostly takes the form of open rebellion and disobedience).

Of course, unlike de Certeau and especially Scott, Mirzoeff (2009) talks of three spaces: domestic spaces, public spaces and the spaces of consumption. However, it should be noted that the border between these spaces is very fluid and slippery. In general, he considers domestic spaces to provide shelter, rest and a suitable environment for taking care of theirselves and children. Public and collective spaces such as institutions, theaters, cinemas, galleries and museums or political spaces such as constituencies, communities such as strikes and demonstrations, and consumption spaces (including spaces and places for eating; and etc.), as important areas and the most important area in everyday life. This range, while meeting the needs of people's lives, has now become an arena that accommodates everything and, in this way, immerses human beings in its depths. Mirzoeff's emphasis on expanding the spaces of consumption as a significant

part of daily life is the basis of his critique of daily life (Kahvand and Hosseini. 2015: 11-10).

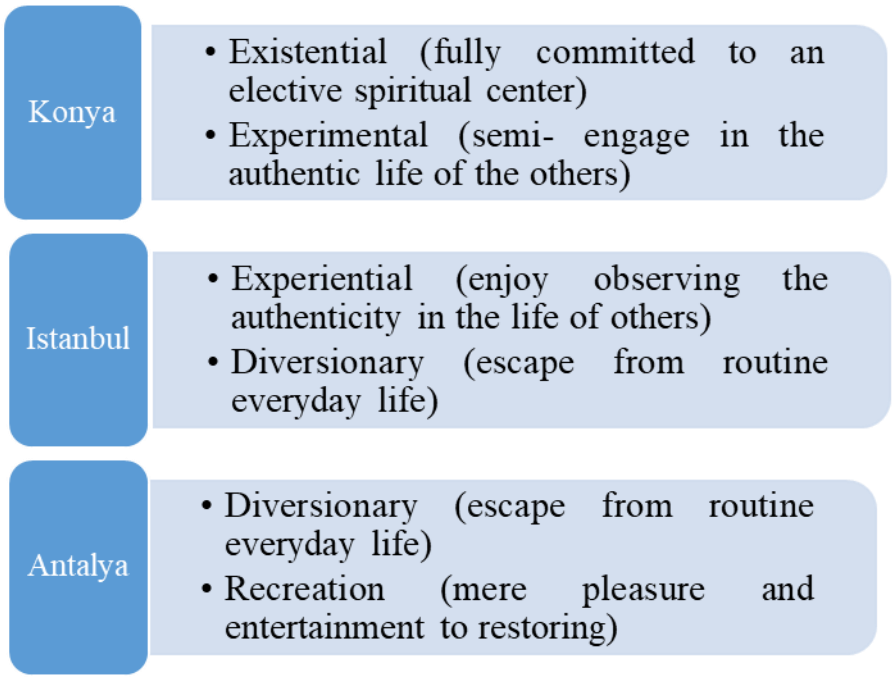
Iranian tourism in Turkey can be seen as the Iranian tourist tactics to oppose the strategy of Iranian sovereignty in the theory of de Certeau's, in Scott's theory their hidden transcript against public display against the government, and in Mirzoeff's theory to be present in consumption and avoid public space. In other words, it can be said that this resistance, a tactic, is the hidden transcript of some Iranians in the tourism consumption of Turkey. It means, the tourist areas of Turkey become a consumption space where Iranian tourists can follow their favorite lifestyle, at least in the short term. That is, as de Certeau showed that daily activities such as talking, walking, cooking, etc. are tactics by their consumers (1988: xix), activities such as attending concerts, sitting in cafes until midnight, dressing favorite clothes, attending bars, etc. are also considered as a tactic by Iranian tourists in Turkey. Even some public transcript propagandists have a contradictory hidden transcript, too.[118] These are in fact parts of Iranian culture that can only be used in places other than the birthplace of that culture. Perhaps no better concept than *"culture in exile"* can explain this phenomenon.

Culture in exile is one of the areas that anthropologists study, especially with regard to asylum seekers (Eastmond, 2001: 12903). As Naficy (1993: 2) says, *"All cultures are located in place and time. Exile culture is located at the intersection and in the interstices of other cultures".* Also as Eastmond (ibid) shows *"many exile communities are concerned with continuity".*

Iranian tourists in Turkey have a sense of being between the homeland and exile. It can be argued that this is a characteristic of all tourists, but Iranian tourists cannot be compared with tourists from other countries (as in general, tourists from each country are different from the another country's tourists). A tourist generally wants to stay away from the limitations of their permanent home when traveling. So, it feels more free and comfortable in the tourist destination. Therefore, they may do activities at the destination that they do not do at their place of residence. For example, sunbathing on

118. In the last days of spring 2019, a video clip of Setareh Eskandari, a famous Iranian actress who defends women's Islamic hijab on Iranian television, while herself was without hijab in a store in Turkey, caused a discussion about the duality life of many Iranian celebrities.

the beach, walking the streets of the coastal city with short pants and flip fops sandals, participate in music concerts and dance, drink more alcohol and etc. None of these activities are usually prohibited or illegal in one's own home, but cultural and social frameworks limit them. However, almost all the examples shown above are forbidden and illegal in Iran, and if anyone does them, the law will punish them. On the other hand, some of these activities, which are related to Iranian culture, are not carried out in Iran itself. Therefore, Iranian tourists, unlike tourists from other countries, have a different situation. On the other hand, according to Cohen (1979)'s categorization on various experiences of tourists, more tourists who seek an environment similar to the center environment, their experience are superficial. The center in Cohen's theory refers to the West, as the tourist's homland and country. That is, if we were dealing with recreation tourism, it means that the tourists want their conditions at the destination to be similar to their conditions at home, but with more freedom and comfortable (to eat a ready food after visit a museum, instead of cooking food after a work day; to rest in a tidy hotel room after visit a theme park, instead of tidy the room after washing the bedsheet and etc.). If we want to classify the experiences of Iranian tourists in the three destinations of Konya, Istanbul and Antalya according to the appearance of the Cohen's category, the following table is obtained:



Cohen's (1979) Tourist Experience Typology

But the Cohen's theory is actually suitable for Western tourists and cannot explain the situation of Iranian tourists. Because Iranian tourists in Turkey try to make almost all their experiences look like the ideal center. But this ideal center is not the West, but Iran, and not only some of experiences in the Cohen's categorizing, but almost these categories of tourist experience are focused on the ideal center / Iran; What recreation tourism experiences in Antalya that like to feel in the ideal north of Iran (for example, Ramsar), and what existential experiences they get in Konya and wish for these happened to other Iranian poets and mystics in Iran.

Also, according to Uriely (1997), the modern tourist experiences can be categorized into *"simulational experiences"* and *"other"* experiences in the sociological studies. In Uriely's view, the simulated experiences (in which he sees in theme parks and other artificial attractions) are in fact superficial experiences; While the experiences that follow the real life (other) are deep experiences. However, in the case of Iranian tourists in Turkey, a combination of these two experiences appears to be synthesized. That is, Iranian tourists look for experiencing their own culture which is simulated in another land and culture. Such a simulated experience unlike the Uriely's view cannot be considered superficial.

Thus, Iranian tourists are close to Naficy's description of Iranian exiles in the United States and their culture in exile. Of course, Iranians had experienced not only culture, but even nationalism in exile many times before. For example, in the final years of Qajar rule, a nationalist and patriotic but informal government was formed in Iran that was forced to emigrate due to opposition. Sometimes it was formed in the marginal cities of the country and sometimes outside the borders. Ashraf (2016) has considered this immigrant government as *"a symbol of the formation of national identity in its modern meaning"*. Edward Saeed (2000) sees a two-way, dialectical relationship between nationalism and exile. On the one hand, because nationalism is against foreigners, it somehow prevents exile. But on the other hand, sometimes exiled nationalist groups want nationalism for the liberation and independence of their country. In fact, nationalism is a powerful way to define the boundaries of exile, promote solidarity, and eliminate the torment of exile (Naficy, 1993: 162). There is a close

relationship between these nationalisms in exile (reminiscent of Benedict Anderson (1992)'s concept of long-distance nationalism) and culture in exile. One of the symbols of nationalism is national culture, which is considered and important even in exile; But on the other hand, the application of national culture in exile can highlight nostalgic feelings and spread a sense of nationalism in exile. Exiles use the prevailing culture of the host and its intermediary institutions to create a symbolic and economic connection based on lineage and satisfaction, in which fossilized representations of the home and the past are repeatedly disseminated and reinforced (Naficy. 1993: 34).

A brief introduction to Naficy's (1993) anthropological work on culture in exile of Iranian immigrants to the United States can helps to examine this phenomenon among Iranian tourists in Turkey.

Naficy pointed out that the widespread wave of Iranian immigration to the United States after the revolution led to the launch of television channels in the United States, most of which, being in Los Angeles, became known both as Los Angeles TV channels and as Los Angelesian singers (who performing on those channels). Los Angeles-based Iranian pop stars are well known in Iran and seem to be very popular among certain segments of the population. These singers could no longer return to Iran because the Islamic government said there was a direct link between pop music and moral corruption, because Western culture has had an adverse effect on this music. Moreover, because many of these singers also performed in the pre-revolutionary period, they were accused of collaborating with the official Pahlavi culture before the revolution (p: 55). One of the functions of this Iranian culture in exile was to hold Iranian rituals and celebrations, as well as concerts or nightclubs and private parties, which not only defined the border between the exiles and the host community, but also brought Iranians together (p: 56).

But this exile and the culture in exile were also directly related to nationalism. Iranian exiles, despite their different religious views, were almost all secular and strongly opposed to theocracy. Soon after their arrival in the United States and the Iranian government's attempt to overthrow Iranian nationalism in favor of ummahism, a kind of secular nationalism emerged among them that was practically anti-Islamic (p: 164). The Iranian media and televisions in the United States are more dominated by monarchists, which emphasize the concept of a *"motherland"* that has suffered, and by emphasizing

the distinctive originality, historical background, and racial differences of Iranians. Even sometimes they promoted some kinds of chauvinist and racial nationalism (p: 132). Also, these televisions, with a masochistic point of view, showed a very black and ruined face of Iran. They ignored the cooperation of many Iranians with the Islamic government, including their involvement in the war in Iraq; Because their view was not internal, but external (p: 140). Of course, after the release of the American hostages, and especially after the end of the Iran-Iraq war, these anti-Islamic attitudes gradually changed. The exiles and their televisions accepted that the Islam that was prevalent in the Islamic Republic of Iran was not compatible with the real Islam, and for example, some of them devoted part of their programs to religious occasions (p: 173). But the nationalist view remained dominant.

The culture of exiled Iranians described above is very similar to the culture used by Iranian tourists in Turkey. In most cases, they show an overly black image of present-day Iran; Even religious tourists support a secular government in Iran, like the veiled woman in Antalya who was against religious state in Iran, they differentiate between true Islam and what is propagated in Iran, and so on. For example, they repeatedly referred in interviews and in fact criticized the Islamic government in Iran that although Turkey is as Muslim as Iran, but unlike the religious government of Iran, in Turkey no one cares about the work of others and whoever wants she has a hijab and anyone who does not want to come out without a hijab; Or whoever wants to drink alcohol and whoever does not want to, does not drink. In activities, the behavior of Iranian tourists in Turkey is similar to the behavior of Iranian exiles in the United States, too. For example, the common pattern in Iranian restaurants in Istanbul is very similar to the common pattern in Iranian American restaurants, which Naficy (1993: 55) describes as pop singers perform live with their band every night in low-light but loud Iranian restaurants. The same Los Angeles singers come to different cities of Turkey every year during Nowruz and summer holidays to perform live concerts for Iranian tourists who are deprived of this type of music in Iran. Iranian TV channels in Turkey, especially GEM TV, which play a very important role in introducing Turkish attractions and attracting Iranian tourists and even home buyers to Turkey, oppose religious rule and propagandate a combination of secularism and nationalism in them. Showing illegal pop

singers' songs that are not approved by the Islamic government is also an important part of their program.

This powerful tendency towards secularism in Iranian culture cannot be found in the other Muslim countries. Keddie (2004: 136) explains:

> *Secular ideas are probably stronger in Iran than anywhere else in the Muslim world. In many Muslim countries autocratic and mainly secular rule is encouraging the kind of Islamist reaction that Iran experienced in the 1970s, and it seems unlikely that most of these countries will learn from Iran's experience that Islamist rule is not solving many basic problems. In Iran, Islamist rulers undertook a number of policies that in the end encouraged the development of a healthier, better-educated, and (inadvertently from their viewpoint) more sophisticated society, but their policies accomplished this at a huge cost in lost exiles and capital.*

Certainly this does not mean that the current Iranian society is turning away from Islam (although part of the society has such a desire), but it is a sign of their desire to become a Muslim in their own way. In fact, as Fazeli (2004: 179) points out, the lifestyle of a significant portion of Iranians, especially the middle class, is *"omnivore"* in cultural consumption. He borrowed this term for cultural consumption styles from Peterson (1992). This is why we see that many Iranian tourists which may not wear hijab, but pray; may have hijab, but also go to bars and discos; may have religious beliefs, but have no problem with dancing and etc. Many manifestations of these seemingly contradictory behaviors can be seen in the behaviors of Iranian tourists in Turkey.

In such liminal conditions, that is out of *"panoptic"* control, the anti-structure is formed. In other words, the formal structure of Iranian culture in Iran itself is ignored in Turkey by Iranian tourists. But, as Turner (1969) rightly points out, this anti-structure itself is actually formed on the basis of some kind of structure. This is the structure that Iranian tourists believe should have been common in Iran, as was common in Iran before the revolution. And now in Turkey, liminal conditions allow them to formatting this structure.

Of course, it should not be left unsaid that this resistance, which is accompanied by a distance from the control of the "panoptic" of the government, does not take place only outside the borders of Iran (here, the tourist destinations in Turkey); there are also spaces for this escape in Iran. Part of this "hidden transcript" is the disregard for of the

Islamic Republic's laws, as Keddie (2004: 108) puts it, these restrictions, such as the prohibition of alcohol and the dress rules, were increasingly ignored in private homes and in more public places. What is ignored in the privacy of homes is the domestic space in Mirzoeff's view (2009. Quoted from Kohvand and Hosseini. 2015). For example, as some anthropological and sociological studies (Arabestani. 2018; Fazeli. 2012; Azad Armaki and Shalchi. 2005) show, cafes in Iran, with a distance from the official discourse of the state, an opportunity they are for the *"semiotic resistance"* of the youth against the traditionalist forces and the ruling political forces in the society. This escape from the spaces that belong to the realms of tradition and government, as Fazeli (2012) says, is the same de Certeau's tactic by the youth against the strategies of the authority. Azad Armaki and Shalchi (2005: 176) show an example of this method of resistance:

> *In many of these coffee shops, there are hangers that hang their coats[119] on when the girls enter, and in fact suspend the official culture. They spend their time in [...] their desired cultural atmosphere.*

Fazeli (ibid. 241) considers this behavior of Iranian youth as a kind of political participation that, unlike the classic type of political participation, is not through direct party activity. Keddie (2004: 79) describes this phenomenon in another way. She said only some of the Iranian youth have political activities, but for other Iranian youth, their political thinking is limited to behave according to their own desires. They oppose what the government wants and support what the government opposes.

But this soft resistance, which according to Molavi (2002: 12) is the way for the Iranian people to fight peacefully against many prohibitive laws in the Islamic Republic, has more performance and maneuver power outside Iran. This is why some Iranian Kurdish tourists who travel to Iraqi Kurdistan consider social freedoms, including in drinks, as one of the reasons for traveling there (Gholamian, Maleki and Rezaei. 2020: 10). Or, as Farahani and Mohammad (2013) have shown (and of course it is a very familiar scene for all Iranians who have even once traveled outside of Iran), many Iranian women put aside the Islamic hijab when travel to countries with more social freedom. Or, in contrast to Iranian and Western pop music, which was banned after the revolution (Keddie. 2004), the market for Iranian concerts in Turkish tourist destinations is very

119. It is obligatory for Iranian women to wear the long type, so that it covers women's knees.

thriving. Fazeli (2007: 56-55) considers music as one of the means of expressing identity, especially when there are restrictions. As it is sometimes used for political resistance; for example, it is used by some black American music genres.

In the field of Iranian marriage culture, many Iranians prefer to get married in Turkey to escape social restrictions on their marriage rituals. Some Iranians who like luxury services, or are interested in weddings in Turkey, get married in this country. There are many companies that advertise weddings in Turkey by paying high fees to satellite TVs (which are generally illegal in Iran). Some Iranians living in another country also get married in Turkey because of the proximity to Iran and the possibility of all guests coming to this country, while some of them cannot go to Iran (Etemaddar, Thyne and Insch. 2018). Also the expenses of travel to Turkey is not so much (Mohaghegh. 2015). So much so that some Iranians hold their weddings in the most luxurious European hotels built in Turkey, such as the Palace Men (Ufuk Sarıen. nd).[120]

In many cases, they still try to keep this, according to Scott (2017), the *"hidden transcript"*, so that they do not have any problems after returning to Iran. One of the Iranian telegram channels in Konya, with around 200 members, which regularly publishes related Konya photos, videos and poems, once wrote in a message:

> *Dear sympathizers, in order to maintain and continuity Konya's mood, I am trying to put some videos and audio files in the channel. Please do not share in any way on social medias such as Instagram, Facebook and YouTube in order to keep the presence of dear Iranians in House No. 5.*

On the other hand, even if a part of this hidden transcript was shown to the public in one of the destinations of Turkey, an attempt will be made to follow the rules of the same public display there as well. As described in the findings chapter, on the night of December 15, 2019, Bashir Mirzaei, before performing in the basement of the Baykara Hotel, asked the women who wanted to do Sema not to be without veil; Because later Bashir have to answer [to the Iranian officials].

120. Of course, sometimes different examples are found. The researcher witnessed a very simple marriage of an Iranian couple in house No. 5 in Konya on the night before Shab-e Chelle 2019 (ie December 20). Small space and small number of guests (approximately 30 people). The bride said that her dream was to be able to celebrate her relationship in such a mystical atmosphere.

The hidden transcript of this culture of exile has its own tricks when it comes to public display under the supervision of "panoptic". For example, as mentioned in the findings section, travelogues published on official Iranian websites refuse to share many of their experiences during their travel to Turkey, as such experiences are illegal in Iran. However, they put many indications that the reader is indirectly convinced that the author experienced that illegal act. In his book *"Language, Status, and Power in Iran: Advances in Semiotics"*, which is an ethnographic work in the field of anthropology of language, Beeman (1986) points out that although the grammar of Persian language is simple, but in the other hand, it has a rich set of language variables that allow Iranians to use ambiguous language with language games in a way that can be interpreted in different ways. He described the historical role of Shiism (which, before the Safavids came to power, avoided being punished by Sunni rulers with Taqiyyeh/ dissimulation and secrecy) and literature, especially Persian poetry (in which amphibology played a key role) in this regard.

Straw (2019), a former British foreign minister who attended nuclear energy talks with Iran, makes good reference to these language games of the Iranian negotiating team throughout his book *"The English Job: Understanding Iran and Why It Distrust Britain"*:

> *The key issues were batted across the table, with the Iranians hoping that the textual gymnastics for which they are world-famous might produce a crack in the united front we were presenting.*

He believes this is an Iranian cultural character: *"The Iranians are mad about poetry. It's something never to forget when negotiating with them- their love of words, their poetic appreciation of ambiguity".* It is the widespread use of these language games that makes Iranian travelogues in Turkey, although they voluntarily censor many experiences, still be attractive to readers who are familiar with Iranian culture and are familiar with these language games.

Albeit these behaviors of Iranians have led some Iranian intellectuals, as Fazeli and Kalani (2020: 34) say, to *"reduce the idea of culture to a playful and unserious public"* and to criticize these behaviors of Iranians, namely

> *linguistic resistance and the rituals of the people of Iran, their brilliant literary and artistic works, their playful roguerys (from the expediency of ordinary people to the roguery and literary skills of literates) and their political, social and religious tolerance (from tolerance and peace within mystics and Sufis until peaceful coexistence of the mass classes of the people).*

But even behind these intellectual criticisms, the same trap seems to have been located. That is, maybe they also use language games to criticize the behavior of Iranians, but their main criticism in many cases is the institutions of power that have led Iranians to adopt such ways of life. In the words of a Persian proverb: *"They say to the door so that the wall can hear"*.

4.4. THIRD DESTINATION TOURISM:

Before the end of this section, it is better to explain more a group of Iranian tourists in Turkey. As shown in the findings section, a significant proportion of Iranian tourists in all three destinations surveyed in Turkey came from another country to see their families, who also came from Iran. Travel with the aim of meeting family and acquaintances is one of the most important branches of tourism, which is called VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) for short. Backer (2007: 369) suggests this definition for VFR tourism:

> *VFR travel is a form of travel involving a visit whereby either (or both) the purpose of the trip or the type of accommodation involves visiting friends and/or relatives.*

As we have shown, Iranians who choose Turkey instead of Iran as a place to visit their family are those who live in a third country, either as immigrants or as students. Many studies (Dwyer et al. 2014; Griffin. 2015; Etzo, Massidda and Paris. 2014; Uriely. 2010; King and Dwyer. 2015) have shown that there is a close relationship between migration and VFR tourism and that if migration increased, VFR tourism increases, too. Also as Dwyer et al (2014) have shown, there is a close relationship between higher education and VFR.

Although there is no official and accurate information on the number of Iranians living abroad, it is estimated that the total number is between 5-6 million, mainly live in the United States, Britain, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, Germany, France and Turkey

(Ghaderi. 2015). During the *"Construction Period"* (referes to Rafsanjani's presidency: 1989-1997), efforts were made to improve Iran's tourism, including targeting Iranians who had left the country after the revolution, as an incoming tourist (Seyfi and Hall. 2020: 498). They came to visit Iran especially after the *"Reform Period"* (referes to Khatami's presidency: 1997-2005) and the collapse of the fear of punishment (Seyfi and Hall. 2019). But some of them do not travel to Iran due to their ambiguities. In particular, austerity intensified after the reform era. Baum and O'Gorman (2010) consider the fear of false imprisonment as one of the factors that undermines Iran's attractions as a destination. This also applies to Iranian VFR tourists. So the destination and the third country to meet family and acquaintances is the only way left for this group. Etemaddar et al. (2016: 510) have shown that the main reason why Iranian immigrants in New Zealand did not travel to Iran was religious and political barriers.

In general, it seems that with this situation of VFR tourism, both Iran is deprived of economic income from this type of tourism and VFR tourists and their families do not experience the peace expected in this tourism. As Ureily (2010: 855) has shown, in VFR tourism, tourists feel familiar at home, and outside the home, hosts can guide them and show them aspects of local life as well as destination information. So in this type of tourism, tourists feel at home, while they are away from home.

Almost all researchers who have studied VFR tourism have limited their research to one of the two points of the country/ city of origin (the place of residence of the acquaintance who was the birthplace of the tourist or his parents) and the country / city of destination. Even some, such as Ureily (2010), look more closely at VFR tourism from a dual home-away view. This shows the complexity of Iranian VFRs in Turkey, because the Uriely's pointview or the other scholar views do not apply in our study. Because we are facing VFR tourism in the third destination, which seems to exist in the least country. That is, due to the political, social and especially security conditions prevailing in Iran, it is rare to find a country that its migrant citizens, choose a third country for meet acquaintances instead of going to their own country as a VFR tourist. That is why this issue has not been addressed in VFR tourism studies. Only one study (King and Dwyer. 2015: 48) very briefly and in two sentences referred to the VFR tourism of refugees with family and acquaintances in the third country. But Etemaddar et al. in two separate articles deal with Iranian tourism in the third destination. One is

the same marriage of Iranians in Turkey (2018) mentioned above and the other is about the group travels of Iranian immigrants in New Zealand (2016). They choose a destination in the same New Zealand and gather from different cities in New Zealand and travel there.

She explains that the gathering of members of the Iranian diaspora from different parts of the world in a "third" country or destination is a common phenomenon. Through this form of *"diaspora tourism"*, instead of the place of that gathering, *"moments of home"* are found through the phenomenon of family reunification (Etemaddar et al. 2016: 512).

However, no research has been done on Iranian VFR tourists so far. Ghaderi (2015) has only worked on domestic tourists of this type, which shows 11% of the total domestic tourists in Iran in 2009 (p: 113). Of course, little attention to VFR tourism is not limited to Iran and in the world this part of tourism is underestimated (Backer. 2012: 75). But the extent of neglect and in fact ignoring it in Iran is obvious. Perhaps one reason for this lack of attention is that these tourists generally find themselves in other categories of tourism, especially leisure tourism (King and Dwyer. 2015: 55; Dwyer et al. 2014; Backer. 2012: 75). That is why Kashiwagi, Nagai and Furutani (2020) have named them *"Hidden VFR Travelers"*. In our study, this group of tourists was identified because the purpose of their travel to Turkey was asked. Even in two cases, the respondents first stated their goal in their leisure time, and it was only after further questions and answers that it became clear that they were in fact VFR tourists, too.

It should also be noted that Iranians' travels to Turkey to visit family are generally from the VR group and do not include the VF. It is natural that families are so eager to see their children or close relatives that they are willing to accept the cost of traveling to a third country and visit there. While such a motivation is weaker for friends. Therefore, it can be predicted that their social capital (according to Bourdieu. 1986) will decrease in the country of origin.

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In this chapter, it was showed that there is disagreement not only between the government of the Islamic Republic and an important part of Iranians about the Iranian identity and historical/ cultural heritage, but also about the lifestyle. While the Islamic

Republic emphasizes the Islamic/ Shiite identity of Iranians and the Muslim Ummah, a significant part of Iranians is interested in their pre-Islamic identity. Also, while the Islamic Republic emphasizes the implementation of the Islamic lifestyle, some people, especially the youth, prefer a freer lifestyle. Therefore, one of the tactics or the ways to resist these prohibitions is to travel to Turkey (or sometimes the other countries) as a destination outside the domination of *"panoptic"*. So that in an atmosphere similar to exile, to experience those parts of Iranian culture or lifestyle which are forbidden in Iran. In Turkey, they experience something like both nationalism in exile and culture in exile. But the main point of this dissertation is that they are actually experiencing *"tourism in exile"*; This phenomenon is not common in the world and Iranians are in the forefront in this field. In the conclusion chapter, we will address this issue.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, it was demonstrated that for various reasons (from travel restrictions for Iranians to geographical and cultural proximity, etc.) Turkey is one of the special destinations for Iranian tourists that attracts millions of Iranians every year. One of the main goals of Iranian tourists coming to Turkey is to do and gain experiences that they cannot get in Iran. Much of this has to do with cultural and social freedoms. Sufism and related activities (such as Sema) in Konya; two-person activities (male and female) in Antalya, many of which, although not legally prohibited in Iran, are practically not possible there (such as rafting on roaring rivers or women's cycling beside of the men of their families); midnight walks on Istiklal Street, going to bars and night discos, attending concerts of Iranian-Los Angeles singers, etc. in Istanbul, are some of these experiences. In fact, as mentioned, in many of these experiences, and based on the Iranian nationalist sense that its presenting is not possible in Iran itself, the consumption of Iranian culture is seen dramatically; A culture that is ignored in Iran. This Iranian culture can be a traditional culture that has been present in the life of Iranians for hundreds of years (such as Sufism or traditional music), or it can be a pop culture that does have generally found its way to Iran after extensive contacts with Western countries and it has been transformed by Iranian culture (such as Iranian-Los Angeles pop music, which is more reminiscent of pre-revolutionary Iran). The represent of Iranian nationalism and the consumption of Iranian culture -both of which face many restrictions in Iran- by Iranian tourists in Turkey creates conditions that can be called Iranian tourism in exile; a voluntary exile.

Turkey, as described in the introduction to the third part, is a destination for Iranian political refugees, a destination for Iranian buyers a house abroad, and finally a popular and lovable destination for Iranian tourists. The first group is forced into exile, the second group choose permanent or temporary voluntary exile in Turkey, and the third group do short-term self-exile in the form of tourism. It is easier to agree and accept the concept of *"Tourism in the Exile"* of two groups of Iranians: first, those who temporarily

or permanently reside in Turkey (whether they have fled Iran due to violations of the law; or those who have left Iran without any problems, but In Turkey, to receive asylum and residence in European and American countries, they go to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;[121] and those who have gone to Turkey and lived there without any problems, only for a more comfortable life); And the second group, VFR tourists, i.e. those who come to Turkey from other countries to visit their families there.

First of all, it must be shown that this Iranian tourism way in Turkey can also be a form of exile; Or at least in the first step, show the similarities between tourism and exile.

In general, tourism is closely related to new forms of human mobility; As Korstanje (2009: 104) considers tourism is one of the new forms of displacements. So far, many studies (Hall and Allan. 2002; Dwyer et al. 2014; King & Dwyer. 2015; Etzo, Massidda & Piras. 2014; Haug, Dann & Mehmetoglu. 2007; Kuentze & Ramaswamy. 2005; Harper. 2017) has shown the relationship and similarities between tourism and migration. Migration is usually done to achieve a better life. Tourism wants to achieve this in the short term. In other words, tourism may be considered a short-term migration with the aim of returning to the homeland.

But little has been done so far on the link between tourism and exile. It seems that only in the discussion of reproductive tourism, the concept of exile has been mentioned once or twice. Matorras (2006: 3571) critically proposes the term *"reproductive exile"* instead of *"reproductive tourism"*. This is because usually this group of couples are forced to travel to other countries for fertility due to cumbersome laws or limited facilities in their own country. But since pleasure -as the main feature of tourism- is not usually seen in their travels, they cannot be considered tourists. Inhorn & Patrizio (2009)'s qualitative

121. Of course, as it was explained in forth part, Iranian exiles generally describe the situation in Iran as very bleak. There are at least two reasons for this: First, by blackmailing about the situation in Iran, they are better able to obtain residency in another country as refugees; Secondly, with this blackmail, they want to distance themselves from the government in Iran, something similar to what Naficy (1993) described about exiled Iranians in Los Angeles. Similarly, the Iranian asylum seekers and refugees that the researcher saw during his stay in Turkey for several years were generally the same. Importantly, many of them were in the same situation as other Iranians and had no significant political or civic problem background; So they could continue to live in Iran without seeking asylum in Turkey (although dissatisfaction with economic, cultural, and social constraints etc. are widespread in Iran and I am not trying to ignore them here). However, we put them in general and next to the real asylum seekers, because there are no specific statistics to distinguish between them.

study on travel for reproduction confirmed Maturas' view. They found that interviewees were highly critical of the use of the term reproductive tourism for their travels, because unlike tourism, they did not travel for fun and enjoyment, but this travel was both very stressful and costly for them. Like Maturas, Inhorn and Patrizio believe that the concept of "reproductive exile" may be closer to the mental experience of most patients than the reproductive tourism. Because exile means leaving one's place of residence for political reasons or similar restrictions, the term can be applied to this kind of travel. The term exile, as they point out, has two meanings: either forced deportation or voluntary absence. Both meanings are accurate for describing the fertility travel. That is, in their qualitative study, reproductive travelers feel "forced" to leave their countries to seek safe, effective, cost-effective, and legal infertility care. In particular, there are legal barriers in their own countries that push them into exile. These researchers predict that such exiles to escape fertility restrictions in some countries is increasing.

What Matorras (2006), Inhorn and Patrizio (2009) say about the substitution of the term exile instead tourism may initially differ from mental perceptions of exile, but it falls exactly within the scientific definition of it. Exile that is the conditions for sending or keeping someone away from their homeland, especially for political reasons (Cambridge, 2020), can be forced or voluntary (Merriam-Webster, 2020). In that part of tourism that approaches the concept of exile, we are more confronted with the second type, voluntary or self-exile.

In Iran, too, the concept of exile and its conditions have undergone many changes from the past to the present. The word exile in Persian is derived from an Arabic word (Tab'id) meaning to make away (Dehkhoda. 2020). Historically, the distance from center of Iran, the mass exile, the social diversity of exiled groups, and preventive exile have been some of the features of Iranian exile in the past. If an exiled did not seek to change the structure of government, the government would not be hard on him in exile (Sadat. 2019). Exile in the Qajar period (1789-1925) was for prominent people, especially courtiers and princes, but in the period of Reza Shah (1925-1941) was used more widely and for a wider range. Most of the exiles during Reza Shah's period were also short, and the period of exile usually ended with letters of remorse and a request for forgiveness from the exiled (Sadat. 2017). Exile continues during the Islamic Republic.

The exile of Iranians outside the country began around the Constitutional period (1905-1911). This exile could be both forced and voluntary. Iranian exiles were concentrated in the four cities of Istanbul, Paris, London, and Yverdon/ Switzerland, but Istanbul and Paris accommodated most of them. *"The Iranian Prosperity Association"* (Anjoman-e Sa'adat-e Iranian) in Istanbul was one of the most active constitutionalist groups opposed to the authoritarian Qajar government. A small number of these people were officially exiled by the government of Iran at the time, and others went into self-imposed exile for fear of their lives (Sadat. 2019). For example, Taghizadeh, who was one of the pioneers of the Iranian constitution, went to Istanbul voluntarily in exile after the post-constitutional unrest against him (Taghizadeh. 1989: 351; Kasravi. 2537: 132). Of course, before the victory of the Iranian constitution, many Iranian critics, such as Dehkhoda and Pir Nia, had chosen Istanbul for exile (Sadat. 2019). Later, during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (1941-1979), the exile of Ayatollah Khomeini to Turkey was one of the most famous examples. Of course, Ayatollah Khomeini was exiled by the Shah's government outside the borders, but Shah did not determine the place of exile for him, and for this reason, he and his allies decided where their exile would be according to the conditions of the countries; First Najaf in Iraq, then Bursa in Turkey and finally Nouvel Le Chateau in France.

Of course, the forced or voluntary exiles mentioned above was generally for political reasons. However, sometimes cultural reasons could also lead to voluntary exiles. For example, during the reign of Reza Shah, some of cultural elites who could not tolerate the situation (such as Aref, who was a poet and singer, or Kamal al-Mulk, who was a famous painter), in order not to obey the demands of the government, they chose voluntary exile or self- imposed exile (Sadat. 2017: 115-116).

In one of the latest examples of the exile situation in Iran, in the summer of 2020, a list of 36 Iranian cities as exile places was published by the Iranian Interior Minister. But the ensuing debates in media showed a drastic shift in the concept of exile as a punishment. For example, many Iranian users on social media explained that many of

these exile places are attractive tourist destinations, and pictures of many of the exiles' natural, cultural, and historical attractions were published.[122]

Today, exile for many reasons cannot have the negative consequences it had on exiled person in the past. For example, the bad weather in the exile places of Iranians in the past was to put pressure on them (Sadat. 2017: 129). But today, due to facilities such as heaters and air conditioners, this option is generally not effective. Also, the possibility of traveling to remote and exiled places has become easier for the family and acquaintances of the exiled, and the widespread use of telephone, internet and social networks has lifted the exiled out of isolation and allows them to communicate not only with family and acquaintances, but also with the vast outside world.

On the other hand, the exiled and tourist destinations are connected very closely. Today, almost any place, even if it has the worst weather conditions, if not a tourist destination, undoubtedly has the potential to become a tourist destination (perhaps even because of the same unfavorable weather conditions). That is why, after the introduction of 36 mentioned cities in Iran as exile places, tourism activists protested that the tourism reputation of that cities will be damaged by the prominent their names as exile places. Some Iranian political activists who have been exiled to these places in recent years have also published their good memories of being exiled to these areas. They pointed out that exile to those areas, although were not painless for them, was so beneficial to them that sometimes the official institutions of power objected to this form of exile and eventually their exile sentence ended much sooner. They also had the opportunity to visit the tourist attractions of the exile places during their exile (see, for example, Zeidabadi's recollections of exile to the city of Gonabad).[123]

All of this is in fact indicative of the transformation of exile concept and impact on the one hand, and increasing its close connection with tourism on the other hand in today's world. Until fifty years ago, exile may have had a strong negative impact on the exiled and their family, but now it no longer has much effect as a punishment, which is why

122. https://www.asriran.com/fa/news/742208

123. https://www.etemadnewspaper.ir/fa/Main/Detail/153081

voluntary and self-imposed exile has increased. The main point here is that the Iranian travel to Turkey can be considered as a short-term and voluntary exile on this basis.

Before explaining more about this voluntary exile, it seems necessary to clarify why this travel is called a kind of exile and not a kind of migration? There are two reasons why the concept of exile closer to Iranian travel in Turkey: First, exile, unlike migration, almost always has a time limit. That is, unlike migration, which can be temporary or permanent (usually permanent), exile is not permanent. Although rarely it may be long, its time limit will end one day. Especially in Iran where the laws are based on Shiite jurisprudence, regarding to the hadiths of Shiite Imams, it is mentioned that the period of exile is one year (Shams and Ghanbarian. 2011: 44). As mentioned, exile in the last years of the Qajar period and the Reza Shah period was in many cases so short-lived and temporary. Sometimes, before reaching the exile place, the exiled person was informed that the government and the cabinet that exiled him had been removed, and therefore his exile order was invalid and he could return to his city (Sadat. 2019: 89-90). The second reason is that the concept of exile usually has a more negative connotation than immigration. That is, exile, whether forced or voluntary, is always done because of negative conditions at the place of origin; but this is not necessarily the case with migration. Someone who, for example, works in a Western Europe with a good income, but finds another better-paying job in the United States, migrates to the United States without having a negative view to the first country.

So the concept of voluntary exile here is closer to what I mean. That is, the travel of Iranian tourists to Turkey is a kind of voluntary and short-term exile. Here it can even be argued that the unintended role of the Iran Islamic Republic government in this exile is significant. Legal experts do not agree on whether the reason for exile is punishment or security prevention. That is, while some believe that governments see exile as a way to punish offenders, others say that exile is to keep criminals away from a society in which their presence is dangerous (Shams and Ghanbarian. 2011: 51). Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran, by closing its eyes on these travels, seems to be a kind of preventive measure to keep those interested in extra-legal and extra-Islamic freedoms (according to the laws of the Islamic Republic) away from the Islamic Republic of Iran and lets them to venting their emotions somewhere other than Islamic conditions in

Iran.[124] Of course, this does not mean that the Islamic government is satisfied with these travels, rather, as mentioned in the previous parts, it prevents these travels as much as possible (by banning direct flights to some destinations like Antalya, excessive increase in exit taxes, etc.), but with this voluntary exile by those who finally and with all the difficulties travel to Turkey to experience these freedoms will come to terms. In Arabestani (2018: 123) word: *"The dominant discourse, while practically tolerating these opportunities, does not consider the Iranians to be entitled to use them. Therefore, a judgment glance is always staring at such opportunities"*.

On the other hand, according to the view of Shiite jurists, exile is a punishment that is characterized by humiliation of the offender (Shams and Ghanbarian. 2011: 54). Thus, the humiliation experienced by some Iranian tourists in Turkey (for example, in the absence of direct flights and the problems that arise for Iranian tourists in Antalya following this decision), could be another sign of Iranian travel to Turkey as an exile.

Of course, it should be noted that tourism in the exile of Iranians can has some differences with the classic examples of exile. For example, while people in exile may often face serious financial problems, tourists are generally far from this problem, because tourism for this group of Iranians is equal to using the savings they have saved for this travel throughout the year. In fact, the financial situation in the voluntary exile of Iranian tourists in Turkey is similar to the exile of wealthy people in the past who could afford to spend in exile (for example, like the exile of Mohammad Mossadegh during Reza Shah's period, in: Sadat. 2017).

Also, unlike other common forms of exile, in which exiled are usually upset about being away from home and the problems that may arise at the exile, in this form of exile

124. Of course, this is a waiver as long as there is not too much displaying offence; That is, Iranian tourists in Turkey should not show too much of their illegal freedoms in Turkey to other Iranians. For example, if an Iranian tourist posts photos and clips of drinking alcohol in Turkey on theirselves Instagram page, it may cause them trouble after returning Iran, especially if s/he has a government job. The more famous people are, there are more sensitive about their behaviors; so, if a celebrity does that, s/he will usually face a sharp reaction from the government. As mentioned, the woman who ran for the Iranian parliament and received enough votes, after a picture outside Iran of her without a hijab was published, her votes were annulled and her entry to the parliament was prohibited. But if the activities that are prohibited in Iran are not disclosed by tourists (for example, on social networks), the government of the Islamic Republic will turn a blind eye to them. This is while, for example, it is sensitive to the activities of political critics abroad and monitors any of their activities abroad and deals with them severely in case of the slightest violation.

Iranian tourists are happy to be able to enjoy and gain good experiences such as relaxation, consumption of Iranian culture, etc. in such a short time. This contradiction in voluntary exile of Iranians as tourism can be related to the historical dimension of such exile. That is, the voluntary exile of Iranians to Turkey in the form of tourism has a geographical dimension that is from Iran to Turkey, but at the same time has a historical dimension that takes them from today of Turkey to the yesterday of Iran. This nostalgic memory, as Saloul (2012) argued, can help resolve the exiled mental conflicts as a cultural response to the status quo, which is the idea of losing a home, and thus relieve grief.

With these explanations, it became clear that Iranian tourism in Turkey in two forms is clearly tourism in exile: the first, those who come to Turkey for tourism of the third destination and the second, the Iranians living in forced or voluntary exile in Turkey. But beside of them, the third group is the Iranians whose travel to Turkey in the form of multi-day travels is also considered a form of tourism in exile due to the prevailing conditions in Iran and its restrictions. These travels of Iranians to escape restrictions and gain social and cultural freedoms -especially for the consumption of Iranian culture- are more reminiscent of the voluntary exile of the Iranian cultural elite (such as Aref the poet and Kamal al-Molk the painter). Turkey is, in fact, an exile place where Iranians can display their long-distance nationalism by their voluntarily exile and consuming the forbidden parts of Iranian culture, away from the panoptic of Iranian state. This voluntary exile is a tactic against the strategy of banning Iranian culture by the Iranian rulers. The liminality situation of these travels let Iranian tourists to do them. In other words, based on what has been said in the previous parts, tourism in exile of Iranians is a combination of the consumption of Iranian culture in exile and nationalism in exile by Iranian tourists in Turkey.

This concept of tourism in exile of Iranians in Turkey can be extended to two other levels:

First for other travels of Iranians to other countries. Such as the travel to Iraqi Kurdistan mentioned in the research literature, or travel to the countries of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia and the United Arab Emirates, which are Iran's neighbors, with the presence of Iranian-Los Angeles singers there and the existence of Iranian cafes and restaurants, has

conditions close to Turkey for Iranian tourists. However, due to some restrictions imposed on Iranian tourists, it is not as attractive to Iranians as Turkey.

Second, for tourists from the countries that have conditions close to those of Iran. However, it is difficult to find such a country. On the one hand, such the government's confrontation with the nationalism of its people is not seen in any other country except Iran, and on the other hand, even the most fundamental Islamic countries have now say welcome to issues such as pop music concerts and women's singing, etc. And so freedom aims seeking or nationalistic motives of its people to travel to other countries to consume the culture of their own country are less seen. But for countries that have political restrictions (which are in many countries such as the Middle East, Far East, South America, etc.), finding tourism in exile for two groups (tourists in the third destination who cannot go to their own country and also, permanent exiled in a country other than their own) are not far off the mark, and probably can be found with similar studies.

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APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEW IN ISTANBUL:

Age:	sex:	edu:	job:
How coming from Iran:	For how many days?	Your accommodation:	
times of travel to Istanbul:	With tour or personal:	alone, with friends or family	

(The questions will be asked according to the interview situation, so necessarily all of them do not be asked in an interview)

- Why and when did you decide to travel to Istanbul?
- (If this is not the first time) What attracted you here for several times? What do you get in this travel which could not get in the previous times?
- What do you expect from this travel?
- What did you do these days in Istanbul?
- Which activity/ies was/were more important for you?
- Which attractions did you go until now? Where do you go in the next days?
- Would you please say me about your visiting these attractions? What they were looks like?
- Did you have shopping? Where and what? Why? How much?
- Did you have any unexpected/unplanned experience in these days?
- Are there any differences between your plan before of coming to Istanbul and your activities here?
- Can you separate your experiences in this travel to the main and the secondary? If yes, which ones are the main and which ones are the secondary?
- When do you sleep in this travel period usually? What do you do in the last hours before sleeping?
- What was the differences between this travel and another travels in your life?
- Did you have any other experience which is impossible in Iran? If yes, which experiences and why?
- When you talk about your travel to Istanbul, what does experience come to your mind first?
- Which one of the photos you took in Istanbul do you like more?
- If you want to explain your travel to Istanbul, what do you say?
- Will you travel to Istanbul again? If yes, why?

APPENDIX 4: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEW IN ANTALYA

Age:	sex:	edu:	job:
times of travel to Antalya:	With tour or personal:	alone, with friends or family	
How coming from Iran:	For how many days?	Your accommodation:	

(The questions will be asked according to the interview situation, so necessarily all of them do not be asked in an interview)

- Why and when did you decide to travel to Antalya?
- (If this is not the first time) What attracted you here for several times? What do you get in this travel which could not get in the previous times?
- What do you expect from this travel?
- What did you do these days in Antalya?
- Which activity/ies was/were more important for you?
- Which attractions did you go until now? Where do you go in the next days?
- Would you please say me about your visiting? What they were looks like?
- Did you have shopping? Where and what? Why? How much?
- What is the differences between shopping here and shopping in Iran?
- Did you have any unexpected/unplanned experience in these days?
- Are there any differences between your plan before of coming to Antalya and your activities here?
- Can you separate your experiences in this travel to the main and the secondary? If yes, which ones are the main and which ones are the secondary?
- How is your hotel? Would you please say me about your experiences in the hotel?
- What was the differences between this travel and another travels in your life?
- What this experience (travel to Antalya) looks like?
- Did you have any other experience which is impossible in Iran? If yes, which experiences and why?
- When you talk about your travel to Antalya, what does experience come to your mind first?
- Which one of the photos you took in Antalya do you like more?
- If you want to explain your travel to Antalya, what do you say?
- Will you travel to Antalya again? If yes, why?

APPENDIX 5: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INTERVIEW IN KONYA:

Age:	Sex:	Edu:	Job:
Times of travel to Konya:	With tour or personal:	Alone/ with friends/ family:	
How coming from Iran:	For how many days?	Your accommodation:	

(The questions will be asked according to the interview situation, so necessarily all of them do not be asked in an interview)

- Why and when did you decide to travel to Konya?
- (If this is not the first time) What attracted you here for several times? What do you get in this travel which could not get in the previous times?
- What do you expect from this travel?
- What do you get when you travel to Konya, rather than -for example- when you sit at home and read the poems of Rumi?
- What did you do these days in Konya?
- Which activity/ies was/were more important for you?
- Do you have any unexpected/unplanned experience in these days?
- Are there any differences between your plan before of coming to Konya and your activities here?
- What is the differences between this travel with your previous travels to other Persian Poets? (if s/he has gone before[125])
- Who is Rumi for you?
- Did you have any connection with Rumi? If yes, in which way and how?
- What did you feel about the ceremonies such as Sema, Kandil etc.?
- Would you please say me about your experiences in the Shams mosque, Atash Baz Vali's tomb etc. (if you had)?
- Can you separate your experiences on this travel to the main and the secondary? If yes, which ones are the main and which ones are the secondary?
- What was the differences between this travel and another travels in your life?
- What this experience (travel to Konya) looks like?
- Except of visiting Rumi's tomb, did you have any other experience which is impossible in Iran? If yes, which experiences and why?
- When you talk about your travel to Konya, what is the first experience that come to your mind?
- If you want to explain your travel to Konya, what do you say to her/him?
- Which one of the photos you took in Konya do you like more?
- Will you travel to Konya again? If yes, why?

125 . Although most of Iranians, especially those who are interested in literature went to the tombs of Hafez and Sa'di in Shiraz, Khayyam, Attar and Ferdowsi in Khorasan.