

## The Evolution of Iranian Exilic Media: The Case of Iranian Television Programming in the US

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This paper examines the political, cultural, ideological and aesthetical intricacies of the Iranian exilic TV programming through its technological evolution since the 1980s.

Mirza Mohammad Ali, better known as Hajj Sayyah (meaning the traveler), who was born in 1836 in the town of Mahallat in Iran is known as the very first Iranian to travel to Europe and eventually ended up in the USA and became the first Iranian who received American Citizenship in May 26, 1875.

But the major exodus of Iranians to the outside world, mainly Europe and the US, began after the Islamic revolution of 1979. A large community of Iranians have since settled in Los Angeles, Houston and other major cities in the US. In the early 1980s, Iranians began producing their exilic TV programs as a form of political, cultural and ideological opposition to the newly established Islamic regime in Iran. In the early 1981, the locally produced immigrant TV programs by Iranians in Los Angeles exceeded the production of other immigrant communities, especially well-established communities like Chinese and Koreans. In 1981 alone, 28 weekly programs were produced and aired on leased airtime on KSCI-TV in Los Angeles. These programs then were sent to other cities like New York and Houston for rebroadcast.

The next major exilic mass communication movement to reach out to other Iranians across the world, especially the audience in Iran, was the free-to-air (FTA) Satellite TV. This technology posed a direct competition against the TV programming by the state-run- television in Iran. The research in this area shows that the Iranian inside Iran consume more of these Satellite programs produced outside of the country. The Iranian government attempts to combat the use of satellite dishes in Iran by declaring it as illegal has largely failed.

The next movement in the evolution of Iranian exilic television programming has happened with the increased bandwidth of the Internet, thus IPTV.

The paper concludes with a discourse on the social and political implication of these type of media production and distribution and its impact on shaping the next generation of audiences in Iran especially the Generation Z.



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