

Placing Hospitality

Iranian Citizens and Afghan Refugees in the City of Shiraz

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work. It contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any degree of a university or other institute of higher learning. This thesis contains no material previously published or written by any other person, other than where due acknowledgment has been made in the text.

Elisabeth Yarbakhsh

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Abstract

Iranian hospitality is not enacted only at the border, but in the everyday interactions between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees at sites of national significance in and around the city of Shiraz.

In my thesis I take the broad notion of hospitality—as articulated by Jacques Derrida and engaged with by numerous scholars over a number of decades and across a broad range of disciplines—and place it in the *Shirazi* locale. I argue that shifting policies and practices towards refugees between 1979 and 2014 run parallel to shifting notions of what it means to *be Iranian*. The tension between Islamic and historical-nationalist discourses of identity forms the background for my exploration of hospitality in the context of the relationship between Iranians and Afghans in Shiraz. I seek to understand the interplay between identity and hospitality as expressed through the notion of ‘Iranian hospitality,’ which itself emerges out of variously competing and intersecting Islamic, historical and literary narratives.

Narratives of identity and hospitality adhere to particular sites in and around the city of Shiraz. I locate three sites (or clusters of sites) around which some of the most significant myths of Iranian nationalism have been woven and over which Shiraz exerts a certain proprietorship. These sites can be broadly categorised as religious sites (amongst which I include two major shrine complexes within the city), historical sites (centred primarily on the Persepolis ruins located just north of Shiraz) and literary sites (focussed on the mausoleums of two Shiraz-based classical Persian-language poets). I explore these sites both in terms of their symbolic significance in Iranian constructions of the hospitable nation and as lived spaces in which Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees interact (or, indeed, fail to interact).

Techniques of social anthropology lie at the very heart of my thesis. By inserting myself, as an ethnographer-guest, into a space of hospitality, I have sought to explore how hospitality maps onto the city and its surrounds. Furthermore, by tracing modalities of inclusion and exclusion in the urban space I offer an alternative to state-centric narratives of migration.

In this thesis I have examined how a principle of hospitality comes to be articulated and experienced in Iran. I have shown that such a principle is not static but in fact shifts and changes over time and in accordance with shifting notions of identity. As I have interrogated the idea of Iranian hospitality in light of the occasionally fractious relationship between Iranian-citizens and Afghan-refugees in the city of Shiraz, I have exposed tensions and contradictions in the Iranian construction of national identity. At the same time, I have concluded that within the current hostile environment for Afghan refugees in Iran, the potential for hospitality remains.

A note on transliteration

Throughout this thesis I have used a simplified transcription system in which I have deliberately forgone the use of the diacritics that are commonly used in the transliteration of the Persian script to the Latin alphabet. As such, I have prioritised ease of reading for English speakers unfamiliar with the Persian language, and sought to enhance the flow of the thesis by not drawing undue attention to non-English words.

Both Iran and Afghanistan use the Solar Hejri (SH) calendar. The year 1396 SH began on 21 March 2017. To convert to the SH calendar it is a simple matter of taking away 622 years (if the date in any given year falls between 1 January and 20 March) or 621 years (if the date falls between 21 March and 31 December). Unless otherwise indicated, all dates in this thesis are Christian Era (CE).

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Part One

Chapter One: Placing the Research

Locating the research

Since the mid-1990s the municipality of Shiraz has been engaged in a drawn-out process of demolition and restoration centred on those areas of the city of Shiraz deemed the most culturally valuable. Afghan refugees have been disproportionately affected by this program of urban rejuvenation. While the construction industry comprises the primary employer of Afghans in Shiraz, it is the very neighbourhoods in which Afghans have predominantly settled that have borne the brunt of destruction. Many of the old neighbourhoods of the city have been demolished, in a dual attempt to rid the area of 'undesirable' residents and to reclaim it as a space for the middle and upper classes to visit and experience 'culture.'

In my thesis I seek to unpack ideas around culture, identity, and the relationship between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees who co-inhabit the city of Shiraz and its surrounds. I interpret this as a relationship which can be understood and defined in terms of hospitality. Indeed, the Iranian government utilises a discourse of hospitality in order to emphasise the temporary nature of Afghan migration and to encourage repatriation, in accordance with prevailing policy. At the same time, framing Iranian citizens as hosts bolsters notions of national identity, acting to reproduce an *Other* against which the *Self* can be made and remade.

Shifting policies and practices towards refugees over the past thirty-five plus years run parallel to shifting notions of what it means to be Iranian. The tension between Islamic and historical-nationalist discourses of identity forms the background for my exploration of hospitality in the context of Iranian–Afghan relations. I seek to understand the interplay between identity and hospitality as expressed through the notion of 'Iranian

hospitality,' which itself emerges out of variously competing and intersecting Islamic, historical and literary narratives.

This notion of Iranian hospitality, can be productively placed in theoretical proximity to Derridean hospitality, thereby allowing us to *think* Iranian hospitality with Derrida (and, conversely, to think Derridean hospitality in light of the Iranian experience). While there are undoubtedly risks, and pitfalls to be avoided, in seeking to bring late-twentieth century philosophy—firmly embedded within a Western tradition—to bear on a distant field of anthropological enquiry, such an approach has the potential to shine new and surprising light on age-old issues that have troubled scholars across disciplines.

Throughout my thesis I explore how religion, history and poetry, as sites of Iranian cultural production, intersect with place in the city of Shiraz. I argue that Iranian hospitality has both a temporal and a spatial location. It is imagined to exist within a long tradition, the origins of which can be variously traced to the pre-Islamic Achaemenid era (550–330 BCE), the advent of Islam in the seventh century, or the later period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries in which Iran, '[t]hrough sieges, changes of rule, mob violence, and dynastic strife' experienced a flourishing of literature and poetry (Limbert 2004, p. ix). Further, it is represented at particular sites of national significance. These sites exist simultaneously in historical narrative and in place. It is this element of place that I want to apply over the discussion of hospitality.

While the way in which host–guest identity comes to be imagined through place comprises one element of how I situate the city of Shiraz within my thesis, at the same time I look at how hospitality is spatially arranged within Shiraz. By inserting myself, as an ethnographer-guest, into this space of hospitality, I seek to understand how

hospitality maps onto the city and its surrounds. Furthermore, by tracing modalities of inclusion and exclusion in the urban space I offer an alternative to state-centric narratives of migration. Such narratives have privileged the border as the foremost site at which host-ness and guest-ness is articulated. Borders are almost invariably understood as national in scale and exclusively controlled by the state. The emphasis on the state in much of the migration literature obscures broader, everyday processes of migrant exclusion. Nick Gill (2010, p. 630) points to the need to examine 'social factors' contributing to exclusion and to develop theoretical concepts that draw upon 'relationality, network and place.' I strive to achieve this through an ethnographic approach, whereby I explore the everyday, situated practices of hospitality in the grey areas between the 'state' and the 'social.'

My research comprises a multi-faceted exploration of hospitality as it pertains to the relationship between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees in and around the city of Shiraz. I reveal how Iranian identity emerges at sites of national significance and how these sites come to be imaginatively incorporated into a narrative of Iranian hospitality, that is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive of Afghans. I draw on notions of Derridean hospitality in order to shed light on idioms of the open door, the *sofreh* [tablecloth] and the walled garden: idioms that function, in place, as symbols of hospitality.

Locating the researcher

I depart Australia just as the news of a murdered Iranian asylum seeker emerges from the murky secrecy of Manus Island (see Laughland 2014). Over the past two decades I have observed with growing despair the harshness of Australia's response to asylum

seekers at the borders and wondered what, if anything, can be done to reverse a trend of utter indifference to the tragedies, large and small, that lie outside the perceived purview of the nation. As I fly westward across the dark expanse of Indian Ocean—the same ocean across which a handful of frail boats have made their way in search of hospitable shore—I can't help but reflect on the way in which Australia's relative isolation has acted to shape and distort, ultimately to *parochialise*, the national response to a global issue. The Australian space-place is entangled with, perhaps even integral to, the way in which refugees are viewed and the way in which Australians view themselves and their nation *in relation to refugees*. In other words, the overarching themes that drive my thesis are not necessarily unique to Iran, even as they take unique form specific to the Iranian context.

My interest in the topic that has formed the basis of my doctoral research has its origins in the John Howard years (1996–2007), as Australia's conservative government under Prime Minister Howard made seeking asylum a concern of unprecedented electoral significance. During that period Iranian asylum seekers—men, women and children—formed a significant proportion of the detained population. Visiting the Villawood immigration detention centre in Sydney, assisting families as they made the transition to living in the community after months or even years behind bars, and advocating on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers, ignited my interest in the places asylum seekers had come from. Refugee stories and statistics became something I carried with me and could recall on demand. Amongst the statistics I found most intriguing were those detailing the distribution of refugees worldwide. In the early 2000s Iran was held to have the largest refugee population in the world, numbering 1.8 million (UNHCR 2000). At the same time, it was a significant refugee *producing* country, with arrivals of Iranian asylum

seekers to Australia peaking at almost 6000 in 1999 and 2000 (Iranians' Refugee Alliance 2013). Globally there were approximately 53 000 Iranian refugees who, in 1999, were recognised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as individuals seeking settlement solutions, and many tens of thousands of others with less certain status (UNHCR 2000).

Cursory efforts to further investigate the refugee situation in Iran proved fruitless at the time. I could locate almost no written information on the topic beyond bare statistics indicating the proportion of refugees that had come from either Iraq or Afghanistan (see United States Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2000). Amongst Iranian asylum seekers in Australia there was, as far as I could discern, little interest in, or awareness of, the circumstances of refugees in the country they had left behind.

It would be well over a decade before I could begin to more seriously consider some of the questions I had around Afghan refugees in Iran. During the intervening years I lived overseas (my life again entangling with the lives of asylum seekers), started a family and completed two undergraduate degrees. At the same time Afghanistan moved to the forefront of global consciousness, Australia inserted itself into an ongoing occupation of the fragile post-Taliban state, a trickle of journal articles began to be published which dealt with various aspects of Afghan refugee life in Iran (see Kalafi, Hagh-Shenas & Ostovar 2002; Olszewska 2007; Rajaee 2000; Tober 2007) and successive Australian governments instituted a range of harsh and seemingly desperate measures to deter boat arrivals, the largest proportion no longer coming from Iran but from Afghanistan (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012).

‘Afghan son of a dog.’ The words were muttered at a volume loud enough for the young Hazara man to hear. While my Farsi was (and remains) far from perfect, like many students of a foreign language I had somehow, quite without meaning to, become familiar with a wide range of curses and insults. I was horrified, not least because the middle-aged Iranian woman who had spoken without the slightest provocation was a guest I was showing around Canberra. Horror quickly turned to mortification, when the man walked towards us speaking bitterly in a rapid string of Persian, before concluding with the comment that he had come to Australia in the hope of escaping such abuse. My failure to manage, at that moment, a dignified apology on behalf of my guest is a shame that has stayed with me. In time it became one of those defining events, a touchstone to which I constantly returned while thinking through the questions that become the basis of my thesis. However, it was only years later when reading the volume *Conceptualizing Iranian Anthropology* (Nadjmabadi 2009) that a line from one contributor about the absences and silences in Iranian anthropology really clarified my thinking on the topic. ‘Can we imagine an anthropology of stigmatized minorities (Bahai, Jews, Afghans, homosexuals, etc.), or of racism in Iran?’ writes Christian Bromberger (2009, p. 198). That, I thought, copying the sentence carefully into my notebook, is exactly what I am trying to imagine.

Looking to the margins

The multicultural and multiethnic composition of Iran is not widely acknowledged and it is only relatively recently that scholars have begun to question the inherent Persian-centrism and nationalism of Iranian narratives of cultural identity (see Asgharzadeh 2007; Boroujerdi 1998; Samii 2000). My research can be located within an emerging

body of literature that looks to the margins in order to elucidate the centre. Anthropologists, working out of a heritage of tribal and folklore studies in Iran, have been at the forefront of producing accounts of ethnic minorities in order to point to those places at which the idea of the nation bumps up against the sometimes uncomfortable reality of a multi-ethnic and, indeed, multi-*cultural* Iran (see Ashraf 1993; Elling 2013). Minority claims to belonging contest the notion of a homogenous Persian culture rooted in myth, history, language and religious practice. My work looks to a different experience of marginality among those who are long term residents of Iran but continue to be denied citizenship with its attendant rights. As such, I have made a conscious and determined effort to peer around corners, to see what very often goes unseen and to bring what is unspoken into the realm of that which can be described and discussed. This, to me, lies at the very core of what anthropology should be and, indeed, what the very best anthropology is.

As a caveat it is worth noting that the uncertain and tenuous nature of citizenship rights is immediately obvious in Iran, undisguised by most democratic niceties. Afghans are not the only segment of society to come up against obstacles to accessing these rights and, even amongst Afghans, there is substantial variation in what the denial of rights actually means in terms of lived experience. While throughout my thesis I have drawn a sharp distinction between Afghan refugees and Iranian citizens there are other points at which a dividing line might (with equal logic) have fallen, the most obvious being in terms of the capacity (intimately tied to gender, class, education and wealth) to wield social and economic capital.

Exploring existing research

The relative absence of academic research on Afghan refugees in Iran has resulted in a significant lacuna that demands attention. Developing countries continue to host the vast majority of refugees—86 per cent, according to UNHCR data (2015b). However, much of the scholarship—rightly holding to account the border regimes of Western nations—inadvertently reproduces the distortion by which we, in countries such as Australia, come to believe (quite incorrectly) that we bear a disproportionate burden of refugees and asylum seekers. Correcting an imbalance that sees the weight of academic attention falling on the relatively small number of refugees who make their way beyond neighbouring nations and countries of first asylum has certainly been part of the occasionally wavering motivation to locate my research in the Islamic Republic of Iran rather than in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide or any number of smaller regional centres across Australia that have, in recent decades, become host to refugee populations.

As I have discussed my research with the interested (and the merely polite), I have been conscious that there is very little awareness of the issue of Afghan refugees in Iran. Over the past decade a small body of work has emerged looking primarily at refugees in the context of medical and epidemiological issues (see Alavian, Fallahian & Lankarani 2007; Basseri, Raeisi, Holakouie & Shanadeh 2010; Ghods, Nasrollahzadeh & Kazemeini 2005). There is a poignant irony to this, given that Afghan refugees have been and continue to be conceived of in bio-medical terms (as a contagion, virus or bodily mutation) and that the diseasedness of Afghan bodies is frequently cited as a reason for their actual or attempted exclusion. Liisa Malkki (1992) notes that the pathologisation of refugees has a long history in scholarship as well as in policy and that it emerges out of a deep

discomfort with the disruption to the 'national order of things' posed by the disorderly movement of people.

Research of more immediate relevance to my own includes that undertaken by the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) which I have found to be an invaluable source of both statistical and qualitative data. The work of AREU crosses disciplinary boundaries of demography, sociology and anthropology, as well as crossing national boundaries through multi-sited fieldwork in Afghanistan and amongst the Afghan diaspora in Iran, Pakistan and beyond.

A project led by Homa Hoodfar between 2002 and 2005 explored the effects of forced migration on Afghan youth in Tehran and Mashhad (Chatty 2010). This was part of a larger multi-disciplinary study on Sahrawi and Afghan refugee youth (SARC) and a continuation of an earlier project undertaken between 1999 and 2001 that sought to document the experiences of Palestinian youth in a situation of prolonged conflict and exile. The publication of lessons learned in the SARC project (Chatty & Crivello 2005) provided valuable data, along with pointing to potential hazards of research in this area.

Anthropologists who have undertaken extended fieldwork among Afghan refugees in Iran include Alessandro Monsutti (2005), who looked at Afghan patterns of migration between Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan and Zuzanna Olszewska (2015), who completed her doctoral research amongst young Afghan poets in the city of Mashhad. I found the ethnographic data they produced simultaneously inspiring and intimidating as I embarked on my own fieldwork journey.

In May 2014 I was privileged to take part in a conference hosted by the University of Tehran, that brought together researchers (primarily Iranian and Afghan) and local non-

government organisations (NGOs) working on issues related to Afghan refugees in Iran. A number of presenters touched on the unique challenges that face those working in the field, including the sparsity of prior research, the lack of statistical data and government resistance to a potentially contentious research topic.

It should be noted here that there *is* a body of research concerned with the experiences, livelihoods and health of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, which dates back to the initial Afghan exodus in the wake of the 1979 Soviet invasion (Allan 1987; Bartlett et al. 2002; Centlivres & Centlivres-Demont 1988; Cheema 1983; Dupree 1988). Media interest in Pakistan's border camps has been more recently generated in the wake of the 2001 attacks against the United States and the subsequent military campaign against Afghanistan. The US invasion of Afghanistan comprised an attempt to destroy al-Qaeda and uproot their Taliban sponsors, with the latter generally held to have originated in the refugee camps of Pakistan (Rashid 2010, p. 23). This revelation, long known but widely ignored, sparked a short-lived interest in the welfare of Afghan refugees in Pakistan (Bhutta 2002), however this interest did not extend to the almost equally large Afghan refugee population in Iran.

Conducting research in Iran is a notoriously complex task. Indeed, the dearth of ethnographic data from and about Iran since the 1979 establishment of the Islamic Republic can be attributed to the practical obstacles placed in the path of researchers, both Iranian and non-Iranian, by a state apparatus deeply suspicious of the (real and imagined) aims of anthropology and the social sciences more broadly (Nadjmabadi 2009). Over the past decade the generally bleak state of Iranian anthropology has improved somewhat, and a small but steady trickle of ethnographies has been published in English. Much of this has been written by the so-called 'diaspora generation'—those

who left Iran as children or, increasingly, were born abroad to Iranian parents, and have been able to utilise their dual citizenship in order to undertake the sort of extended fieldwork that is generally barred to non-citizen anthropologists (Hegland 2009).

While much early Iranian anthropology was concerned with tribal society, more recently there has been a plethora of research which focuses on a relatively accessible, educated Tehran upper-middle-class milieu. It is this latter form of research that has succeeded, to an extent, in bridging the gap between academic and popular literature (see for example Alavi 2005; Mahdavi 2009; Varzi 2006). A number of semi-ethnographic, journalistic, autobiographical and travelogue works now compete with traditional anthropology to shape the way in which we read and understand Iran. This 'middle-class anthropology' has played an important role in correcting, or at least challenging, dominant Western media stereotypes that have existed since the Iranian Revolution (1978–1979). The representative image of Iran as a mass of chanting women dressed in black *chadors* is gradually being replaced by that of a confident, worldly young woman with a brightly coloured slip of transparent cloth draped elegantly over her elaborately arranged hair. My own travels to Iran, prior to fieldwork, revealed a nation more complex than either of these stereotypes suggest and compelled me to look for a research topic in those spaces that have remained largely unexplored.

Journeying through hospitality

Anthropology has, to a large extent, been absent from contemporary debates around hospitality which arose in philosophy and, from there, filtered into other disciplines including political science and cultural studies. As Matei Candea and Giovanni da Col

(2012) point out, despite (or, perhaps, *because of*) anthropology's deeply experienced 'living engagement' with hospitality, there have been few attempts to foreground it as an anthropologically significant theoretical concept in its own right. As such, hospitality has been a present absence in anthropological literature; it is 'both everywhere and (nearly) nowhere' (Candea & da Col 2012, p. 52). Hospitality is, of course, an unavoidable condition of the possibility of ethnography. The ethnographer as guest to the subject host emerges, implicitly, in many of the most celebrated accounts of anthropologists in the field (see for example Evans-Pritchard 1940; Geertz 1973). Indeed, the ambiguities of hospitality are laid bare in the archetypal narrative of entering the ethnographic space of the field.

Importantly, there is an often overlooked transactional nature to hospitality (see Rosello 2001, Bell 2007). This transactional nature is not always immediately obvious in the field (as it would be in, for instance, a restaurant or hotel). However, the collection of data in the field is not infrequently dependent on the willing participation of researcher and research participant in a play or guise of hospitality (Tamas 2013). I was often conscious of this play of hospitality in the field. Finding myself transformed into a guest, even when it was clearly understood that I was there in the unusual role of ethnographer.

It is a wet morning in early spring. I know this will be one of the last days of rain that can be expected in Shiraz before we enter the long, hot, dry months of summer. In the streets the gutters, blocked with refuse, flow over, creating unexpected rivers and pooling where the road dips. A young Afghan woman in a black *chador* [an outer covering that is wrapped loosely around the (female) body and, in Iran often denoting religiosity], fashionably edged with lace in a style I associate with Mashhad or Tehran—one of those larger northern cities—picks her way carefully across the street towards a

bakery whose awning offers some shelter from the downpour. As she reaches the far side of the road a taxi careers past, the driver pressing on his horn and raising a sheet of water that soaks the woman. An Iranian man, emerging from the bakery clutching an oversized *barbari* loaf, shakes his head in what can be taken as an act of solidarity with the unfortunate pedestrian.

I was here in Siboooye to conduct one of the very first interviews I had arranged with an Afghan research participant. Moments after ringing the doorbell and before Anoosh opened the door to reveal a narrow staircase leading up to a second floor apartment, I was gripped by sudden doubt. Had I made it clear during our telephone conversation earlier in the week that I was coming to conduct an interview? Did the carton of mixed sweets and pastries I was holding in suddenly sweaty hands, create the wrong impression? At that moment, if it was not for the presence of my partner Abbas, who had agreed to assist me in negotiating the taxi trip across town and was now holding an umbrella over my head and promising to return in two hours, ('unless you call me earlier, call me'), I might have simply turned around and walked away.

Anoosh had migrated to Shiraz from the Herat province only six years earlier, making her one of the more recent arrivals amongst my research participants. She had never before met her cousin, the son of her father's oldest brother, who had fled to Iran in the 1980s, but for Anoosh, then sixteen, the marriage (arranged with the assistance of a broker—a relative in Afghanistan who used a vast network of contacts in both countries to negotiate all sorts of agreements) was seen as an opportunity, in part, to escape the grinding occupation of Afghanistan and the ever present threat of violence.

When Agha-ye Yusufi passed away, God bless his soul, I faced pressure on all sides to return to Afghanistan, to my parents' home. This would have been a death for me. How could I return from freedom to prison?

I had first met Anoosh when visiting an Afghan school, that was running in the dank basement of a rented home in Kuh-ye Zahra. She had been widowed just six months after coming to Iran, her husband killed in an accident on a construction site. Older than the other students by several years, Anoosh was fiercely determined to obtain the education denied to her during her childhood in Afghanistan. I later discovered that she was only rarely able to attend classes. Most of her days were spent bent over a sewing machine, straining her back (and eyes), in a makeshift (and entirely illegal) factory run by a relatively wealthy Afghan family.

On that first occasion, my fears about being treated as a guest were largely realised. Anoosh darted constantly between the small kitchen, hidden behind a striped curtain, and the living area, ignoring my ineffectual protests that she be seated, and producing a seemingly endless supply of food. At Anoosh's insistence, I remained perched awkwardly on the room's single dining chair, looming over her when she did eventually, briefly, take a seat on the floor. My hesitant attempts at interviewing were expertly deflected, in favour of common courtesies and stock answers. When the front doorbell rang after two hours, I was relieved to make my escape. And disappointed that I hadn't, on that occasion, made the leap from guest to ethnographer.

Throughout my fieldwork, the line between ethnographer and guest remained blurred: a notebook and pen often being the only insufficient prop I had to maintain some sort of distinction between the two, against my informant-host's efforts to revert to more familiar modes of interaction. I came to recognise the subtle shifts of power between host and guest, as I consumed endless glasses of tea, and ate more biscuits and fruit

(and dates and chocolates and more fruit and ‘here, your plate’s empty you must take another biscuit’) than I could possibly wish for. As a guest there were certain rights that I could implicitly (by virtue of my presence) demand of the host: I could expect to be treated with courtesy, even if I arrived, as happened on more than one occasion, at an inopportune moment (as the host was sitting down to lunch, or sleeping, or once, excruciatingly, immersed in the middle of a vigorous argument); I knew I would be provided with food and drink (even in the poorest household); and that the incautiously probing questions I asked would, at least in the moment, be forgiven. At the same time there were limits placed on me: I did not have free rein of the house; the host could choose what to reveal and conceal; and I had to remain alert for the subtle signals that my welcome had reached an end.

As an ethnographer I was subject to the hospitalities (and indeed, hostilities) of those amongst whom I conducted research. My being in the field gave me unusual insight into the way in which Iranian hospitality is constructed and experienced. Before embarking on fieldwork I was warned of the difficulties I was likely to face in establishing the sorts of relationships that would prove productive in terms of ethnographic data. Dire warnings were issued about the obstacles facing foreign (and female) researchers in the field. After I arrived in Iran many well-meaning Iranians likewise warned me that Afghan refugees would be difficult if not impossible to approach. I imagine many more withheld their misgivings while anticipating the failure of my research. It therefore came as a surprise to discover just how willing most Afghans were to share their stories, open up their homes and assist me in multiple ways with my research, all while guiding me through a city that was at once familiar and unfamiliar.

Faraz, an eighteen year old Afghan boy, who insisted that his greatest wish was to own the latest model of iPhone, came perhaps closest to articulating what I had come to suspect. At the end of a long interview spanning almost five hours, in which we had touched on some deeply personal life events, Faraz looked suddenly puzzled, shifting his gaze from somewhere in my direction, to Abbas, who had been acting as interpreter, 'I don't know why I have told you this. I have never spoken about this to any of my Iranian friends.' As a foreign woman married to an Iranian man I often found myself straddling the divide between insider and outside. While occasionally uncomfortable, it also allowed me to shift easily (and often advantageously) between these identities.

The way in which anthropologists think and write ethnography underwent a radical shift in response to the multifaceted critique offered up by the 1986 *Writing Culture* project (Clifford & Marcus). In the same volume, Mary Louise Pratt (1986) explored the way in which narratives of entry and exit function to authenticate and authorise the body of ethnographic work, thus becoming a vital adjunct to writing up the field. Such narratives, which are implicitly entangled with ideas about hospitality, form a 'key piece of the informal lore of fieldwork that is so much a part of socialization into the discipline' (Gupta & Ferguson 1997, p. 13). Ethnography occurs within a hospitable space. That is to say, ethnography occurs in a space *structured* by hospitality, notwithstanding the experience of any individual anthropologist that may occur along a spectrum from overt hostility to overwhelmingly generous hospitality. As an anthropologically useful concept it is not limited to explorations of the relationship between anthropologist and anthropological subject. Rather, hospitality can be understood as a structure that regulates, negotiates and celebrates the social relations between home and away, inside and outside, private and public, and Self and Other (Still 2006). Hospitality functions as

the unseen scaffolding upon which key concepts of anthropology (including gift exchange; belonging and alterity; kinship; and the relationship between the individual and society) have been constructed.

The renaissance of hospitality as a theoretical concept within the social sciences owes much to the work of Jacques Derrida. Derrida was not, however, the first scholar to note the inherent tension contained within the very word hospitality (Latin *hospitalitas*). In a 1926 lecture Marcel Mauss drew attention to the etymological roots of hospitality's role-inversion, '*hostis*, the enemy, is the opposite of *hospes*, the host' (Mauss 2007 [1926], p. 116). It is this linguistic contradiction that hints at the aporetic nature of hospitality—its possibility only 'on the condition of its impossibility' (Derrida 2000a, p. 5). Derrida coined the term *hostipitality* [*hostipitalité*] in order to illuminate the performative contradiction of hospitality; the way in which hostility is intimately and invariably entangled with hospitality. The door of the home (and by extension, the border of the nation) cannot be opened up in hospitality without it being implicitly affirmed that this (the home, the nation) is 'mine.' In the moment of affirmation, whereupon the roles of host and guest are clearly demarcated, the true potential of hospitality to which it is always striving is denied. 'Injustice,' Derrida argues, 'begins right away, from the very threshold of the right to hospitality,' for there is,

No hospitality, in the classic sense, without sovereignty of oneself over one's home, but since there is also no hospitality without finitude, sovereignty can only be exercised by filtering, choosing, and thus by excluding and doing violence (Derrida 2000b, p. 55).

Derrida doesn't abandon hospitality at the point of acknowledging its impossibility. Instead he challenges us to find new ways towards welcoming the stranger, striking a path between, on the one hand, *laws* of hospitality, which are inscribed in the relationship between states and act to place limits and conditions on hospitality, and,

on the other, the *law* of hospitality, in its utter unconditionality (Dikeç 2002). Following Derrida, hospitality has been utilised as a framework for exploring the limits and possibilities of human rights and the cosmopolitical formulations of a universal law of hospitality (Amin 2004; Benhabib 2004; Dikeç 2002; Honig 1999; Vertovec & Cohen 2002). As such, it has immense relevance for some of the most pressing questions dominating contemporary political debate across the globe; questions relating to immigration, globalisation, multiculturalism, and citizenship (de Vries 2001, p. 178).

In bringing Derrida to bear on the field there are two broad temptations to be avoided: the first is the temptation to use Derrida in order to impose a standard of hospitality against which Iran can be judged, thereby contrasting and comparing a Western philosophy of hospitality with an Iranian practice of hospitality; the second temptation is to use an overly cautious approach, such that both Derridean hospitality and Iranian hospitality remain intact and unaltered by the encounter. In using Derrida in my research I aim to create a dialogue between philosophy and practice, in which Iranian hospitality is not only spoken to, but speaks back to Derridean hospitality.

Hospitality and place

Hospitality is predicated on the existence of a space over which the host has sovereignty and into which the guest can be welcomed. In the context of hospitality this space is never merely a *space*. Host-ness and guest-ness are not enacted in some kind of featureless void or against a standard and interchangeable backdrop, but are constituted by, and in turn constitute, *place*. Within the extant migration literature place remains remarkably under theorised. There is a sense whereby those who are perceived

as *out of place* are also imagined as essentially *placeless*, living out what Edward Said (1979, p. 18) calls a 'generalized condition of homelessness' in the *world in general*. However, as Clifford Geertz (1996, p. 262) has pointed out, the lives that people live are inseparable from the settings in which they live them and 'even the exiled, the drifting, the diasporic, or the perpetually moving' live in some confined and limited stretch of the world. Moments of life are invariably experienced *in place*.

Since the 1990s there has been a renewed interest in issues of space and place across the social sciences (Sojo 1989). Much of this interest has revolved around the pursuit of distinguishing space from place. While historically there has been 'little recognition that place is more than locale, the setting for action, the stage on which things happen' (Rodman 1992, p. 643), anthropologists have increasingly sought to foreground spatial dimensions of culture, giving new meaning to the notion that 'all behaviour is located in and constructed of space' (Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga 2003, p. 1). Through human action and interaction we bring about the world in which we then *are*; 'we create so that we may be, in our creations' (Richardson 1982, p. 74). Early attempts to grapple with questions of identity and locality focused on the social-wellbeing attached to a sense of being rooted in place, with all the organic and arborescent connotations of such terminology. However, the emphasis given to the in-place, rather than the out-of-place is at best problematic and has been widely criticised as inauthentic (Appadurai 1996; Gupta & Ferguson 1992; Richardson 1984). Counter to this, anthropology has developed, over the past two decades, a heightened awareness of the way in which the historical disciplinary emphasis on culture as bounded and discrete has hidden the reality of a world in movement. The 'once black-lined borders and boundaries are increasingly smudged by vagueness, erased by chaos, or clouded by uncertainty' (Feld &

Basso 1996, p. 6). As such, there have been calls for an anthropology of space grounded, not in outmoded notions of rootedness and cultural sedentarism—an ‘assumed isomorphism of space, place and culture’ (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, p. 7)—but in an understanding of the realities of globalised mobilities and uncertain boundaries (Feld & Basso 1996).

Nevzat Soguk (1996) suggests that in a highly mobile world the certainty of native place and culture is displaced by the uncertain possibilities of the world as a ‘nominally fragmented but pragmatically continuous space’ in which ‘everywhere’ has the potential to be ‘home.’ This perspective celebrates the deterritorialisation of contemporary life, without properly accounting for the ways in which mobility is unevenly distributed and variously experienced. The reality, of course, is that the world is *not* lived, by any of us, as a continuous space and that home *cannot* be everywhere (although it can certainly be *nowhere*). Furthermore, the capacity to make a home of a given place is not held in equal measure. Disparate relations of power are implicated in the establishment, and contestation, of spatial meanings. Even as cultures and peoples cease to be plausibly identifiable as spots on the map, the imaginary of culturally and ethnically distinct places becomes ever more salient (Gupta & Ferguson 1997). Indeed, these two processes are generally viewed as closely intertwined (see Greenfeld 1992; Kaldor 2004; Robertson, R 1994) and nationalism, as a political ideology, is understood to be a response to the increasing permeability of national borders.

How then do we integrate an anthropological concern with place, with a recognition of the way in which processes of globalisation have acted to make tenuous—even to the point of entirely decoupling—the link between locality and identity? By focussing on the enactment of hospitality between Iranians ‘at home’ and Afghans ‘out of place’ I hope

to throw into relief the way in which place is variously constituted and experienced. I am seeking to emplace hospitality, in order to understand it as a practice that at once informs and is informed by the spaces in which it is enacted.

Hospitality is, as Brian Treanor (2011) argues, the ‘preeminent virtue of place.’ There can be no hospitality without place, and hostness and guestness is formed in the context of an individual’s relationship to [a] place. Places are social, communal and historical (Casey 1993). Place is the space in which we live and act. It is in action and interaction that space becomes place, crowded with familiar [land]marks which give meaning and allow us to orient ourselves.

Spaces of hospitality exist at multiple scales. Indeed, Derrida utilises a form of bifocality in locating his discussion of hospitality simultaneously at home and in the nation. Switching effortlessly between the two he implies that these spaces of hospitality are interchangeable—that the nation *is* the home and the home *is* the nation. The nation as home is a commonly invoked metaphor and nationalist discourses attach political meaning to the spaces in which people carry out their ordinary lives (Waetjen 1999). The idea of being *at home* in the nation implies that the nation can be understood on the same terms as the domestic ‘homely’ space. Being *at home* evokes a sense of security and stability. Importantly, both the home and nation are idealised as ‘monocultural sites’ in which inhabitants are tied to each other by way of ‘blood,’ common origins and shared membership status (Ranchod-Nilsson & Tétreault 2004). Where the nation and the home are theoretically conflated, the stranger becomes an intensely problematic figure and must necessarily be brought into place. Efforts to constitute the refugee as guest and the relationship between refugee-guest and citizen-

host as one of hospitality can be understood as an attempt to solve this problematic of the stranger.

Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson (1998, pp. 9–10) argue for a deterritorialised definition of home as a ‘cognitive environment’ in which ‘one best knows oneself.’ This deconstruction of identity-place has had powerful repercussions within anthropology. Today, it is generally accepted that individuals are engaged in multiple processes of identity formation and that identity does not emerge naturally out of territorial rootedness. However, within migration literature territory continues to hold enormous sway over the way identity is perceived. Refugees, for instance, are understood and indeed popularly described as *displaced*. The place that refugees are *not in*, or are *wrongly situated in*, is the nation. Refugees are fundamentally a symptom of the ‘national order of things’ (Malkki 1995). There can be no refugees without nation states. Indeed, the 1951 Refugee Convention makes a defining moment of the (international) border crossing. Refugees continue to be defined by their placedness in relation to borders. Refugees originate within (nation) states, are (re)located within (nation) states and are a problem for and between (nation) states. The state, therefore, constitutes a theoretically significant space of hospitality. In state-space hospitality is enacted through the policing of borders, the granting or withholding of citizenship and related visa regimes, and policies which variously extend or deny rights to those who have been constituted as ‘guests.’ Perhaps less concretely (but for the purposes of my thesis more importantly) hospitality is enacted in state-space through the imagining of nationhood.

At this point we might usefully look to David Farrier’s (2011, pp. 12–3) construction of the relationship between nation-states and refugees as one of ‘inclusive exclusion’ in which refugee bodies are abandoned by the law (deprived, for example, of government

support and services) even as they are '*held* by the law's vested interest in their exclusion' (original emphasis).

In migration scholarship the metaphor of hospitality is most often invoked as what Mireille Rosello (2001, p. 3) calls a 'dead metaphor.' That is to say, the framework of hospitality is used in order to point to hospitality's absence. In this, there is a subtle reworking of Derrida's *hostipitality* formulation. Whereas Derrida saw hostility as an integral element of hospitality, many migration theorists separate the two terms out so that a discourse or play of hospitality becomes a foil for hostile politics (see Gibson 2003; Kelly 2006). Hospitality comes to be treated not as something which 'encompasses, frames, or explains people's actions, but as an object of contention, concern, and debate' (Candea 2012).

This theoretical shift is perhaps a result of Derrida's more prescriptive intentions against anthropology's descriptive purpose. Derridean philosophy points to an absolute, universal and utopian hospitality. At the same time, however, Derrida calls for giving '*place* to a determined, limitable, and delimitable – in a word, to a calculable – right or law...to a concrete politics and ethics' of hospitality (Derrida 2000b, pp. 147–8). As Ulrik Pram Gad (2013, p. 122) argues, there is a role for philosophy in keeping the 'pillars supporting the ceiling' of political debate 'erect and tall,' but we also need to 'make ourselves familiar with the strategic terrain we intend to intervene in.' That is, 'having shown that we can be philosophers, we need the courage to refuse this ambition and return to ethnographic empathy and ordinary language' (Miller 2005, p. 15).

The 'strategic terrain' in which I utilise Derrida's notion of hospitality is the city of Shiraz. In doing so I explore the relationship between Iranian (hosts) and Afghan (guests) as it shapes and is shaped by the particular locale in which it plays out.

Shiraz as a site

My fieldwork site was largely chosen for me. My partner is from Shiraz and with two young children in tow the thought of starting off somewhere else without an established network of support was simply too daunting to contemplate. The starry-eyed plan we developed as a family before departing Australia involved a careful balance between spending time with relatives and undertaking research. This was, we imagined, an opportunity for our children to be immersed in one part of their cultural heritage, to get to know their grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and to become fluent in Farsi. Like almost any fieldwork experience the reality was far messier. The high ideals with which we went were quickly confounded by the reality of managing complex and occasionally fractious family relationships, while making time for what I more properly considered research. Throughout the nine months I lamented, on more than one occasion, the decision to choose Shiraz over Isfahan or Mashhad or even, say, Jakarta.

That I established a fieldwork site prior to settling on the precise details of my research topic forced me to work backwards in considering just what it is about Shiraz that might uniquely shape my thesis. The Afghan population in Shiraz is much smaller than in the border city of Mashhad or the capital Tehran. It is also a much more dispersed population and lacks the social infrastructure that exists in some other cities. Indeed, when I first proposed my research topic the assumption was that I would focus on one

of the larger northern cities as representative of the situation at a national level. This assumption strengthened my resolve to firmly situate my thesis within a social constructivist anthropological tradition that rejects the notion that national conditions can be extrapolated from the local. It is somewhat ironic then that what I identified as unique about Shiraz was the way in which the city speaks to notions of national identity.

The city of Shiraz is both a site and a locale made up of multiple sites. As such, Shiraz symbolises one particular idea of Iran and Iranian-ness. The idea of Iran embedded in the *Shirazi* locale can be traced back to the city's long history as a centre of culture, and its proximity to historical monuments of national significance. Established in the eighth century, Shiraz has been the birthplace of revered poets, mystics, scientists and scholars. The capital of Iran during the Buyid (945–1055) and Zand (1750–1794) dynasties, today Shiraz plays a relatively minor role in the political and economic fortunes of the country. However, it wields disproportionate cultural power and the city's centrality in the Orientalist and Iranian imagination belies its marginality as a provincial city (Manoukian 2012). Furthermore, it is a city that welcomes guests in the form of tourists, but also hosts a significant population of 'unwelcome guests' in the form of Afghan migrants and refugees. This tension between welcome and unwelcome was revealed to me as I moved through the space of the city, particularly when negotiating tourist sites as a *khareji* [foreigner], anomalously in the company of Afghan *panahandegan* [refugees].

Shiraz is located approximately seven hundred kilometres south of Tehran. From the air the dry mountainous landscape—a study in shades of brown—obfuscates the city's reputation as a place of verdant gardens. Indeed, as the city has grown, both in terms of population and surface area, many of its famed green spaces have been swallowed up by urban development. The private gardens and orchards that once marked the

outskirts of the city have, to a large extent been replaced by medium and high density housing. Located in an elongated valley, the peculiarities of geography inhibit the capacity of the city to expand much beyond its present limits in order to accommodate a population that has grown nine-fold, to 1.5 million, since the first city census of 1956.

Capital cities often lay claim to being representative of the nation as a whole. Indeed, contemporary Iranian ethnography is remarkably Tehran-centric (Beck, L 2009). In the *Shirazi* imaginary, however, Shiraz stands as an alternate and possibly more authentic representation of Iran (Manoukian 2004). Whereas Tehran is perceived as a burgeoning multi-ethnic city of migrants, Shiraz is idealised as a Persian homeland, with a predominantly Persian ethnic composition.

The emergence of Shiraz as a kind of 'Persian miniature' has not occurred spontaneously or as a result of some happy coincidence of history. Under the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi (1925–1941) the idea of Persian culture came to be institutionalised and heavily circumscribed. According to the emerging state definition, culture was understood as a distinct domain of human experience. Iran's pre-Islamic history was glorified and become a 'normative ideal cultivated through the disciplining of bodies and minds' (Manoukian 2012, p. 24). Shiraz (and the province of Fars, more broadly) was seen as a repository of Persian culture and its people were forced, sometimes violently (for example, the nomadic tribes forcibly and unwillingly sedentarised by Reza Shah) to adhere to this particular vision of Iranian selfhood.

Twentieth century Orientalist scholarship has also played a part in the configuration of Shiraz as the preeminent site of Persian culture. Arthur Arberry's *Shiraz: Persian City of Saints and Poets* (1960) has been particularly influential in this regard, both outside Iran

and—following its translation into Farsi in 1974—within (Manoukian 2012). The corpus of scholarship to which this work belongs has been rightly criticised for its reductionist and essentialising view of Iranians. In making reference to this work, and the work of other Orientalist scholars, I am not seeking to validate it, but to show how it has, often in the absence of other scholarship, contributed to the way in which Iran is understood by English speakers and, more importantly, forms part of the knowledge that Iranians have about how they are *known* in the West.

Arberry rejects the Pahlavi project, which sought to make the past present in the *Shirazi* locale, instead perceiving Persian culture as embodied in the ‘spiritual and artistic legacy’ of four significant historical figures who were born in and lived in Shiraz (Arberry 1960, p. 171). However, even as Arberry seeks to make Shiraz a metonym for the entirety of Persian civilisation, he fails to acknowledge the essential materiality of the city. Shiraz is rendered by Arberry, not as a physical place but as a ‘spiritual’ locale. Indeed, he explicitly warns against seeking to understand Shiraz by looking to the city or its monuments. Needless to say, this is not advice I will be taking on board. I seek to construct a picture of Shiraz by looking to the contemporary city, its living people *and* its historical monuments.

Following the revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic, monuments that under the Pahlavi regime (1925–1979) had been elevated to symbols of Iranian-ness, had to be either violently rejected or cautiously incorporated into an Islamic discourse of identity. While the former represented the (brief) initial attitude of (parts of) the Islamic government, the latter has, for the most part, prevailed. The ongoing significance of Shiraz in the Iranian imagination means that the city itself cannot be relegated to a

mere 'spiritual' status but must be understood as a *place* with both a historical and a contemporary existence.

There are several sites around which some of the most significant myths of Irano-Persian nationalism have been woven and over which Shiraz exerts a kind of proprietorship. The discourse that posits Shiraz as a repository of Persian culture revolves around the historical fact of the city as the birthplace, and burial site, of two major Iranian poets, Saadi (1210–1291/92) and Hafez (1325/26–1389/90), along with the proximity of the city to the most important ruins of the Achaemenid era at Persepolis and Pasargadae. I am conscious however, that focussing on these sites risks elevating what we might think of (perhaps not entirely accurately) as *secular* constructions of Iranian selfhood while downplaying the continuing salience of Islam as a foundational element of national identity. For this reason, I look in addition to a third site—the shrine precinct of Shiraz, incorporating the shrines of Shah Cheragh and the Sayyid Ala al-Din Husayn Shrine (Astane). As sites of religious veneration these pale in significance to the Imam Reza Shrine in Mashhad but nevertheless provide an important counterbalance to an exclusively historical-literary rendering of the city's landscape, thus offering alternative insights into the way in which Iranian hospitality is constructed and experienced. A narrative of Iranian hospitality emerges out of and interacts with these sites in diverse ways. In this thesis I explore this narrative and then look beyond it to consider converging and diverging practices of hospitality, as Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees interact in and around these sites.

Disciplinary space

I was initially concerned that by focussing on sites I might reproduce a kind of tourist-scape—a false but persuasive image of the city as comprised of places and non-places or (alternatively) space and empty space (see Augé 1995; Benko 1997; Kociatkiewicz & Kostera 1999). Here, we might also look to Edward Casey's (2011) use of the term 'non-place' in the context of the hospitable *edge*. The edge is where hospitality happens and spaces of hospitality are, therefore, both places and non-places.

Zygmunt Bauman (2000) illustrates the notion of empty spaces with an anecdote about the failure of his host to incorporate an impoverished urban precinct into her mental map of the city in which she lived and in which Bauman was a guest. Bauman proposes that in order for the mental maps that we all carry with us to 'make sense,' some areas must inevitably be left out as senseless (2000, p. 104). This notion of mental maps guided initial ethnographic process and gave form to the early stages of fieldwork. Research participants, both Iranian and Afghan, created maps of the city that visually represented the exotic, the familiar and, through absences and blank spaces, the unseen. Ultimately the construction of space as place or non-place pivots on questions of power. Questions such as: Whose vision of the city prevails? And, who has the capacity to render places meaningful?

Fieldwork was undertaken between February and October 2014. This was my third and longest visit to Shiraz. The first visit, between November 2009 and January 2010, had given me the confidence to pursue fieldwork in Iran and encouraged me to begin thinking through questions that would ultimately shape my research. In February 2013 I again visited Iran for a period of six weeks, during which time I made a deliberate effort to lay the groundwork for fieldwork by seeking to establish relationships with research

institutions including Shiraz University and the Islamic Azad University of Shiraz. At this point I made contact with individuals in Shiraz who were able to liaise with the universities in my absence. Ultimately, attempts to conduct research with the cooperation of Iranian social scientists within the universities was confounded by a bureaucratic system that threw up such obstacles over a period of some eighteen months that I eventually made the decision to continue research independently. This method of 'flying-under-the radar' while occasionally daunting, was perhaps best suited to research conditions in Iran. I am very much aware that my status as a non-resident Iranian citizen allowed me the luxury of conducting research in a way that would be impossible for non-citizens and problematic for resident researchers. Furthermore, working independently provided the freedom to indulge in what Oliver Bakewell (2008) calls 'policy irrelevant research,' that is to say, research that is not shaped or constrained by policy categories and concerns.

My methodology can be described as emerging out of a social anthropology tradition, in which the practice of participant observation in the context of long term fieldwork is elevated as the primary method of data collection.

Ultimately, the methods I adopted were different to those anticipated prior to embarking on fieldwork. As James Clifford (2007, p. 477) pertinently notes, there is 'a myth of fieldwork,' (one that I had fully subscribed to), but 'the actual experience, hedged around with contingencies, rarely lives up to the ideal.' I had initially planned to locate myself in one of the southern neighbourhoods of Shiraz where I could adopt an unassuming research strategy—participating, without fanfare, in the daily lives of residents, both Iranian and Afghan. This ethnographic technique places great weight on the participatory element of participant observation. Robert Desjarlais, an

anthropologist working with homeless populations in Boston, notes that by utilising an unassuming research strategy the ethnographer 'can develop lasting informal ties with people, [that] often outweigh the benefits of information obtained through surveys and more intrusive methods' (Desjarlais 1997, p. 41).

In the event, this plan didn't come to fruition. Indeed, the deep concern of my Iranian hosts about the possibility of me relocating from the north to the south of the city and living in an Afghan-dominated neighbourhood exposed deep-seated attitudes in regards to class, along with the widely held perception of Afghans as alien and inherently dangerous. Travelling daily across Shiraz forced me to rethink questions of hospitality, moving from the minutiae to a broader consideration of how hospitality intersects with place in terms of Iranian identity, ultimately shaping my research questions and resulting in a form of multi-sited ethnography—albeit at sites located within a mere fifty kilometre radius.

Throughout the period of my fieldwork I was acutely aware of the way in which place shapes actions and interactions. Excerpts of field notes made at different sites reveal the way in which place was not merely the background against which hospitable relations in the field occurred, but in fact formed an integral part of this hospitality. Working across different sites, I experienced the way in which the physical environment affected the methods and techniques utilised in the collection of data. The people I was able to converse with, the pace and style of interview, the depth and breadth of information gathered and the technologies of recording data were all highly dependent on the physical space of the field.

The anthropologist is part of the 'ethnographic reality,' being complicit in the creation of the space that becomes 'the field' (Hastrup 1990, p. 46). Indeed, the individual experience of the ethnographer inhibits or enables particular kinds of insight (Rosaldo 2004). As Vincent Crapanzano (1986, p. 51) points out, 'ethnography is historically determined by the moment of the ethnographer's encounter with whomever he is studying.'

Elsewhere I discuss how my status as a guest and as existing somewhere between foreign and not-foreign variously acted to shape the field and position me within it. Awareness of my positionality in the field was something that moved in and out of focus throughout the period of my fieldwork. Often catching me by surprise as when, for example, with just weeks of fieldwork remaining my Iranian host developed a set of intense (and utterly intractable) suspicions about my intentions in the field.

At times in this thesis I shift to writing in the 'ethnographic present tense.' While the ethnographic present has been roundly condemned as alienating and deeply dehistoricising (Sturge 2014), I perceive value in bringing ethnographic description into the present. As Kirsten Hastrup (1990, p. 50) argues, irrespective of the fact that all societies are enmeshed in history, fieldwork has its own temporality and 'cannot be spoken about in ordinary historical categories.' Writing in the present tense, indicates to the reader that the data in question is drawn from field notes written either at the time of the events described or immediately after. Many notebooks were filled as I was driven across Shiraz, scrambling to commit to memory the sights, sounds, scents and textures (not to mention conversations) of the field.

In the thesis there are forty-seven distinct voices in addition to my own. Appendix One, on page 273, comprises a list of the research participants who have been directly quoted. It gives basic information—including name or pseudonym, gender, nationality and age—to help orient the reader. These forty-seven were only a portion of the many Iranians and Afghans I spoke to and interacted with through the nine months of my fieldwork. Deciding which voices and whose stories were to be included was a task left largely to the post-fieldwork analysis, where I read and re-read notes, listened to recordings and created multiple, complex indices of themes around the what, where, who, how and why of the volumes of data that I had gathered. It was also, at times, guided by practical considerations, particularly where anonymity was necessary but couldn't be guaranteed due to the impossibility of eliding potentially identifying details.

Over the nine months of my fieldwork I lived with an Iranian family in a suburb in the northwest of Shiraz. This allowed me to participate in the ordinary rhythms of hospitality and observe the minutiae of my host's hostile/hospitable interactions with both Iranians and Afghans. While there were benefits to participating in everyday Iranian life in this way, there were certain elements of this arrangement that acted to circumscribe my research in ways that need to be acknowledged at the outset.

Firstly, by placing myself in an Iranian, rather than an Afghan, household, I immediately found myself positioned on the Iranian side of the Iranian–Afghan hospitality nexus. While this was partially mitigated by my status as a foreign researcher it remained an issue that was never entirely resolved to my satisfaction and is reflected in the treatment of hospitality in this thesis in terms of, not a dialectical process between host and guest, but a matter, largely, of Iranian attitudes towards Afghans, within a framework of Iranian identity. Secondly, as a guest, I found myself subject to the conditions of hospitality

imposed by my host. This had repercussions in my efforts, for example, to participate fully in the reciprocal hospitality that forms an essential element of the Iranian New Year and sociality in Shiraz more generally. Indeed, in the initial stages of my fieldwork I found myself significantly hampered in my interactions with Afghans, as a result of my status as guest to my Iranian host.

Thirdly, my host developed a proprietary interest in my research and attempted to shape it in ways that she felt reflected better on Iran. Early on, I mistakenly accepted the offer of my host to assist in an interview with an Iranian woman who had been referred to me, on account of her involvement in organising a neighbourhood sports club for young Afghan boys. The interview was an unmitigated disaster, with my host insisting that statements be retracted and eventually taking over the role of interviewer.

Ultimately, the relationship between myself and my host was complicated by my role as an ethnographer. Conversely, my role as an ethnographer was complicated by my dependence on my host and the ongoing presence of myself and my immediate family in her home. It should be noted, that my host is largely written out of this thesis on her request, an absence that in itself points to the tensions that arise within the host–guest relationship.

The historic village of Ghalat just to the north of Shiraz is touted as a tourist destination: a slice of village life that, having been frozen in time, is now slipping into ruin. Late in the year and on a weekday morning we expect to find the place largely deserted. It is with some consternation then, that we discover our usual picnic site—a hard to reach section of hillside on the far side of a fast-moving river—has been taken over by a boisterous school group. Kobra's extraordinary energy and drive in organising the logistically

complex task of ferrying thirty-plus young Afghan students—ranging in age from seven to nineteen—to this destination some distance outside the city, proves an asset when she turns her attention to assisting me with my research—organising interviews, cajoling her contacts within the Afghan community to speak with me and connecting me to a network of informal Afghan-run schools across Shiraz.

Between April and October 2014 (excluding the month of fasting from the end of June to the end of July) I spent at least one day a week at the Marvdasht premises of an Iranian run organisation that offers, amongst other things, classes to Afghan women and children. This standing-appointment gave me not only the opportunity to observe some of the inner workings of the organisation and the interactions of Iranians and Afghans in what was a highly unusual context, it also allowed me to develop relationships over a period of months. Ultimately, I grappled with some quite significant ethical concerns in relation to this aspect of my research. A number of the participants were children and consent to participate was not forthcoming from adult guardians. Furthermore, where I did obtain consent there was concern about the difficulty in rendering anonymous the research participant, given the relatively small Afghan population in Marvdasht and the prominence of the organisation in the town. In the event, for the purposes of this thesis, I reluctantly discarded almost all the data collected in this context.

Balancing the demand for thick description with the requirement to provide anonymity to research participants has made the writing of this thesis particularly fraught. I have attempted to manage this by using the voices of those who had less stake in the research as a way of supplementing the material derived from more in depth and intrusive data collection methods.

Methods for data collection, falling under the broad rubric of participant observation as ethnographer-guest, included:

- 1) Informal conversations and serendipitous meetings at specifically chosen sites in and around the city of Shiraz. Particular thought and care was taken to identify sites where participants could be reasonably approached and engaged in conversation. There are some ethical considerations which made this an occasionally problematic approach. Obtaining consent at the outset tended to result in abrupt cessation of the conversation. The compromise I developed, with mixed success, involved explaining my research at a natural juncture in the conversation and confirming at the conclusion, that I could reproduce the conversation in the text of my thesis, with the usual caveat of anonymity.
- 2) Stand-alone semi-formal interviews. The nature of the field and my particular movements within it resulted in far more semi-formal interviews than I had anticipated. These interviews were pre-arranged, sometimes during these serendipitous meetings mentioned above, at other times through the mediation of existing research participants or other contacts. With a few notable exceptions, these interviews were conducted in the interviewees home and lasted between two and four hours. I conducted a total of fifty-three stand-alone interviews, of which forty-two were with Iranian research participants and the remainder with Afghans. Thirty of these interviews were conducted with the assistance of an interpreter/guide, most often my partner, Abbas. Only six interviews were recorded, as most interviewees expressed a preference not to have their voice recorded, feeling that it posed an unnecessary risk to their desired anonymity.

3) Extended semi-formal interviews. These were interviews that were conducted over weeks or months, often comprising a modified life history approach and blurring the boundaries between interview and conversation. I conducted extended semi-formal interviews with twelve individuals or family groups, ten of whom were Afghan. Initial interviews were conducted with an interpreter present, as above. I made a total of seventeen recordings, but the majority of interviews were written into notebooks during or, on rare occasions immediately after, the event.

One of the many challenges of anthropology is achieving the delicate balance between producing a sincere account of the lives of others and maintaining a requisite degree of privacy. Anonymity takes on an added degree of urgency where a repressive state apparatus has cultivated a constant low-level fear amongst its citizenry and where people's lives, as refugees, are lived at the shadowy edges of legality. Names have been changed throughout the thesis and difficult decisions have been made to exclude data where anonymity was compromised in some way. Where permission was granted to record interviews I did so, however even where I have voice recordings I have relied heavily on written notes to provide greater texture.

In both the research and the process of writing I have allowed myself to be guided by the words of C Wright Mills. Written well over half a century ago, his injunction to, 'be a good craftsman. Avoid any rigid set of procedures...let theory and method again become part of the practice of the craft,' still has contemporary resonance (Mills 1959, p. 224). In this thesis I seek to tightly weave together robust theory with descriptions drawn from the field. The style of writing closely mirrors my broader fieldwork methodology, in

which the field itself could be said to both shape and be shaped by a particular set of theoretical concerns.

I describe my writing method, in accordance with the typography of ideal types described by Michael Humphreys and Tony Watson (2009, p. 43), as ‘enhanced ethnography.’ While falling firmly within the established epistemological framework of anthropology, enhanced ethnography uses the ‘presentational techniques of the novelist: descriptive scene-setting; use of dialogues; author as a character in the narrative; inclusion of emotional responses by author and subjects; [and] attention to the perspectives and stories of subjects’ (ibid)

Mapping the thesis

This thesis can be thought of as a kind of layered map, comprised of analysis overlaid with ethnographic description. Chapters Two through to Seven have an independent coherence and can be read in isolation. However, placed together these chapters create a more comprehensive picture of the terrain with which the thesis is concerned. Part One of the thesis, comprising Chapters One to Four, lays down the ‘geographical features’ upon which the architecture of Part Two is built.

Following on from this introduction, Chapter Two provides a comprehensive historical overview of Afghans as pilgrims, migrants and refugees in Iran. I look at the history of asylum and refugee policy in Iran considering, in the first place, the codification of refugee rights within Islamic texts. I further explore the historical practice of *bast* (seeking asylum in shrines and holy places) even as I argue against the notion that there is a continuity between pre-modern and modern forms of asylum. I explain the role of

international law in the development of Iran's modern asylum regime in the 1970s and point out that it was largely untested prior to the arrival of millions of Afghan refugees from 1979 onwards. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 marked the beginning of the mass-exodus of Afghans from Afghanistan and the creation of an Afghan diaspora—representing one of the largest and most protracted refugee crises of the modern era. I consider the shift from an open-door policy through the 1980s to one of increasing restrictions on Afghan movement into Iran and the adoption of a policy of 'encouraging voluntary repatriation,' framing this shift in terms of a nexus of hospitality and hostility.

In Chapter Three I trace the way in which hospitality threads through diverse narratives of Iranian identity, noting that the politics of hospitality are intimately and inextricably tied to the politics of nationalism. I look at how hospitality arises and is variously articulated within Islamic, historical and literary narratives of national selfhood.

Islamic principles of hospitality can be traced to several different sources, including Quranic injunctions, the story of Ibrahim and the *hijrah* narrative. Indeed, when Afghan refugees were officially nominated *mohajerin* (literally those who have undertaken *hijrah*) during the Khomeini decade, it was against the backdrop of a new articulation of Islamic personhood in the context of the Iranian Revolution. The response of the newly installed government to the influx of Afghan refugees has been described as an open door policy predicated, in part (although far from exclusively), on notions of a borderless Islam or the Islamic *ummah*. The open door of Iranian hospitality, resonates with Derridean hospitality, drawing, as it does, on metaphors of the home, the door and the threshold. The Afghan experience illustrates the inherent violence of the door as a

bordering device and further points to the limits of the metaphor's utility in directing us to a hospitality beyond hospitality.

Hospitality arises, too, in a nationalist Perso-Iranian narrative that draws on Iran's pre-Islamic history. Here we see ideas about human rights running parallel to hospitality. The key mythology of hospitality in this context centres around the figure of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Achaemenid Empire. I point to the way in which notions of identity linked to the pre-Islamic era are reproduced in rituals of hospitality, principally the events around *nowruz* (the New Year). I identify the *sofreh* as a key symbol of Iranian hospitality and a metaphor for the sharing of food and the conviviality of the meal. The consumption of food has been broadly overlooked by Derrida and the hospitality literature that arises out of Derridean scholarship. Here I suggest that the *sofreh* functions as a further metaphor of hospitality in Iranian society, providing new insight to the way in which the host–guest/citizen–refugee relationship is negotiated.

Finally, in this chapter, I ask how classical Persian poetry comes to encapsulate notions of hospitality as simultaneously characteristic of the Iranian nation *and* a cosmopolitan virtue. I discuss the place of Persian language in narratives of national selfhood and trace the way in which the Persian–language literature of Afghanistan has been pushed to the periphery. I look at the way in which walled gardens, functioning as a multi-layered metaphors in classical Persian poetry and, vitally, corporeally realised at the mausoleums of Hafez and Saadi, articulate certain ideas about the nation, encapsulating notions of hospitality through the construction of exclusive spaces.

In Chapter Four I seek to ground the discussion of hospitality in place. I recognise place as an inevitable condition of hospitality, shaping and being shaped by relations of power between host and guest. I move between, on the one hand, a theoretical discussion of

place and hospitality as it has been iterated in studies of borders, migrants and refugees, and on the other a highly textured rendering of my own experience of the city as a place of sometimes hidden hospitality. Having traced the interpellation of Shiraz as a 'city of culture,' I come to see the city as a microcosm of the imagined Persian whole, in which the claimed constitutive parts of Iranian culture are made concrete at particular sites in and around the city. I look to how nation-space acts to create and constrain identities of Self and Other, citizen and refugee; and how these identities come to be practiced in place. I attempt to capture diverse ways of thinking space by theorising it, at the scale of nation, city and site, in terms of hospitality and in the context of uneven relations of power and place-making capacity between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees.

In Part Two of the thesis I look at three kinds of sites in and around the city of Shiraz and ask how these sites function as spaces of hospitality. I draw heavily on ethnographic fieldwork undertaken between February and October 2014, in order to elucidate my own experience of guestness at these sites and, more importantly, explore the ways in which Afghan refugees and Iranian citizens variously practice hospitality, interacting with the space and with each other as host and guest.

I begin, in Chapter Five, by looking at hospitality and religious sites, drawing on interviews undertaken in the vicinity of the Shah Cheragh and Astane shrines. The shrine precinct of Shiraz has been (and continues to be) subject to significant redevelopment. In the process, the area is being demographically reconstituted, as poorer residents (including hundreds of Afghans) are pushed out in order to create a space for middle-class Iranians to visit and experience 'culture.' This makes it a particularly interesting site at which to explore ideas around Islamic (Shia) identity and Iranian hospitality. I look at how Shiism is being actively promoted as a foundational element of Iranian culture,

through the reorganisation of urban space, asking how Afghan refugees are variously included and excluded from this particular vision of culture.

In Chapter Six I move between the city proper and the Achaemenid ruins of Persepolis which lie outside the city, adjacent to the town of Marvdasht. Built in approximately 515BCE and destroyed just 200 years later, Persepolis has, intermittently, functioned as a site of hospitality. From the mid-twentieth century it has also been drawn into a particular narrative of national identity that foregrounds Iran's pre-Islamic history. I ask how Persepolis has historically functioned both as a site and a symbol of hospitality and how that hospitality is experienced by Iranians and Afghans living in Marvdasht and Shiraz. I explore the way in which history is implicated in the reification of national borders. I point to a disjuncture between the articulation of a discourse of hospitality and human rights in association with Iran's Achaemenid past, and the way in which this history is wielded in the formation of an exclusive nationalism.

In Chapter Seven I explore the intersection between poetry and identity in the city of Shiraz. Much of the ethnographic data that informs this chapter was drawn from interviews and observations undertaken in the Saadi mausoleum and the adjacent neighbourhood. The Saadi neighbourhood is largely comprised of informal housing and accommodates a substantial Afghan population. It has come to be seen as an undesirable place, in which threats are imagined to lurk in the narrow laneways. These threats are perceived by Iranians as both physical and cultural.

Saadi—the place—is imbued with multiple and occasionally contradictory meanings. Various actors lay claim to the space and it is both worked on by and works on these actors in distinct ways. I seek to trace how the space is experienced as a site of hostile

hospitality by both Afghan and Iranian residents of the Saadi neighbourhood and as well as by visitors (past and present) to the mausoleum.

In Chapter Eight I draw together the various strands of the thesis, showing how identity and hospitality intersect in place, giving rise to spaces in and around the city of Shiraz that are configured as exclusive or inclusive of Afghan refugees. I return to Derrida, in order to consider how hospitality exposes hidden tensions and unseen contradictions within the construction of Iranian national selfhood.

Let me ask you now to 'be my guest,' to step across the threshold and immerse yourself in the results of four years of research. In the following pages you may find yourself 'at home' in the familiar or, conversely, 'out of place' in the strange and unknown. As you make your way through the theoretical to the ethnographic and back I invite you to embrace new forms of hospitality and new ways of thinking and theorising the hospitable.

Chapter Two: Afghans in Iran

Afghan migration in historical context

For hundreds of years, Afghans belonging to the Shia sect of Islam have made pilgrimages to holy sites within Iran, most notably the tomb of the Imam Reza at Mashhad. The first documented case of mass Afghan migration to Iran dates back to the 1850s when as many as 5000 Hazara Afghans settled in Torbat-e Jam. Several decades later, following a failed rebellion against Afghan ruler Amir Abdur Rahman Khan (1880–1901), up to 15 000 Hazara fled, seeking sanctuary across the Iranian border and settling primarily in Torbat-e Jam and Bakharz. Moving forward a century, crop failure as a result of a severe drought, along with rising government taxes, compelled many Afghans to seek opportunities abroad (Saito 2009). Most were not obliged to look far. The 1973 oil boom in the Middle East was accompanied by an unprecedented growth in Iran's construction industry, providing the lure of relatively well remunerated employment to several hundred thousand Afghans who migrated westward into Iran throughout the 1970s. By December 1979 the economic incentive, somewhat muted by the revolutionary events that led to the departure of the Iranian Shah in January of that year and the subsequent establishment of the Islamic Republic, was subsumed by an imperative to escape the Soviet invasion and unfolding war in Afghanistan and, subsequently, the perceived contravention of religiously-defined cultural norms by the Soviet-backed Afghan government. In the decades that followed Afghans would come to constitute the largest global refugee population with approximately one in three Afghans seeking safety (and a modicum of stability) outside their homeland. Almost half would cross Afghanistan's western border into Iran, establishing a highly dispersed community, with populations of Afghan migrants found in most large regional centres and, in smaller numbers, throughout rural communities across Iran.

Today, Afghans constitute over 20 per cent of the global refugee population and 40 per cent of those in what UNHCR designates 'protracted displacement' (UNHCR 2015a). The overwhelming majority of Afghan refugees reside in just two countries—Pakistan and Iran. While it can be safely stated that Afghans have a long history of migration to Iran for both economic and political reasons, there are few cases that demonstrate as clearly as the Afghan diaspora the futility of attempting to separate out the economic from the political in terms of motivation for migration. As a result, I have struggled to settle on the appropriate term to describe Afghans in Iran. I have shifted from refugee, to undocumented, to migrant and back to refugee. None of these terms fully captures the circumstances of Afghans in Iran and all have weaknesses that are likely to make them unacceptable to at least some readers.

Refugee is sometimes treated solely as a juridical category based on a UNHCR definition. Adrian Edwards (2016) argues for a clear separation of the term migrant from refugee, partly in response to a trend towards describing those arriving in Europe 'from countries mired in war or which otherwise are considered to be 'refugee-producing'' as migrants, presumably in a deliberately ploy to undercut claims to a right to asylum under international law. The 'two terms' he argues 'have distinct and different meanings, and confusing them leads to problems for both populations' (Edwards 2015). However, the official definition of a refugee fails to capture the lived reality for the millions of people who are forced to cross national boundaries in search of security. Furthermore, there is a strong case to be made for a social or flexible use of the term refugee (see Cole 2016). There are undoubtedly many Afghan migrants in Iran, particularly young men who cross the border for seasonal work or for a period of a few years with the intention of returning to Afghanistan (see Monsutti 2010; Stigter 2005). However, the majority of

Afghans I interacted with in Shiraz were part of family groups whose reasons for departing Afghanistan, often decades earlier, while complex and multi-faceted, overlapped to some degree with the broad understanding of what constitutes a refugee. Importantly, I use the term refugee in reference to Afghans in Iran without necessarily interrogating individual circumstances of cross-border movement or implying a hierarchy of legitimacy. This is significant, as the terms migrant/immigrant and refugee imply very different claims to legitimacy (see Berglund Prytz 2016).

Afghanistan and Iran: a shared history

Persia cannot forget that what is now Western Afghanistan has through the greatest part of history been Eastern Khorasan, that Herat has been habitually ruled by Persian sovereigns, viceroys, governors, or vassals, that is inhabited by people of Persian rather than Afghan traditions and sympathy, and that it is severed by no physical or ethnographical barrier from Meshed [Mashhad] (Curzon 2012 [1892]).

Iran's eastern border is the subject of myth and legend. The story goes that the warrior Arash shot from his bow a magic arrow that landed at the farthest reaches of Greater Khorasan, marking out the frontiers of the Persian Empire (Hanaway 1971). Rostam, the mythical hero of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, was said to have been born in Zabol on the present-day border between Iran and Afghanistan; his father came from the northern Iran region, while his mother was a Kabuli Princess (Ferdowsi 2016 [977–1010]). The blurring of boundaries between Iran and Afghanistan in Persian mythology is reflected in the centuries of interwoven politics, religion and culture.

The state of Afghanistan was formed out of the disintegration of the Afsharid Empire in the mid-eighteenth century. At its peak under Nader Shah (1736–1747), the Afsharid

Empire stretched from Mosul in the west, through the Caucasus, across Iran and southern Afghanistan, and as far east as India. By the time the Qajar tribe wrested control of an area more-or-less corresponding to present-day Iran, the border between Iran and Afghanistan had largely solidified. In the intervening years it has remained virtually unchanged, notwithstanding an ill-advised campaign by Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (1848–1896) to seize control of the then independent emirate of Herat, against the interests of colonial Britain.

Fariba Adelkhah (2016, p. 149) describes a situation, today, of reciprocal dependence, in which Iran functions as ‘the “nose” through which Afghanistan, or at least its western provinces, can breathe,’ even as Afghanistan (and Afghan migrants) play a vital role in the Iranian economy. Here, the continuing porosity of the border, in terms of sanctioned and un-sanctioned economic and cultural activities, is emphasised.

Iranian refugee policy pre-1979

Traditions of seeking and granting asylum have existed within Iran dating back to the pre-Islamic period. However, it was with the advent of Islam that the rights of refugees were first codified. Islam demands that the believing community uphold the rights of the *mostamen* (refugees), including those of non-believers who are entitled to remain in Muslim lands for up to a year before converting to one of the recognised religions (i.e. monotheistic Abrahamic faiths) (Ebadi 2008).

For centuries those accused of crimes or fearful of persecution at the hands of their associates or representatives of the state, could seek asylum (*bast*) in shrines or at holy sites. Those taking *bast* would often use chain or rope to tie themselves to the shrine

and it would be rare and indeed shocking for such an individual to be forced to leave the site of their protection prior to establishing terms of immunity with their pursuers (Calmard 1988).

The practice of seeking *bast* at holy sites gradually expanded to included places, objects and even animals associated with royalty and, from the nineteenth century onwards (in a nod to what asylum constitutes today), diplomatic missions. The practice of *bast* as a form of political protest was integral to the Constitutional Revolution of 1905 to 1911 (Keddie & Richard 2006). However, with the establishment of a constitution and the implementation of new secular laws, the practice of *bast* waned and asylum in Iran evolved to its modern day meaning of seeking protection from an external state power when one's life was perceived to be in danger.

In June 1976, Iran ratified, with some reservations, both the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol. At the time, parliament placed stipulations on article 17 (regarding wage-earning employment), article 23 (public relief), article 24 (labour legislation and social security) and article 26 (freedom of movement) (Abbasi-Shavazi, Glazebrook, Jamshidiha, Mahmoudian & Sadeghi 2005b). More than a decade earlier, in 1963, the government of Iran had adopted an ordinance that, in words closely mirroring international instruments, provided a legal and administrative framework to grant asylum to refugees.

Prior to the ratification of the Convention, Iran had only brief and limited brushes with the massive tumultuous refugee movements that gave the twentieth century its moniker 'the century of the refugee' (Myers 2001). During the Second World War several thousand Polish Jews made their way to Iran via Soviet Central Asia, including up

to a thousand of the so-called Tehran Children who eventually made their way on to British-controlled Palestine (Dekel 2012). Throughout the 1940s Iran also offered asylum to an uncounted number of refugees of Iranian ancestry who were expelled from or fled Soviet Azerbaijan (Ashrafi & Moghissi 2002). In the early 1970s increasing numbers of Shia and Kurdish Iraqis sought refuge in Iran, presaging the mass expulsions that would occur under Saddam Hussein during the Iran–Iraq war. None of these events could, however, prepare Iran for the extent of the refugee crisis precipitated by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Afghan refugees and the Khomeini decade: 1979–1989

The Saur Revolution of April 1978 and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviet Army marked the first major sustained movement of Afghan refugees into Iran and resulted in the emergence of a global Afghan diaspora. At the same time, the newly established Islamic government in Iran had significant political and ideological motivations to warmly embrace the Afghan exiles. Khodadad, an older Afghan man who had travelled to Iran in that first wave of what was to become the Afghan diaspora describes how what was essentially an ‘open door’ policy was felt and experienced, ‘Khomeini told us that there are no borders in Islam and we believed him. At first it was like coming to our own country. To our own home. The Iranian was my brother and we were equal before God and the law.’ Globally, such a reception is one that few refugees experience and one that has certainly not been emulated by Western countries in the face of Afghan requests for asylum.

Afghan refugees in Iran were nominated *mohajerin*, an Arabic term which is often translated simply as migrant, but which carries with it a whole cache of meaning and which, for Muslims, recalls the flight of the Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina in order to escape persecution. A *mohajer* is understood to have gone into exile for religious reasons where a 'regime in power does not allow the free expression of Islam' (Centlivres & Centlivres-Demont 1988: 145). The term *mohajer*, while it is used in some contexts in a way that we would consider interchangeable with the word migrant, in other contexts has clear overlaps with popular usage of the term refugee.

One who welcomes the *mohajer* is considered to be performing a valuable religious act. The Iranian government's willingness to welcome Afghans in flight from the Soviet invaders reinforced its own Islamic credentials, while also speaking forcefully to the pan-Islamic vision of the Islamic Republic's early leadership. Concurrent to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Iranian government was engaged in a bloody domestic struggle against left-wing ideologues with whom it had formerly been allied against the Shah—further reason to accept refugees in flight from a communist government.

The right to seek asylum is enshrined in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic. Article 155 of the constitution states that *[t]he government of the Islamic Republic of Iran may grant political asylum to those who seek it unless they are regarded as traitors and saboteurs according to the laws of Iran*. In the wake of the revolution the Guardian Council recognised the applicability of international treaties and obligations to which Iran had previously committed.

With reference to the fact that existing laws are inapplicable by law only when they violate the Constitution, and with reference to the fact that the Guardian Council's interpretation is required to guarantee that existing laws observe the Constitution, as long as the Guardian Council does not

take an interpretive position, existing laws remain applicable (in Ebadi 2008).

As such, the Convention, Protocol and the associated 1963 by-law remain in force, with the proviso noted in the constitution that an asylum seeker not be regarded as a traitor or saboteur ‘according to the laws of Iran’ (this potentially captures a range of people including atheists, homosexuals, and those who oppose a government with which Iran has friendly relations) (Ashrafi & Moghissi 2002).

Throughout the period of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan (1979–1989), Iran hosted as many as three million Afghan refugees. Such a large refugee population posed an extraordinary economic burden. Having shunned—and been shunned by—the international community following the revolution and the seizure of the US embassy in Tehran, and determined to strike its own path unaligned to one or the other of the two Cold War superpowers, Iran was left almost entirely to its own devices in dealing with what would universally be considered a crisis. Simultaneously, it faced another crisis on a different border. Iraq’s invasion of Iran in 1980 led to a bitter and costly eight-year war (and, incidentally, the influx of several hundred thousand Iraqi refugees and over one million internally displaced Iranians from the western province of Khuzestan) (Van Engeland-Nourai 2008, p. 146). By 1989 Iran’s economy was under severe strain and its capacity to provide for the welfare of Afghan refugees, including access to health and education, was stretched to breaking point. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in February 1989, the war with Iraq (1980–1988) and the death of the Islamic Republic’s Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, on 3 June 1989 all contributed to a significant shift in Iranian attitudes towards Afghan sojourners. Indeed, a number of commentators have noted the re-emergence, in the 1990s, of a distinctly *Iranian* national identity (see Adelkhah 2016; Ashraf 1993; Holliday 2011; Rajaee 2000). As a

result, welcoming *mohajer* was no longer a political expediency and Afghan refugees were officially downgraded to *panahandegan*, a term which, like *mohajerin* can be translated as ‘refugees,’ but carries pejorative nuances and suggests impoverishment (Rajaei 2000, pp. 56–58).

Afghans themselves expressed mixed views about the terminology used to describe them: ‘I am not a *panahande*,’ declares Abdul Golhi proudly. Abdul Golhi, a married Afghan man in his mid-thirties and the father of four children, fled the chaos that engulfed Kabul in the early 1990s, as warlords fought for power in the wake of the Soviet withdrawal. He has recently moved from Shiraz to the satellite city of Sadra, twenty kilometres north of Shiraz. Despite the fact that his story of displacement accords with popular usage of the term refugee, he insists, ‘I am a worker. We Afghans have built Iran with our sweat and labour.’ More commonly, Afghans resorted to the term *mohajer*, sometimes unreflexively, but often with a self-conscious nod to their felt-status as undesirable migrants or problematic refugees. Kobra articulated this clearly, ‘A *mohajer* is not a *panahande*. A *mohajer* has dignity and a right to refuge as a fellow Muslim.’ It was, the pejorative nuances that had accrued to the word *panahande* that most Afghans (not unreasonably) objected to. In the context of Afghans who were known to have sought asylum beyond Iran’s borders, there was less resistance to the term *panahandegan*. Here, it was felt that, far from implying problematic personhood, the term imparted a certain set of rights, that Afghans in Iran lacked. This is, of course, the perspective of Afghans who reside in Iran rather than those who have travelled to Europe, Australia or North America, where they must grapple with a new terminology that designates them either refugee or asylum seeker, illegal immigrant or economic refugee, irregular arrival or boat person, each with its own set of implicit values and

often with considerable slippage between the terms (Schuster 2011). There is, it should be noted, a vigorous (and potentially enlightening) discussion in English-speaking countries about the use and misuse of such terms (Goodman, Sirriyeh & McMahon 2017; Boeva 2016).

From 1979 to 1992 a form of refugee status was granted by the Iranian government on a *prima facie* basis, with the vast majority of Afghans issued 'blue cards' indicating their status as *mohajerin*. Those with blue cards were granted permission to remain in Iran indefinitely and had the same access as Iranian citizens to subsidised food and health care, along with free primary and secondary education. However, restrictions were placed on employment, and blue card holders were limited to low wage positions primarily in industries such as agriculture and construction (Abbasi-Shavazi et al. 2008).

Farahnaz, a twenty-six-year-old Afghan refugee who had migrated to Iran with her parents more than twenty years ago and has lived in Shiraz for almost as long, describes how her parents suffered under the impost of employment restrictions:

We farmed our own land in Bakwa [a district in Farah province, Western Afghanistan]. For my father to lose his land was like losing his soul. Every day, working on a building site [in Shiraz] was a kind of humiliation. It broke his heart. He died five years after we came here. I'm telling you the truth—he died of a broken heart. My uncle smuggled his body back to Afghanistan and he is buried there in his own land. It has been eighteen years and I still cry because I cannot visit his grave to pray for him.

The air conditioner rattles noisily in the window, ineffectually stirring the stale air in the small room that functions, by day as classroom and, by night, as bedroom for Farahnaz, and her brother's three children—young girls who, having lost interest in the conversation, are now showing my two children how they can perch on a wall in their front courtyard in order to almost, but not quite, reach the tantalising cherries adorning the closest of the neighbour's carefully manicured fruit trees. A whiteboard is propped

up against the wall, scrawled over with the answers to the maths problems that the morning class had been working on. Soon Farahnaz will have to go and make lunch. Already the rice is soaking in the kitchen and I am sitting on the floor helping Farahnaz clean lentils—separating out the small brown pulses from the stones and chaff with which they are mixed—while we talk. ‘What do you remember about Afghanistan?’ I ask, ‘Not much,’ Farahnaz says, but later she elaborates:

My generation came to Iran as children. To us Afghanistan is just a bad dream. Unlike [my aunt] I have no good memories of Afghanistan. Here I went to school, to university. Don’t get me wrong. To be a refugee is not easy but I have no doubt that my life in Iran is far better than any life I might have lived as a woman in Afghanistan.

Farahnaz is less upbeat about the situation for the later generation of Afghan refugees:

These younger children have it much harder. There is no doubt about that. Iran today is less welcoming than when Khomeini was alive. Now they must fight for everything. To go to school. To learn. This is no way to live. If I had children then yes, perhaps I would sacrifice [myself] and go back [to Afghanistan].

Afghan refugees in contemporary Iran

During the Taliban era (1997–2001), and notwithstanding Iran’s support of the persecuted Shia minority within Afghanistan, Afghan migrants continued to be viewed in broadly negative terms. Immediately following the fall of the Taliban the Iranian government intensified existing efforts to repatriate the more than one million Afghans remaining in the country. In late 2001 a tripartite repatriation agreement was signed between Iran, Afghanistan and UNHCR, and since January 2002 UNHCR claims to have assisted 902 000 Afghan refugees to ‘return home’ from Iran (UNHCR 2013). Such glowing reports of the repatriation program’s success obscure what should be an immediately apparent discrepancy between the total Afghan population in Iran and the

number of repatriated refugees. The figure of 950 000 quoted by UNHCR (2015a) as the number of registered refugees residing in Iran at present is barely any lower than before the repatriation program began and hides a far larger number of unregistered 'refugees,' labour migrants and others. Indeed, these statistics have come in for considerable criticism. David Turton and Peter Marsden (2002) correctly point out that while the figures are an accurate reflection of the number of people who have received repatriation assistance, they are not an accurate reflection of the number who have repatriated. They point to the problem, particularly in Pakistan but also in Iran, of what they call (somewhat disturbingly, given the broader association between refugees and waste) 'recycling' (that is, refugees making multiple border crossings in order to obtain the relatively generous repatriation assistance package more than once), along with the difficulty of identifying ordinary seasonal migrants who might choose to make use of the repatriation program (Turton & Marsden, 2002, p. 20). They seem to suggest that there has been widespread intentional abuse of the UNHCR facilitated program. However, it is also worth considering the environment of insecurity in which the early repatriation program was taking place. The involvement of UNHCR almost certainly raised false expectations about the progress of reconstruction and the state of security in Afghanistan. As a result, there is likely to have been some considerable movement back across the border of those who had been forced to reassess their initial decision to return.

Razieh was a young child when her family left Afghanistan, seeking refuge from the Soviet invasion and the imposition of policies in the areas of family law and education, that, at the time, her father felt contravened the precepts of Shiism. At first they considered themselves only temporary sojourners in Iran and the family repatriated to

Afghanistan in late 1995, forgoing the assistance of UNHCR and resettling in Herat province. Within twelve months Razieh had returned to Iran, this time with her husband, who presciently recognised the threat posed by the newly established Taliban regime. In the intervening years most of Razieh's family have made the same journey back to Iran and a refugee life. Asked if she still sees Iran as a temporary home, Razieh is adamant that she will not return to Afghanistan. 'There is nothing for us in Afghanistan. Nothing. I have no home. Not here [in Iran] and not there [in Afghanistan]. God willing, one day my children will be able to consider Iran home.'

Razieh's story is far from unique and I soon learned to ask Afghans about their experiences of moving between Iran and Afghanistan. Those who had, at some point, made the journey back to Afghanistan cited multiple factors motivating their subsequent return to Iran. These factors included ongoing insecurity, persecution from village level officials, feuds with neighbours or extended family, lack of employment, loss of property and harsh climatic conditions.

The very existence of an official repatriation program posits the Afghan migrant as *Other* to the Iranian citizen. Indeed, Afghans in Iran are understood to be *out of place* and needing to be *put back in [their] place*. While voluntary repatriation has generally been viewed as 'the foremost durable solution to forced displacement and the solution that would benefit the greatest number of refugees,' even the UNHCR, a leading advocate of voluntary repatriation, has acknowledged that 'the Afghanistan experience has highlighted the complexity of the repatriation and reintegration process' (UNHCR 2008). As Daniel Warner (1994: 170) argues 'refugees in voluntary repatriation are not returning home. They are, in fact, returning to their country of origin, but no more.' Indeed, whether they can even be considered as returning to their country of origin is

highly questionable in the Afghan case. It has been estimated that in 2005, of the approximately 1.2 million documented 'Afghans' in Iran, 38 per cent were under the age of 14, while 33 per cent of adults (over 15 years of age) were born in or had been brought up in Iran (see Abbasi-Shavazi et al. 2008). It is reasonable to suppose that these 'migrants,' who constitute almost three quarters of the Afghan population in Iran, might have ambivalent or contradictory feelings about relocating to Afghanistan. In a study of Afghan refugee youth in Iran, Sarah Kamal reports on the 'striking undercurrent of anxiety and incoherence' that permeated at least some of her interviews around the topic of repatriation—with informants 'vacillating between stating that they wanted to go to Afghanistan and preferred to remain in Iran' (Kamal 2010a, p. 202). Armando Geller and Maciej Latek (2014) attempt to delve more deeply into the reasons for this remarkable anxiety and incoherence, citing the breakdown of cross-border kinship, friendship and business networks and a 'mental state,' characterised by a decision paralysis induced by the multiple stresses of exile. Finally, it is reasonable to assume that those whose citizenship rights were withheld in their country of origin, or who have otherwise experienced exclusion from membership in the imagined community of the [Afghan] nation may, at best, be reluctant to return.

Iranian officials have instituted a project of 'encouraging voluntary repatriation' through the gradual withdrawal of the broad rights that had earlier been extended to Afghans and the institution of a kind of low-level harassment. Over a period of more than a decade subsidies for health care, primary and secondary education, transport, fuel and basic food items have been gradually removed, resulting in a steady increase of costs for some of the most economically marginalised within the Iranian economy. At the same time, Afghan refugees have been (variably) subject to restrictions on opening bank

accounts, running businesses, seeking employment, obtaining driving licences, owning property and, of perhaps greatest significance, attending state schools and studying at university.

In 2014 access to education for Afghan children remained patchy, at best. It is estimated that half a million Afghan children in Iran are not attending school (while 350 000 Afghan children are legally enrolled) (Karami 2015). Current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has since declared that no child, 'not even [of] immigrants who came to Iran illegally and without documents, must be kept from an education' (Fars News Agency 2015). However, this seemingly unambiguous statement has been variously interpreted and, in practice, many Afghans continue to be denied access to school. At the same time, informal Afghan-run schools—often accommodating children whose age makes them ineligible to enter school at a level appropriate to their prior education—are searched-out and shutdown.

Since 2002 there has been an increasing implementation of what are effectively Afghan-free zones (Justice for Iran 2012). Such zones constitute entire provinces, cities or urban spaces which Afghans are prohibited from residing in or even visiting. This spatial exclusion of Afghans (their *Othering*) acts to demarcate the Iranian *Self*, thereby contributing to the formation of an Iranian national identity.

Afghan refugees in the city of Shiraz

Afghan refugees began settling in Shiraz shortly after the initial exodus from Afghanistan. By the early 1980s a sizable Afghan community was established in the city

and today it is estimated that there are approximately 100 000 Afghans residing in Shiraz and tens of thousands more across the Fars province.

Afghans are permitted to settle in any area of Shiraz and face no legal restrictions on their movements within the city. However, the community is concentrated in poorer areas, particularly in the south of the city, with smaller populations found where there are significant building projects being undertaken, such as in the newly established northern suburbs.

Foremost factors bringing Afghan refugees to Shiraz have been the availability of work (particularly in the construction industry) and the presence of familial networks. 'A Hazara man from a village near ours [in Afghanistan] said there would be work for [my husband] in a textile [dyeing] factory just outside the city,' Fahima explains, when I ask why she and her husband made the decision to relocate hundreds of kilometres south from their first place of exile just outside the city of Mashhad on the Iran–Afghanistan border. Most of those who had lived elsewhere felt that Shiraz had offered an 'easier life' with particular mention made of the weather, availability of work and housing, relatively low hostility from local residents and comparatively lower levels of restrictions placed on Afghan migrants. As Fahima comments, 'We had heard from other Afghans that life here was good, that the weather was pleasant and the people welcoming.' Farahnaz likewise notes, 'they [Iranians] say that Shiraz is more relaxed [than other cities in Iran] and that *Shirazi* are more laid back [than other Iranians]. I think for the most part they just want to get on with their own lives and that is good for us [Afghans]. That is what we want too.'

These comments, and similar, were almost invariably clarified by statements to the effect that things have changed, that life in Shiraz has become increasingly difficult, that local hostility has risen and that employment and housing are today more limited than in the past. The Sharifi family settled in the Fars province in the mid-1980s. Now, after more than two decades of calling Shiraz home they have decided to depart Iran. Agha-ye Sharifi contrasts the early period of their exile with recent policy and societal shifts that have impacted Afghan refugees in Iran, ‘When we came to Shiraz [in 1992] we had no trouble finding a place to live, work, school [for our daughters]. Only recently it has become much harder. They are deporting Afghans and suddenly we are strangers here and treated with suspicion.’

Mohammad, a young Afghan man, who had recently been forcibly returned from Tehran to Shiraz, where his residency permit had been issued, felt that life in the capital city—with its much higher Afghan population and more diverse employment opportunities—was preferable to life in Shiraz.

There [in Tehran] I could just hide in the crowd. Nobody notices you. Nobody cares if you’re Afghan or Turk or whatever. I had a good job with a tailor and I was earning enough money to send back home [to Shiraz] and to enjoy life. If it wasn’t for the fear [of being caught] it would have been perfect. Here I’m stuck at home with no job, no hope. If I go outside people say ‘Afghan, Afghan’ to me. Just two weeks ago I was hit in the street. Beaten up for no reason. Beaten up just because I am from Afghanistan.

Iranians in Shiraz tend to self-identify as hospitable, laid-back and friendly, if not at a personal level then in terms of stereotypical characteristics of the city’s residents. Interestingly, these traits were often described as simultaneously ‘typically Iranian’ and rarely found in other parts of Iran. Furthermore, a sense of nostalgia was evoked as

Iranians looked back and lamented the way in which changing demographics had altered the imagined character of the city and its people.

‘We *Shirazi* have a reputation for being...not lazy. What would you say? Laid back.’ I am seated in a teashop that is located within the grounds of the Saadi mausoleum, with a group of students from Shiraz University. Maryam nods, agreeing with Hana’s assessment and adds, ‘Iranians are hospitable, but none more so than us *Shirazi*. I mean’ she clarifies, ‘real *Shirazi*. Not these country bumpkins who arrived last week and think they can call themselves *Shirazi*.’

This self-identification frequently jars with overt hostility towards Afghan refugees. Hana opines that in the post-Taliban era refugees remaining in Iran ought to return (or be returned) to Afghanistan. ‘Our government invited these people in to make a point to the Russians. Now the Russians are gone and we’re stuck with three million Afghans. Criminals, drug dealers, poor and diseased. I say our generosity has been taken advantage of.’

Amongst Iranians who self-identify as *Shirazi*—a term obliquely suggesting Persian ethnicity and denoting, not someone who is merely resident in Shiraz but, someone who perceives themselves as ‘rooted’ in place through substantial ties to the city that stretch through space and time—the presence of both rural migrants and Afghans in the city was, without fail, cited as one of the most pressing problems facing Shiraz today. Ahmed, a Shiraz-based researcher, has followed urbanisation trends in the Fars province over a period of decades, ‘The villages have emptied and millions of people have flooded into Shiraz. Not just Iranians either, but Afghans and others. This is an old city and it wasn’t

made for such a population. You can see the problems this is causing—traffic, pollution, over-crowding.’

While mention is made of increased pressure on urban services and facilities, environmental degradation and various problems associated with poverty and overcrowding, deeper seated anxieties are almost invariably expressed.

Ali Reza, a shopkeeper in a leafy middle-class suburb, laments the changes that migration has wrought on the city he was born in:

Shiraz is not like Shiraz anymore. It used to be a beautiful city but now it has become like an overgrown village. We have Turkmen, Lor. But where can you find real *Shirazi*? Real Persians? There are parts of Shiraz that resemble downtown Kabul. Just Afghans. It’s not safe to go there. I’m *Shirazi* and there are parts of my city I can’t visit.

Anxieties often revolved around issues of incivility and the diluting effect of (poor) rural migrants on the cosmopolitan nature of an imagined ‘real’ Shiraz. In addition, Afghan migrants are perceived as physically and culturally threatening. Ultimately, the presence of Afghans in the city is deemed to indicate a potential loss of Iranian cultural identity.

Such fears were further entangled with a narrative about high birth rates in the Afghan community. Ali Reza continues, ‘Afghans come here and you see how it is—they have five, six, seven children. I don’t have a problem with Afghans and I think we have a duty to help our brothers but we don’t want to turn Iran into Afghanistan. And, frankly, that’s what’s happening.’

Iran’s sharply falling fertility rate has become an issue of popular concern, as the Iranian government seeks policy solutions in order to reverse the acclaimed successes of its earlier focus on population control. Access to contraceptives and reproductive health education has been wound back and policies that will impact women’s employment and

education, both of which have been determining factors in sharp fertility decline, have been introduced by parliament (Larsen 2014). At the same time, the presence of Afghan migrants in the country has been quite cynically utilised by sections of the government and media in order to frame childbirth as an act of patriotism. In this discourse it is Iranian culture that is threatened by slowed population growth. In a reversal of earlier advertising campaigns in which small families were promoted as 'Islamically acceptable' and leading to a better quality of life for all, today large families are being discursively constructed as an expression of 'Iranian-Islamic culture,' against the dual corrupting forces of external 'Western' (i.e. non-Islamic) and internal non-Iranian elements.

For Afghan residents of the city anxieties assume a different shape. Everyday fears dominate, while the aching uncertainty of a life lived in limbo forms a context in which small anxieties are multiplied and magnified. Despite having obtained a stable and relatively well-paid position as a construction foreman and being granted consecutive work visas enabling him to remain in Iran, Abdul Golhi has spent the past twenty years in a state of constant expectation of being summarily deported back to Afghanistan, 'I am always looking over my shoulder. We all know people who have been sent back. Even those with all their papers in order. I could lose my job tomorrow and then what? I have no rights here. My children will end up on the street or worse.'

Afghan parents struggle to balance the desire to provide their children with a semblance of ordinary life and a modicum of freedom, with fear that they will become the target of neighbourhood ire.

When a branch from the [neighbour's] persimmon tree was broken off they came knocking on our door threatening us, accusing our children. Somebody even claimed to have seen them attacking it, which just wasn't

true. We try to keep them inside, but it's hard. They're boys. They need to run around.

Following this incident and struggling to keep their children occupied in the confines of a one-bedroom home, Abdul Golhi joined together with several other Afghan fathers in the Sadra region—a newly established satellite town to the north of Shiraz—in order to organise Quranic classes. Mullah Azami was born in Afghanistan's Ghazni province and trained in Iran's seminary city of Qom. He accepts a small stipend in order to provide religious instruction. Three afternoons a week, Abdul Golhi escorts up to fifteen boys to classes held in a gloomy basement. Eventually, when the building it is housed in is completed, this will become an underground garage, but for now the owner is happy to collect rent on the otherwise unused space. It is hardly an ideal classroom but the students seem unconcerned by the rudimentary surrounds. Somebody has taped a print of the Imam Reza shrine on the rough surface of the wall and a colourful carpet has been laid over the cement floor. 'One day we would like a proper classroom. Chairs and desks. Maybe we will run a school for the boys.' Mullah Azami breaks in, smiling a gentle reproach to Abdul Golhi, 'And for the girls, too. We're not in Afghanistan anymore.'

Most Afghans describe ways in which they seek to modify their behaviour, in an almost invariably futile attempt to make their 'Afghan-ness' less offensive. These techniques revolve around avoiding confrontation and limiting movement within a small radius of which home forms the centre. Despite having lived most of her life in Iran, Razieh rarely ventures beyond her immediate neighbourhood, 'I will go to the mosque and back and, if [my son] Naghib has already left [for school], to the bread shop, but it makes me nervous and I always feel I must apologise for being here—for being an Afghan woman here in Iran.'

Anthropology and refugees

Recent scholarship has come to view movement as one of the dominant traits of contemporary social life (see Bauman 2000; Robertson, G et al. 1994; Urry 2012). Processes and practices of transnationalism acquire, in at least some of this scholarship, a celebratory tone (see for example Ong 1999; Portes, Escobar & Radford 2007). As Philip Crang, Claire Dwyer and Peter Jackson (2003, p. 442) point out there is an 'assumption that the politics of transnationalism are necessarily progressive.' The migrant, crossing borders with ease and uniquely imbued with the capacity to appropriate and shed identities at will, becomes the epitome of the modern. Within this account of the nomadic normal, refugees inhabit an occasionally contradictory space. On the one hand a refugee can be thought of as the model *par excellence* of unencumbered humanity; on the other, he or she is peculiarly subject to the bordering regimes of states.

One of the early and enduring critiques of transnationalism has been its failure to robustly engage with the way in which differences of wealth, class, gender, race and citizenship make for vastly divergent experiences of movement. As Carole Fabricant (1998, p. 26) cogently argues, transnational theories must necessarily address the 'yawning gulf separating those privileged groups apparently able to flit around the world at will from the much larger group of migrants threatened with incarceration.' Likewise, Nina Glick-Schiller (1997) attempts to reign in some of the more enthusiastic scholars of transnationalism with her sobering reminder that even as borders might be recognised as 'cultural constructions' they are 'constructions that are backed by force of law, economic and political power, and regulating and regularizing institutions.' And that

'[w]hat they come to mean and how they are experienced, crossed or imagined are products of particular histories, times, and places' (Glick-Schiller 1997, p. 159).

Borders are fundamental to Derrida's construction of *hostipitality*. It is borders that make possible the condition of hospitality at the scale of the nation, for without the nation—a necessarily bounded object—there can be no host and no hospitality. At the same time borders speak to the violence of 'filtering, choosing, and...excluding' (Derrida 2000b, p. 55). Afghan refugees in Iran are subject to forces of both mobility and immobility. Mobility is thought to define refugees and yet, on a global scale, immobility is as much a feature of refugee life. Systems of citizenship, the granting and withholding of visas, the erecting of physical barriers such as walls and fences and a startling proliferation of immigration prisons place multiple constraints on refugee movement. The number of Afghans detained as a result of their residency or migratory status is dwarfed by the number held amongst the general prison population of Iran. However, restricted movement is a common experience for almost all Afghans residing in Iran—not only for those who are being held in prisons or in immigration detention, but also for those who are ostensibly free. Having crossed the border between Afghanistan and Iran (often multiple times), the combined factors of poverty, social marginalisation and a lack of access to citizenship, along with the implementation of Afghan-free zones at a provincial and municipal level conspire to fix Afghan refugees in place.

This fixing of Afghans in place can be understood in the context of a deportation regime that forms the underpinning logic of the Iranian government's treatment of Afghans. Nicholas De Genova has developed the notion of the deportation regime, to describe the way in which states invest in creating and maintaining a disposable migrant labour force (see De Genova 2002; De Genova & Peutz 2010). Monsutti (2005, p. 129) describes

a disorientating situation of hospitality/hostility towards Afghan migrants: a 'game of cat and mouse' in which the Iranian government attempts to balance the need for a steady supply of cheap Afghan labour, against the impulse to 'discourage integration and long-term residence.'

As moving populations have come to be recognised as legitimate subjects of anthropological study the notion that refugees are essentially rootless—and subsequently devoid of culture—has been emphatically discredited and place has emerged as a central concern (see Kibreab 1999; Malkki 1992, 1995; Stepputat 1994). Where refugees have been popularly understood as an aberration, existing outside what Malkki (1995) nominates 'the national order of things,' the many multiple ways in which displacement acts to 'make place' has remained hidden. Shining a light on hidden places has exposed the way in which refugees actively negotiate the simultaneous here and there of existence, piecing together a place for self from whatever is available to the project. Yet many accounts of refugees in (and out of) place reproduce the same flaws that have dogged transnational studies—namely a failure to account for the way in which the power to make place is unevenly distributed.

A transnational perspective does not take as a natural given the attachment of people to particular places and territories. 'It must now be more difficult than ever, or at least more unreasonable' writes anthropologist Ulf Hannerz (1992, p. 218), 'to see the world...as a cultural mosaic, of separate pieces with hard, well-defined edges.' Yet it is precisely, I argue, this 'unreasonable' view of the world that continues to prevail in the domain of everyday life. When, in 1983, Ernest Gellner published his theory of nationalism he drew on the imagery of two successive ethnographic maps in order to illustrate a shift from a riotous Kokoschka to an ordered Modigliani. Transnational

theorists have taken issue with this notion of linear progression towards fixed borders (Crang et al. 2003; Sheller & Urry 2006; Wilkinson 2005). Extending Gellner's (1983) art metaphor Ulf Hannerz (1996, p. 78) opines, 'Kokoschka is back, and it seems that he is taking over rather more of the canvas.' By way of contrast, Malkki (1992) suggests that there is in fact an ongoing persistence to the Modigliani map in the way that we imagine and practice being in the world. Even as people are shaken free of their moorings and borders crumble beneath the weight of sustained movement (or are shown to be less rigid than we might once have taken them to be), nation-states remain a conceptually powerful and deeply territorialising principle of organisation.

Refugees lays bare the simultaneous processes of liquefying and solidifying that occur at, and within, border spaces. Afghan refugees, in movement, dissolve the politico-legal barrier that exists between Iran and Afghanistan as a cartographic reality, At the same time, they are complicit in the creation of new, mobile borders, producing and reproducing the Iranian nation in the context of everyday interactions with Iranian citizens.

In thinking about global movements of refugees Gellner's (1983) imagery of the ethnographic map is perhaps best employed by considering the two maps—or two artworks—existing not successively but rather laid on top of each other and viewed simultaneously. On the one hand it is necessary to recognise the blurred edges, to bring to the forefront of our thinking and our scholarship questions of movement, flows and liquidity, on the other hand, we must account for the sustained belief in a coincidence of nations and states. In this thesis I am straddling both of these ideas, asking what happens when the messy reality of Afghan migration bumps up against the powerful belief in a naturally existing Iranian nation.

Chapter Three: Hospitality and Iranian Identity

Hospitality, Iranian style

Marjan meets us on the main road, anxiously eager that we locate the correct side street: a crooked laneway running narrowly between high brick walls in which a series of imposing doors face each other barely more than a metre apart. From the time we first met, in late March, in the home of a mutual friend, Marjan had enthusiastically embraced the ideas around my research that, at that early stage, were still in nascent form. On that first occasion Marjan had reminisced in length about an Afghan family that had lived in the neighbourhood where she grew up. It was, however, my thinking around Iranian hospitality that really fired her imagination. She had made me promise, then, that I would visit her home so she could show me ‘true Iranian hospitality.’ Now, almost two months later I am fulfilling that promise.

Jasmine creeps over one wall, a fragrant cascade of white blossoms and glossy leaves. Around a corner the street comes to an abrupt end at a blue painted door. Marjan indicates the place where a metal doorknob has been wrenched off, leaving twisted screws protruding threateningly at eye height. Apocryphal rumours abound as to the involvement of an Afghan mafia in the lucrative scrap metal trade. Stolen fixtures, hazardously gaping manholes and the periodic blackouts that plunge parts of the city into darkness are attributed to the international market in copper-coated inductors and cast iron.

Marjan rings the bell and the door clicks open softly, revealing a tiled courtyard, into which she ushers us, insisting that her guests’ first step across the threshold and urging us to ‘Please come in.’

Marjan's husband, Adham, and their five-year-old son, Arya greet us at the front door, 'You are very welcome. You have troubled yourself to visit us.' Shoes are left on the doorstep and slippers in the correct size are produced from a selection within a cupboard at the entrance. Inside the house it is cool and the sunlight that shines through the barred windows is dappled, filtered through the leafy branches of fruit trees that crowd with surprising density in the pocket-sized garden. A low coffee table is spread with an array of fruit, pastries, nuts and chocolates. The whole scene exudes a kind of artful effortlessness. You can't help but feel that were you to turn up on the doorstep unexpected you would be just as welcome, that the same spread of food would be there on the table waiting for you. On another occasion Adham puts words to this sense of ready hospitality, 'In Iran, a good host is always prepared to receive guests. Even unannounced guests.'

After polite greetings, hand shaking, cheek kissing and the asking after various absent family members, we are urged to sit. As I perch awkwardly on the edge of an elaborate settee it occurs to me that I have yet to come across a truly comfortable chair in any Iranian house I have visited. Alone or in the easy presence of family and close friends most Iranians will sit on the floor. Indeed, almost all activities within the home—from sleeping to food preparation—take place at floor level, and rugs, often room-sized, are the most important furnishing an Iranian will purchase for their home. However, the settee and other little-utilised items of furniture, have become vital middle-class accretions, symbols not merely of financial capacity but, more importantly, of the ease with which an individual is able to appropriate elements of a Western lifestyle. I can't help but see this as part of the performance of hospitality in which Iranians engage, that which Andrew Shryock (2012, p. S24) calls the 'stagecraft' and 'assemblages' that

form such a vital element of the management of hospitable relations. The contemporary performance of hospitality within the domestic sphere departs from earlier forms of traditional architecture in which houses were constructed around particular ideals of hospitality and norms of host-guest relations (see Tehrani & Duffy 2015).

In this chapter I explore the way in which hospitality emerges out of and threads its way through diverse narratives of Iranian identity. I call on Derrida's formulation of *hostipitality* in order to investigate the way in which a politics of hospitality is tied up with the politics of nationalism in Iran, ultimately exposing tensions and contradictions within the construction of Iranian national selfhood. I identify three different narratives of national identity: an Islamic narrative, a historic narrative and a literary narrative. Through each of these narratives, hospitality acts as a common thread, even as it manifests itself in distinct ways. I visit Marjan and Adham in order to begin to understand how Iranians think about hospitality and how they construct themselves as hospitable. At the same I have inserted myself at the nexus of hospitality—no longer a mere observer I am now a full participant as a guest of my Iranian host.

Glasses of iced drink—a sweet syrupy concoction—are produced from a hidden kitchen and placed before us on individual tables. Reassurances as to our comfort are sought and we are urged to eat. Any sign of slowing down is met with increasingly forceful reprimands. At one point my own plate is judged inadequately laden and taken from me in order to be piled high with fruit—a tower of apples, peaches, apricots and kiwi fruit, topped with a small green cucumber. Piping hot amber tea is poured from an elaborate teapot and offered along with cinnamon and saffron infused sugar cubes. Half-hearted protests are made and artfully deflected. The first of several small, delicate glasses filled to the brim are drunk. '*Lab riz, lab suz, lab duz,*' somebody muses, invoking the time-

honoured tradition of serving tea precisely brewed, lip burningly hot and filled to the very brim of the glass in which it is served.

The conversation meanders along lightly and it is only as shadows lengthen against the wall and the overhead fluorescent lights are switched on that we begin to steer the conversation with a view to departure. Our intentions are immediately identified and countered by an insistence that we remain for an evening meal.

‘Please, you must remain.’ Marjan is insistent on the point and my partner, Abbas, with practiced ease, is equally insistent in refusing. ‘Thank you. We couldn’t possibly bother you.’

Marjan is quick to counter, ‘What kind of talk is this? You are no bother at all. We are happy to be at your service.’ Adham nods in agreement and I see an opportunity for me to jump into the conversation, ‘No, no we must go. The children are tired.’

‘It’s just one night, not a thousand.’ Marjan smiles expansively and adds, ‘We would love to spend more time in your company.’

The vehement protestation that this is not mere politeness (*‘taarofnist’*) and that a meal has already been prepared in the expectation that we would stay, finally convinces us. The ritualised battle of wills has been won by our hosts and we accept defeat. With dinner still several hours away we all move outside to enjoy the cooler evening air. Across the neighbourhood children can be heard as windows are opened to catch whatever breath of breeze might make its way down from the mountains. A television blares briefly, a snatch of song from a popular LA-based Iranian singer, evidence of the ubiquitous satellite dish, formally outlawed and periodically subject to crackdowns and confiscations. Seated on cushions and leaning back against the still-warm bricks of the

wall that divides my hosts' home from their neighbours, I comment on the extraordinary hospitality I have experienced over several visits to Iran and my relative ineptitude when it comes to the art of *taarof*.

'Hospitality is not merely something we do,' Marjan explains, plying me with further glasses of sweet fragrant tea and delicate biscuits that melt away on the tongue, leaving behind the clean taste of cardamom—a lingering memory of these summer evenings. 'It's what we are. Iranians *are* hospitable.' In a cage above us, hanging in the lowest branches of an orange tree, a canary trills and warbles, an endless soundtrack to a conversation about Iranian identity that will loop and trace its way through time and space, across centuries of Iranian history and months of fieldwork.

Hospitality is a recurrent motif in descriptive works of Iran and Iranians (see for example Batmanglij 2005; di Cintio 2010; Molavi 2005). I was further to discover that it is a common theme in representations of Iranian selfhood. Marvin Zonis (1971, p. 210) identifies hospitality as a central feature of the 'ritualistic code of interpersonal behaviour' that functioned amongst the pre-revolutionary political elite of Iran. Twenty percent of the participants in his study volunteered hospitality as an 'outstanding characteristic' of 'Persians as a people' (i.e. people of Iranian nationality) and Zonis notes that rules of hospitality function across all social classes (ibid). Marjan's statement to the effect that hospitality is an integral element of the Iranian character points to hospitality's function as something of an empty signifier. The object to which hospitality is directed remains almost always ill-defined and uncertain. Indeed, hospitality as a character trait is only very rarely imagined to have any sort of outward working. It could be reasonably argued that, in the hospitality nexus, Afghans in Iran are once again rendered invisible.

Reading Derrida in the field

How do I go about reading Derrida in Shiraz? What meaning does Derrida have when I open a well-thumbed volume of *Of Hospitality* or *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas* in a small room, in a house in which I am a guest, in a strange city? Does meaning shift and take on new form in interviews with Afghan refugees, who claim a right to hospitality, drawing not on Derrida but on Khomeini and Islamic principles of charity towards the stranger? What contribution can Derrida make to conversations with Iranians for whom hospitality is identified as a kind of national character trait, even as the presence of Afghan refugees is unashamedly derided? What of a politics of hospitality in a place in which all politics is necessarily conducted in the shadow of a decades-old revolution?

First we must ask a more basic question: what is hospitality? In the asking we are open to the possibility of welcoming strange knowledge. Derrida answers that we 'do not know what hospitality is' (2000a, p. 6). The implication being that hospitality is unknowable,

[N]ot because the idea is built around a difficult conceptual riddle, but because, in the end, hospitality is not a matter of objective knowledge, but belongs to another order altogether, beyond knowledge, an enigmatic 'experience' in which I set out for the stranger, for the other, for the unknown, where I cannot go (Derrida & Caputo 1997, p. 112).

Hospitality is, first and foremost an experience, what Anne Dufourmantelle (2013, p. 13) calls a 'pure event.' We can only begin to grasp hospitality phenomenologically, as we enact it and yet, in the moment of enactment, hospitality eludes us. Absolute hospitality is 'inconceivable and incomprehensible' (Derrida & Anidjar 2002, p. 362). Derrida points to an irreconcilable tension between unconditional hospitality and the conditions

necessarily imposed upon the act of hospitality 'These two regimes of law, of *the* law and the laws are both contradictory, antinomic *and* inseparable' (Derrida 2000b, pp. 79–80).

The host, whom Derrida conceives of as the master of the home, can make no demands. The law of hospitality is to 'give the new arrival all of one's home and oneself, to give him or her one's own, our own, without asking a name, or compensation, or the fulfilment of even the smallest condition' (Derrida 2000b, p. 77). The master forsakes his mastery of the home and renounces the very sovereignty that allows him to say 'This is my home. Welcome.' Derrida argues that there can be no hospitality 'without sovereignty of oneself over one's home, but since there is also no hospitality without finitude, sovereignty can only be exercised by filtering...and doing violence' (Derrida 2000b, p. 55). Violence is integral to Derridean notions of hospitality and is clearly on display when hospitality is considered at the level of the state. It is the state that establishes the rules through which people are divided into hosts and guests, residents and refugees, citizens and foreigners. The state identifies 'and therefore, it can include or exclude whosoever it chooses based on the laws, which it has created' (Westmoreland 2008, p. 2). For Derrida the scale at which hospitality is enacted shifts between the home and the state, with the former functioning sometimes as an example and sometimes as an allegory. Across numerous essays, conversations and lectures, Derrida shines a light on the relationship between stranger and host in the context of immigration, integration and cosmopolitanism.

Juxtaposing Iranian hospitality with Derridean hospitality should not imply that the two are interchangeable or that Derrida's philosophy can be applied wholesale to the specific ethnographic circumstances in which I write, but rather that one can illuminate

the other. Derrida's ethical position was developed against a backdrop of fractious politics in France and in the context of his own sense of being '*un petit Juif noir et très arabe*' (a little black and very Arab Jew) (Anidjar 2002, p. 33). His notion of a radically realised 'just hospitality' spoke pertinently to the relationship between immigrants and the French state in the early- to mid-1990s. However, the utility of hospitality as a theoretical concept has seen Derrida's formulation pressed into ever-widening service (see for example Brun 2001; McNaughton 2006; Shryock 2004; Utley & Lymer 2012; Worth 2006). Hospitality has been most frequently invoked in discussions around immigration, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, acting as both 'a potent political imperative and...a useful critical tool to think with' (Bell 2007, p. 10). Thinking hospitality in the Iranian space provides an opportunity for new ways of understanding the relationship between citizens and refugees in a context that has, to now, been little explored.

During my fieldwork I was both a recipient of and witness to hospitality in its various iterations—a participant observer, if you like. As I lived hospitality, Derrida became a kind of touchstone to which I could periodically return in order to clarify my thinking on the topic.

For Derrida hospitality, like democracy, is always 'to come.' Riven by internal contradictions hospitality can never be realised. Indeed, whenever we draw close to hospitality it collapses in on itself. However, the impossibility of hospitality is no reason to turn away from it, for '[h]ospitality can only take place beyond hospitality, in deciding to let it come, overcoming the hospitality that paralyzes itself on the threshold which it is' (Derrida 2000a, p. 14). Here we begin to see hospitality as a political imperative. It is simultaneously impossible and required of us, existing in both its conditionality and its

unconditionality. As Peggy Kamuf (2006, p. 112) argues, 'To think the unconditionality of such concepts is not at all to remove thought from the practical experiences we wish to call hospitality, gift, forgiveness, or justice.' Distinguishing hospitality-as-ethics or hospitality-as-culture from a politics of hospitality, Derrida seems to imply that there is a conflict between the two. However, rather than understanding the *laws* of hospitality—those conditional rights, obligations and norms of behaviour—as necessarily transgressive of the greater (unconditional and unlimited) *law* of hospitality, it may be more helpful to think of the two as complementary. Indeed, as Derrida develops his thinking around hospitality he illuminates the way in which the *laws* of hospitality give concrete reality to the *law* of hospitality.

Derrida identifies a link between nationalism—in its ethnocentric or even xenophobic iteration—and hospitality, pointing to the 'privatising and even familialist reaction' to a felt violation of the 'home.' 'The perversion and pervertibility of this law [of hospitality]...is that one can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect or claim to protect one's own hospitality' (Derrida 2000b, p. 53). Indeed, hospitality is always shadowed by the potential to turn from 'a principle of openness to the other, into a principle of ethnic closure upon the self' (Candea 2012, p. 541). In Iran the politics of hospitality are tied up with the politics of nationalism. Hospitality exposes tensions and contradictions within the construction of Iranian national selfhood. On the one hand there are ideals of hospitality that resonate with Derridean notions of just hospitality and are incorporated into ideas about what it means to be Iranian, while on the other there is a highly conditional hospitality that is encapsulated in nation-making policies and practices towards the Afghan *Other*. If we understand ourselves primarily in relation

to others then the Afghan refugee acts as an *Other* to the Iranian citizen, allowing the citizen to see, perhaps even to make, themselves.

Derrida draws on diverse examples, 'from characters of fiction to contemporary political situations, from ancient Greece to the Middle East, from monotheisms to immigration policies' in order to illustrate the relationship between guest and host (Westmoreland 2008, p. 4). In doing so he locates hospitality as a universal concept existing outside of, although not separate from, culture. 'Hospitality,' Derrida argues, 'is culture itself and not simply one ethic among others' (Derrida 2001, p. 16). Hospitality as culture would, at the very least, appear to disallow ethnographic specificity. Derrida acknowledges this in a later interview, prefacing an explanation of the double law of hospitality by stating, '[d]oubtless, all ethics of hospitality are not the same, but there is no culture or social bond without a principle of hospitality' (Derrida 2005, p. 6). Not only are the laws of hospitality variously applied and experienced through specific policies and practices but the law of hospitality has diverse iterations and is understood in terms of particular cultural practices, beliefs and mythologies.

Hospitality and the imagined nation

The notion of a distinct Iranian hospitality threads its way through various iterations of national identity, highlighting both commonalities and divergences in the narratives that at once bind Iranians to each other and to Iran-space and, at the same time, construct Afghans as *Other* and outside. The Constitutional Revolution, coming at the crumbling end of the Qajar period (1796–1925), is often singled out as the moment at which the idea of Iran coalesced and nationalism emerged as a force within the arena of Iranian

politics (see Cottam 1964; Katouzian 1979; Tavakoli-Targhi 1990). In the intervening years different actors have sought to harness the idea of the nation to diverse ideological ends, such that to the present-day, Iranian nationalism continues to be variously constructed and bitterly contested (see Holliday 2011; Mozaffari 2014). Of these various constructions most commentators identify two major strands to Iranian national identity: a Perso-Iranian strand (that I further divide into a historical narrative and a literary or poetic narrative) and an Islamic strand.

Historically prominent is a nationalist narrative that draws, variously, on Iran's ancient past—represented in archaeological artefacts of the Achaemenid era—and its rich literary history, encapsulated in the poetry of Hafez and Saadi. This nationalist narrative is almost entirely 'Persian' in its construction (Saleh & Worrall 2014). Under the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi the idea of Persian culture came to be institutionalised and heavily circumscribed. *Farhang* (culture) was increasingly constructed as a distinct domain of human experience. Iran's pre-Islamic (and para-Islamic) history was glorified and became a 'normative ideal cultivated through the disciplining of bodies and minds' (Manoukian 2012, p. 24). As such, alternative markers of Iranian-ness were violently suppressed and the people of Iran were forced to adhere to a vision of national identity that celebrated a heavily mythologised 'Aryan' and 'Persian' past, even as it embraced the trappings of a modern future. In this construction of 'Persian-supremacy' Iran came to be imaginatively linked to Europe and its perceived technological, military, economic and cultural successes.

With the ascension of Mohammad Reza Shah to the throne in 1941, the elevation of Iran's Achaemenid history within a state-sanctioned narrative of identity continued. From the outset the Shah sought to present himself as heir and successor to the throne

of Cyrus. The Iranian kings of the Islamic era had always previously nurtured links with the clergy. Indeed, the strength of the throne rested, in part, on the perception of the king as the upholder of *sharia* and defender of Islam. But in the context of increasingly tense relations with the clergy, amongst whom Khomeini was emerging as something of a leading figure, Mohammad Reza Shah (1941–1979) sought alternative sources of legitimacy in Iran’s Achaemenid history and the literary legacy of classical Persian poetry (see Keddie & Richard 2006; Saikal 2009).

Existing in tension with this notion of Iranian identity (*Iraniyat*) is a narrative of *Islamiyat*—or Islamic identity—which reached its apogee with the revolutionary events of the late 1970s and continued to dominate throughout the Khomeini decade (Holliday 2011). In some accounts *Islamiyat* comprises an anti-nationalist trend and therefore can be understood as an absence or suppression of Iranian national-identity in the context of Khomeini’s elevation of the *ummah* and his vision of exporting the revolution across borders (Ahmadi, H 2005). In this particular formulation nationalism is seen to re-emerge in the post-Khomeini era, breaking free from the shackles of Islamism. The ‘second-coming’ of nationalism is sometimes traced precisely to then president Rafsanjani’s visit to the ruins of Persepolis in April 1991 (see Adelkhah 2016) or, earlier, to the unsatisfactory peace made with Iraq in August 1988, after eight protracted years of bloody warfare, or the death of Khomeini in June 1989 and the emergence of a pragmatic conservatism that saw the instigation of ‘a process of “rationalization” of the regime’ (Moslem 2002, p. 143).

This notion that there are two distinct and mutually exclusive forms of nationalism acts to reinforce fault lines within Iranian society, separating out supporters of the theocratic regime from its detractors, for instance, or the politically conservative from the

reformist or for that matter, urban from rural, and post-revolutionary generations from pre-revolutionary. A more nuanced approach recognises the ongoing salience of the nation to the Iranian imagination even as Islam has variously moved to, and receded from, the forefront of a discourse of national identity.

For all Khomeini's professed distrust of nationalism (see Holliday 2011), the revolution was an *Iranian* Revolution before it was an *Islamic* Revolution and the Perso-Iranian character of post-revolutionary Iran remained prominent, even as powerful political actors sought to downplay its significance *vis-à-vis* a universalist Islam.

In the decade or so prior to the revolution new forms of Shia nationalism came to be articulated. Islamic mythologies were tightly woven into the revolutionary story that Iranians told (and continue to tell) themselves *about* themselves. Influential thinkers, such as Ali Shariati (1933–1977), laid the groundwork for the revolution, calling for the nation's 'cultural, moral, and administrative independence' (Paşaoğlu 2013, p. 114). For Shariati what was needed was not only a social revolution but, simultaneously, a national revolution that would 'end all forms of imperial domination and would [re]vitalize...the country's culture, heritage and national identity' (Abrahamian 1988, p. 292). The idea of the nation promoted by Shariati and his peers answered back to the Pahlavi construct of identity that drew on Persian history and myth in order to validate the dictatorship of the monarch.

Religion was not, of course, an entirely novel source of identity formation in Iran. Shiism had been integral to the project of constructing a cohesive identity against the external Sunni *Other* since as early as the sixteenth century, when it became the official state religion of Safavid Persia (1501–1736). Nor, in the revolutionary period, did it entirely

displace other ways of thinking about the Iranian self. Haggay Ram (1997) points to continuities between pre- and post-revolutionary Iran in terms of national identity construction by respective political elites.

Pointing to the way in which these different narratives function in contemporary Iran is not to imply that they are mutually exclusive. Any individual Iranian may call on one or more of these narratives at any particular time. Indeed, the Iranian state makes use of and prioritises different narratives of nationalism in various circumstances and for diverse purposes. In this thesis I am perhaps less concerned with divergences between narratives as I am with seeking out commonalities and recurrent themes. In particular, I am interested in how hospitality surfaces and resurfaces in Islamic, historical and literary narratives of Iranian selfhood.

Islamic hospitality in the Iranian context

For Derrida hospitality is an act of religion and the texts and traditions of the Abrahamic faiths serve both as allegories and explanatory systems. Derrida draws on a broad range of examples from Islamic history and from cultural practices of the Middle East and North Africa. Over a two-decade period of engaging with the topic of hospitality, he appears to have oscillated between an exaggerated insistence on Islam's individuality and a tendency to elide Islam with Judaism and/or Christianity as part of an indivisible Abrahamic tradition. Ian Almond (2007) interprets this as a form of neo-Orientalism. In studies of the Middle East in general and Iran in particular hospitality has been a recurrent trope, simultaneously drawing from and feeding into stereotypes about Muslims. Here, I would point to Shryock's contribution in identifying a shared language

of hospitality. Shryock argues, in the case of the Balga Bedouin in modern-day Jordan, that the tendency to paint Middle Eastern hospitality as distinctive, points not so much to Orientalist sensibilities and a “taste for the exotic”, than to the existence of a “zone of intersecting ethical traditions” and a “shared language” of hospitality across and between cultures (Shryock 2012, p. S21). On this basis I would be inclined to view as mutually intelligible the moral languages that underpin both Derridean and Iranian hospitality.

Derrida, it should be noted, almost invariably elides ethnographic nuance in favour of broad brushstrokes and, in doing so, fails to attend to the way in which hospitality might be variously interpreted and practised within an overarching Islamic tradition, or the degree to which the hospitalities of Muslims are or are not engaged with religion. By reading Derrida in the field, I am hoping to bring some of this complexity to bear on Derridean notions of Abrahamic hospitality.

The story of Abraham functions as the cornerstone of Derridean hospitality and the figure of Abraham stands apart as ‘a kind of saint of hospitality’ (Derrida & Anidjar 2002, p. 369). Abraham blurs the categories of host and guest. As a sojourner and stranger in the land, Abraham is at once guest and host, welcoming the divine and being utterly transformed by this encounter. ‘This is...hospitality *par excellence* in which the visitor radically overwhelms the self of the “visited” and the *chez-soi* of the *hôte*’ (Anidjar 2002, p. 372). The story of Abraham places hospitality at the centre of faith (in the abstract), as well as forming a foundational element of those faiths (in the concrete) that recognise Abraham. ‘The origins of faith’ Theodore Jennings (2006, p. 114) argues via a reading of the New Testament, ‘is the scene of hospitality in which the *Other* is welcomed, trusted and relied on.’

Kevin O’Gorman (2007) asserts that Ibrahim (Abraham), is the paradigmatic host of Islamic thought. Drawing on travelogue narratives dating back to the nineteenth century, O’Gorman (2007, p. 31) states that it is the sharing of food that binds host and guest and that in Iran ‘even today, this hospitable relationship is established through the sharing of bread and salt, and it lasts for two days and the intervening night, traditionally referred to as three days.’ This painfully Orientalist rendering of practices of hospitality in Iran fails to consider spatial and temporal elements of Islam and the ways in which religion is (or is not) integrated into everyday life. In other words, Islam is being perceived as timeless and universal and the Quran is being treated as a direct model for contemporary life. Other scholars have sought to develop a more prescriptive sense of Islamic hospitality, drawing on religious texts to argue that Islam involves an obligation to welcome guests, encompassing the requirement to extend asylum and protection to any who seek it (see Elmadmad 2008; Muzaffar 2001; Nur Manuty 2008, Siddiqui 2015). These renderings of Islamic hospitality could be seen to ‘answer back’ to a populist image of an inherently hostile Islam. At the same time, they contribute to the formation of Muslims as the ‘exotic Other,’ indulging in an excess of both hospitality *and* hostility.

If Abraham forms the central figure of hospitality in the shared Jewish, Christian and Islamic traditions, the *hijrah* (622/1AH) emerges as the defining event of hospitality specific to Islam (Siddiqui 2015). It is an event that, like the story of Abraham, almost perfectly illustrates the ambiguity of host and guest and the capacity of the guest to become the host of the host. Muhammad’s emigration from Mecca to Medina (the latter known at that time as Yathrib), as a result of ongoing persecution towards himself and his followers, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar (Makris 2007, p. 20). The new

Muslims that travelled with Muhammad from Mecca became known as the *mohajerin*, while converts from the Medina region were called *ansar* (meaning helpers). Each *nasir* (helper) accepted a *mohajer* as a 'brother' for whom he was responsible for 'helping him to conquer the feeling of uprootedness' (Mernissi 1991, p. 111). As the people of Medina were incorporated into the new faith community Muhammad and his *mohajerin* became hosts to those who hosted them.

Boris Vukonić (2010) links Islamic hospitality to the *hajj*—that act of pilgrimage to Mecca that forms a fundamental (and, in theory, obligatory) element of Islamic practice—arguing that,

One of the ways for a Muslim to reach *Jannah* (paradise) is "by showing hospitality (to a traveler or a guest)" (Selection of the Prophet's *Hadith*, *hadith* 146). Hadith 146 explicitly states: "There is no wellbeing in a family which does not welcome and treat guests well". It is understandable that special care should be provided to people on the Hajj, but Islam is categorical here: "Hospitality extends for three days. What is beyond that is charity" (Selection of the Prophet's *Hadith*, *hadith* 1000).

(original emphasis)

Hospitality was already a feature of life in the region in which Islam arose. Trade across the ancient Middle East depended on the existence of trading depots—places of neutrality where traders could meet with reduced danger of conflict or hostility. Hospitality towards strangers evolved out of norms of protected trade. Mecca and Medina were, at the advent of Islam, what Bryan Turner (2002, p. 52) calls 'sites of enforced hospitality and cosmopolitanism.' Islam codified aspects of this hospitality and provided a moral and religious imperative.

Khadija Elmadmad (2008, p. 53) argues that 'The Islamic concept of *hijrah* is broader than the [UN Convention] definition of refugees' and that 'in Islam, asylum is a right, a duty, and a general and comprehensive form of protection.' Enshrined in the Quran and

associated religious texts is an imperative for Muslims to flee injustice and unbelief (Masud 1990). This corresponds with the requirement of the host to provide protection (Zaat 2007). Saeher Muzaffar (2001) further points to the role of *zakat* (variously, a compulsory Islamic tax or voluntary alms giving) in financing refugee relief. While globally a majority of refugees originate in and are hosted by Muslim majority states (Al-Jazeera 2016) few such states invoke the *hijrah* principle in developing policy around migration and refugees (Elmadmad 2008).

Asylum policy in Iran has been formulated around an ongoing commitment to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. In the wake of the 1978–79 revolution the newly established Guardian Council confirmed the government’s position on the applicability of various international obligations, even as it sought to rewrite Iran’s legal code in accordance with *sharia* principles (Ebadi 2008). Policies developed in response to the influx of Afghan refugees from the early 1980s onward drew primarily on these international treaties, while simultaneously referencing religious obligations of asylum. A statement by Khomeini on the imperative to export the revolution captures some of this sentiment:

We must strive to export our Revolution throughout the World, and must abandon all idea of not doing so, for not only does Islam refuse to recognise any difference between Muslim countries, it is the champion of all oppressed people (Khomeini 1985, p. 286 [1980]).

Khomeini emphasised the importance of Islam and the *ummah* above and beyond the nation, to the point of (rhetorically) negating national borders. In the context of Afghan migration to Iran this negation of borders was captured in the idea of the open door.

Furthermore, in the early post-revolutionary period much was made of the requirement to help oppressed Muslims wherever they might be. ‘The oppressed [*mostazafin*] of the

world unite,’ became a slogan that universalised the experiences of the revolution. While this sentiment was often explicitly directed towards the Palestinian people, Iran’s own Afghan refugees stood to benefit from such an ideological stance.

Through my own research I found that Afghans in Iran are far more likely than Iranians to cite Islamic principles of asylum. On one occasion, an Iranian-trained Afghan mullah built an argument for asylum and refugee rights firmly based in religious precepts and principles. ‘The holy Prophet, peace be upon him, said that all are as equal as the teeth of a comb. In the *Islamic Republic* this truth is neglected.’

In part this may have represented the greater span in relative religiosity amongst my Iranian informants (from deeply enmeshed in religious belief and practice to avowedly secular and non-believing) as compared to Afghan informants (most of whom considered themselves devout Muslims). Yet it also points to the obvious utility of these principles for Afghan refugees and the corresponding potential for such dictates to shine light on a less than exemplary Islamic hospitality in the present. ‘Here, where we are all Muslims there is [an expectation of] equality that is not matched by reality,’ Shakufeh, a young, Iranian-born Afghan woman explains.

There are further considerations of refugee temporalities, whereby Afghans—endlessly suspended in a state between exile and belonging—remain acutely conscious of the period in which they first entered Iran. ‘I still remember the [atmosphere of] revolution [that prevailed] when we first arrived [in 1981]’ explains Shakufeh’s father ‘At the end of the street [where we lived] was a mural of the Imam [Khomeini] and [the quote] “revolution knows no borders.” It was painted over a few years back.’

Maryam Ala Amjadi (2012) contends that '[f]rom a cultural religious outlook, a guest for Iranians is the "*habib*" [beloved]...of God, bringing *barakat* [blessing] to the home of the host.' Here we see a broader interpretation of the religious, looking beyond the foundational texts of Islam to encapsulate a range of practices and traditions. In a similar vein, Yann Richard records an 'Islamic' tradition ostensibly passed down by 'the Persian poets':

Abraham, not wishing to eat alone, once sought to share his meal with an old man he met in the desert. When the time came to pray, he realized that his guest was a Zoroastrian and wanted to send him away. But an angel restrained Abraham, saying, "God has fed this man for a hundred years, how could you refuse him a meal?" (Richard 1990, p. 30)

Trudy Conway (2009, p. 7) describes hospitality as 'the most esteemed virtue' of Middle Eastern culture and singles out Iran as a 'traditional' society in which travellers 'could always count on a hospitable response to the stranger.' Despite the edge of over-determination present in such formulations, many Iranians readily embrace this notion of the hospitable Muslim. Reza, an Iranian man and self-designated Shia scholar, living in Shiraz, describes hospitality as 'the sign of a true Muslim.' His wife, Zahra, concurs, 'Hospitality lies at the heart of what it means to be Iranian [and] to be Muslim.'

For many Afghan refugees, particularly those of Shia heritage, religion forms a link between past and present, between the 'there' of Afghanistan and the 'here' of Iran. Religious practices are a constant. Indeed, in the context of migration, religion can form the arena in which an individual might reasonably claim simultaneous membership in two polities. Furthermore, mosques and shrines in Iran act as charitable organisations or conduits of aid. Here it is worth pausing for a moment to distinguish charity from hospitality. While the effects may be similar, charity has a distinct impetus and orientation that marks it out from Derridean hospitality. Charity, as an act embedded in

the religious, is concerned with the relationship to a presence that stands outside the charitable transaction. That is to say, if charity has a hospitable element it is not in the relationship between giver and receiver but in the drawing close of the giver to the divine. Rosello (2001) equates charity with a parasitic hospitality—a hospitality gone awry. Whereas hospitality generates a certain degree of symbiosis between host and guest, charity is marked by an extraordinary disparity of power.

The Islamic calendar is interspersed with numerous rituals, rites and celebrations in which food plays a defining role. Events such as *Iftar* (the daily breaking of the fast during Ramadan), *Eid-e Fetr* (the celebratory end of Ramadan), *Eid-e Ghorban* (the day of sacrifice on which meat is shared amongst friends and family and a portion given to the poor) and, *Ashura* (the day of mourning for the Imam Hossein, during which food is distributed on the street as an act of charity), all feature (to a greater or lesser extent) food and involve moments of shared hospitality, revolving around the preparation, distribution and consumption of food.

However, for many Iranians the stranger can be identified not by recourse to Islamic texts and traditions but to a mythology of Persian hospitality rooted in the pre-Islamic past.

Myths of Persian hospitality

In a study of Iranian migrants in Australia Mammad Aidani (2007) explores the way in which Iranians outside their homeland call on mythologies of Persian hospitality in order to frame their experiences of non-belonging. For Aidani's informants, it is not so much hospitality rooted in Islamic norms but rather in Zoroastrian and other pre-Islamic codes

of conduct, which is posited as essentially or fundamentally Iranian. The Biblico-historical narrative of the freeing of the Jews from Babylonian captivity by the Persian King Cyrus, in particular, becomes the touchstone by which hospitality, everywhere and in all times, is measured. In other words, Aidani's informants are calling on a two-thousand-five-hundred-year-old history in order to contrast an ideal of unconditional Persian hospitality with the highly conditional hospitality they experience as migrants and refugees in contemporary Australia and, further, to make particular moral claims about the rights of the stranger or guest.

According to the book of Ezra in the Old Testament, the Persian King Cyrus, having overthrown the Babylonian ruler, proclaimed the release of the Jewish exiles and permitted their return to Judah in order to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. In 539 BCE Cyrus, King of Anshan (located in today's southwest Iran), marched on Babylon and overthrew the Neo-Babylonian throne. In doing so Cyrus firmly established the Achaemenid dynasty and dramatically expanded a fledgling empire that at its peak would stretch from the Balkans in the west to the Indus Valley in the east. On his death Cyrus was buried at Pasargadae, the dynastic capital prior to the establishment of Persepolis seventy kilometres to the south. Today both Persepolis and Pasargadae are World Heritage sites that loom large in the national imagination, speaking to notions of Iranian identity that draw on Iran's pre-Islamic past.

History emerges as an important trope in narratives of Iranian nationalism. There is an extensive mythology that has accrued around the figure of Cyrus the Great (*Kurosh-e bozorg*). Much of this centres on the Cyrus Cylinder, discovered in 1879 in an area that is now in Iraq, and currently held in the British Museum. John Curtis (2013, pp. 85–6) traces the transformation of the Cylinder from a 'portion of a baked clay

cylinder...inscribed in the Babylonian character with an account of his conquest of Babylon, and with the chief events of his reign in that country' to the 'first declaration of human rights.' The Cyrus Cylinder was adopted as a symbol of Iranian nationhood as late as the 1960s, an occurrence that can be understood as part of the broader trend during the Pahlavi era of making the modern nation by emphasising the pre-Islamic past.

In 1968, when opening the first United Nations Conference on Human Rights in Tehran, Mohammad Reza Shah, a man whose own human rights record was already considerably blotted, referred to the Cyrus Cylinder as 'the precursor to the modern Universal Declaration of Human Rights' (in Curtis 2013, p. 87). This association between the Cyrus Cylinder and the modern human rights regime is a fiction that has been widely disseminated and eagerly embraced, both inside Iran and out. Indeed, it continues to resonate to the present day. In her acceptance speech on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003, Shirin Ebadi declared,

I am an Iranian. A descendent of Cyrus The Great. The very emperor who proclaimed at the pinnacle of power 2500 years ago that "... he would not reign over the people if they did not wish it." And [he] promised not to force any person to change his religion and faith and guaranteed freedom for all. The Charter of Cyrus The Great is one of the most important documents that should be studied in the history of human rights (Ebadi 2003).

At a workshop of Afghan and Iranian scholars at a Tehran university in 2014, an otherwise productive session on the rights of refugees in both the local and global contexts was almost derailed when a senior Iranian academic declared that Iran invented human rights—the implication being that any criticism of Iran's present failures in this regard should be curtailed. 'We always come back to this,' a young researcher complains later, after the session has finished and most of the participants dispersed, 'It seems we are blinded by history.'

The Achaemenid dynasty has been one of the few royal lines to be graced with a tinge of legitimacy by the determinedly anti-imperial, anti-monarchical state, with the early rhetoric that declared Cyrus a despot who had ‘blackened the pages of history books’ (Khomeini quoted in Schulz 2008), toned down to the point that Cyrus is now embraced as a heroic—even exemplary—figure of Persian history. The Cyrus Cylinder has been likewise embraced. In 2010 the Cylinder was loaned to Tehran’s National Museum, returning to Iran for the first time since the 1971 celebrations of the ‘2500th anniversary of the founding of the Persian Empire.’ A number of Iranian government officials spoke at the opening of the exhibition extolling the Cylinder as an important symbol of the ongoing Iranian values of ‘freedom and liberty’ and of contemporary significance globally for its promotion of ‘peace, goodness and justice’ (in Curtis 2013, p. 99). The mythology of the Cyrus Cylinder as a precursor to modern human rights was in no way abated by its physical presence in Iran. Indeed, the notion that Iran has a particular role as bearer of whatever message Cyrus might speak to a global audience today has, if anything, been strengthened to a point of apparent unassailability.

This mythology performs two functions—firstly, it posits Iran as part of a Western tradition, acting to orient the Iranian vision away from its eastern neighbours; and secondly, it collapses millennia in order to bring the past into the present, making contemporary Iran appear the natural successor to the Achaemenid Empire and its policies and social norms. It is this latter point that gives coherence to the notion that Iran’s treatment of Afghan refugees is above reproach and, further, makes it possible for Iranian migrants in Melbourne to lament that their “‘authentic” identity and culture is unknown’ and to ‘recount historical narrative to demonstrate that they are a kind and hospitable people’ (Aidani 2007, p. 184). Derrida’s notion of hostility concealed within

hospitality is important here as it draws our attention to how a society can congratulate and praise itself on its inclusive policies towards migrants and refugees even as it puts in place policies and practices that are intensely inhospitable.

The collapsing of human rights with hospitality brings us back to the Derridean notion of hospitality as a mediating structure in the relationship between citizen-hosts and migrant/refugee-guests. In Iran there is no movement of refugee rights coalescing around a particular ideology. Those who draw on the notion of rights in the context of Afghan migrants and refugees do, however, tend to reference international instruments such as the Refugee Convention and Convention on the Rights of the Child, even as they simultaneously turn to Iran's ancient history as a way of validating, and making relevant within the local context, these instruments.

In the office of an NGO that caters to the educational needs of Afghan children and adults in the Fars province, UNICEF posters of large-eyed Afghan children on the streets of the Iranian capital compete for space with familiar images of the winged *faravahar* that is carved in the stone ruins of Persepolis and has become a popular symbol of Iranian nationalism and the Zoroastrian exhortation to 'Good thoughts, good words and good deeds.' The name of the organisation itself references the pre-Islamic Persian Empire and the history shared by Iranians and Afghans prior to the arrival of Islam. The director admits that the name has caused some grief, being both a source of disquiet amongst the more intensely religious local families and a point of contention with authorities who have been eager to limit the organisation's activities.

In describing Zoroastrian codes of hospitality Robert Zaehner (1976) draws attention to the spiritual or religious obligation of hospitality, 'The host or hostess is reminded to:

Make the traveler welcome so that you yourself may receive a heartier welcome in this world and the next' (Zaehner 1976, p. 111). Robert Meagher (1977) likewise details the way in which, in Zoroastrian thought, a failure of hospitality has eternal repercussions, such that the shutting of the door on the stranger slams shut the door of Paradise on the self. Aidani (2007, p. 184) suggests that it is Zoroastrian notions of hospitality alongside the historical narrative of national identity that 'forms the nucleus of Iranian understandings of hospitality.' 'Hospitality is deeply rooted in our culture,' Marjan explains, 'If you look back through our history you see hospitality is always there. It cannot be held down, even by those who would make us [into] an unwelcoming people.'

The Iranian calendar of hospitality tracks onto the Zoroastrian calendar. Events such as the New Year (*nowruz*), celebrated at the beginning of spring, and the night of the winter solstice (*shab-e yalda*) are marked by extra-ordinary rituals of hospitality that have their origins in the pre-Islamic past. These are events that are celebrated in remarkably similar fashion across the Persian-speaking world, including in Afghanistan. In 2014 an inaugural joint celebration between Afghanistan, Iran and Tajikistan was held in Tajikistan and broadcast on satellite television in Iran for the thirteen days of the New Year. Showcasing singers and traditional dances, this event emphasised the shared heritage of the three countries and became a moment of mutually experienced hospitality. However, more commonly in Iran, *nowruz* celebrations act to make and validate the Iranian nation, largely to the exclusion of others. In a primary school in the suburb of Hafez, in north Shiraz, banners depicting the Iranian flag are displayed prominently, adjacent to posters wishing the students and their families a happy New Year. The traditional New Year *haft seen* table set up for school presentation day likewise features

an Iranian flag and songs and performances explicitly link the New Year to the Iranian nation.

The official attitude of the Islamic government in Iran towards the New Year is one of marked ambiguity. Early attempts to curtail the celebrations in the aftermath of the revolution have given way to a resigned acceptance of the event as a persistent element of traditional culture. Every year the same rumours arise of government crackdowns planned against the more public displays of New Year festivities but, in reality, this is rarely (or only partially) realised. Ambiguity is expressed in the very different messages about the New Year that seem to emerge from different quarters of government. During his tenure Ahmadinejad, for instance, enthusiastically embraced the New Year, incorporating *nowruz* traditions into his belligerently nationalist construction of Iran for the consumption of both a domestic and international audience (see Milani 2011).

The New Year is a high-point of Iranian hospitality. Over the thirteen days of the New Year holiday, family and close friends engage in exchanges of hospitality that act to reinforce kinship and social ties. Hospitality is central to the New Year celebrations—from the ritual *sofreh* known as the *haft seen*, laid out with items representing health and prosperity, to the cooking and sharing of labour intensive dishes, to the symbolic act of welcoming good fortune over the threshold.

However, this is not a hospitality that is oriented towards the stranger and, in Iran, Afghans have no place in the narrative of the 'Iranian' New Year. In Iran, refugees experience alienation through practices that tie the New Year to an imagined fraternity of the Iranian people across time and space. Indeed, exclusion is experienced in more concrete ways. On 1 April 2012 the BBC's Persian language service reported that the

Committee to Enforce Ease of Travel in Isfahan had issued a ban on Afghan nationals entering Soffeh Mountain Park on *sizdeh beh dar* (the thirteenth day of the year in accordance with both Iranian and Afghan calendars, and a day which tradition dictates is to be spent outside the home) (BBC Farsi 2012). What was a blatantly discriminatory measure was defended in terms of ‘ensuring security and welfare of the [Iranian] visitors’ to the park (Justice for Iran 2012). This action, while sparking an online counter-movement where Iranians expressed solidarity with Afghan refugees by declaring, ‘I too am Afghan,’ was mirrored by a number of less publicised exclusions of Afghans from parks and public spaces in various cities across Iran during the same and subsequent New Year periods.

The *sofreh* is not restricted to the domain of ritual and the conspicuous hospitality that forms a foundational element of the Persian New Year. In the context of the everyday, the *sofreh*, functions as a metaphor for the food that is served on it and for the conviviality of the meal. The meal is central to the way in which hospitality is practiced and imagined, not only in Iran but in multiple, diverse cultural settings. Indeed, the very term hospitality has become synonymous with the commercial practices of providing and consuming food and drink. Mary Douglas (1972) describes the crucial function of the mealtime in signifying social order and expressing friendship. Derrida, however, is remarkably silent about this consumptive element of hospitality (Bell 2007). Traditionally, in anthropology, the sharing of food has been captured under the broad trope of the gift (see Mauss 1990 [1924]). As Candea and da Col (2012, p. S2) pertinently note, ‘hospitality emerges over and over again entangled with the gift as an implicit or passing reference-point’ and, in Mauss’s work, ‘flashes into view as the initial pre-condition to gift giving.’ Derrida’s theorizing of hospitality intersects with his work on

the philosophy of the gift, with its 'freight of obligations and reciprocities' (Bell 2007, p. 9).

In Iran practices of hospitality are intimately linked to the provision of food. Ala Amjadi (2012) describes the way in which the 'breaking of bread' binds host and guest together and temporarily transforms the host's house into a space of hospitality and a 'home' for both host and guest. In 2012 rumours circulated that then head of immigrants' affairs in the Fars province, Gholamreza Gholami, had ordered that bakeries and corner stores refuse service to 'illegal immigrants' (Zamaneh 2012). In 2014 Afghans still report moments of being denied service or forced to repeatedly move to the back of the queue. The *nanvayi* [bakery] is a site that most people in Iran will visit on a daily basis. The metaphorical, almost mystical, role of bread in Iranian culture extends to the bakery and, as such, it has become a key site for gauging hostility towards Afghans and subsequently ascribing this hostility to the nation (see Abbasi-Shavazi, Glazebrook, Jamshidiha, Mahmoudian & Sadeghi 2005a).

Poetic hospitality and the lure of cosmopolitanism

'Thinking about hospitality after Derrida also involves thinking about reading and writing, about hospitable texts and texts of hospitality' (Still 2006, p. 82). In Iran, Persian language poetry comprises a textual site of hostile-hospitality. The Persian poetic heritage, through a process of foregrounding *farhang* has 'become identified as a quintessentially "Iranian" art form' (Olszewska 2015, p. 10). Poetry, in the Iranian context, can be understood as a form of banal nationalism (see Billig 1995) with the

everyday poetic the 'stable imaginary,' granting Iranians 'a location and an identity in the world' (Manoukian 2004).

Poetry locates Iran in relationship to the Other. A highly literate consumer of Persian poetry (in translation), is seen by Iranians to exist 'out there.' This is the individual who knows Iran through its cultural production and, in the act of consumption, reflects Iran back to itself. Historically, this could describe Orientalist scholars such as Edward Browne who wrote *A Literary History of Persia* and described 'the Persians' as 'one of the most ancient, gifted and original peoples in the world' (Browne 1909, p. ix). Mostafa Vaziri (1993, p. 5) controversially claims that 'historical Iranian national identity has been an anachronistic invention of the Orientalist,' nullifying the independent contributions of Iranian historians, scholars and public intellectuals. An earlier proponent of this perspective, Seyyed Abd al-Rahim Khalkhali ([1927] in Ferdowsi 2008), overstates the significance of Orientalism in the formation of the Iranian self, waxing lyrical on the resurrection of the great poets and scientists of the past under European ministrations. While it seems prudent to approach this scholarship with a healthy dose of scepticism, the more general point, that the way these figures (poets and scientists, amongst others) are made visible outside Iran contributes (in a small measure) to their contemporary significance inside, is not negated. More recently US President Barack Obama has performed this role by quoting sections of Iranian poetry in his *nowruz* addresses to 'the Iranian people' which have been widely viewed on satellite television inside Iran and by the Iranian diaspora in the US and elsewhere (Obama 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2015).

In Iran, Persian-language poetry comes to function as a site of national and cosmopolitan imaginaries. Sunil Sharma (2012, p. 90) describes the process by which Persian-language poetry came to valorise the 'central Iranian lands' simultaneously 'rendering the Central

and South Asian Persianate world marginal and fragmented.’ Through poetry, the Iranian nation comes into focus as part of a borderless literary culture, even as poetry is complicit in the emergence of a ‘history with borders’ (Tavakoli-Targhi 2001). This history with borders implies the existence of other Others. Afghans are imaginatively constructed as *illiterate*, standing outside the rich Persian literary history to which Iran lays claim and perceived as having no part in it—either as producers or consumers. ‘Afghan poets?’ one well-read Iranian woman muses, when quizzed on the topic, ‘I think poetry has been banned in Afghanistan.’

The Persian literature of Afghanistan is relegated to a peripheral position—indeed, to the point of invisibility from the Iranian ‘centre.’ In discussing modernist Persian literature Wali Ahmadi (2004, p. 411) notes that ‘whereas there is very little awareness in Iran of literary trends in Persian in contemporary Afghanistan, the reverse has not been the case.’ This bordering of Persian literature also applies retrospectively. Ali Ferdowsi (2008) traces the rise of what he calls the ‘national cult of Persian poetry,’ marked by the emergence of a discourse that linked the modern state of Iran to an imagined historical nation through the figures of long-dead poets. ‘[T]he Iranianness of Hafiz [Hafez], along with Ferdowsi, Sa’di [Saadi] and other Persian poets, is taken for granted, as if his Iranian nationality was a state of nature’ (Ferdowsi 2008, p. 683).

Counter to this perspective that dominates amongst Iranians, Afghan poet Reza Mohammadi (2012) describes Afghanistan as a ‘society of poets’ in which the Afghan people live and breathe poetry. Mohammadi cites a list of poets that form part of this literary fabric of contemporary Afghanistan:

When children begin school, the first Persian text introduced to them is
Divan-e Hafiz of Shiraz... In the mornings, Saadi, another poet from Shiraz,

is studied, and in the afternoons we read Bedil...Evening and long nights of winter are dedicated to Shahname (Book of the Kings) by Firdausi (Mohammadi 2012).

These are poets that, on account of having their corpus of work in the Persian language, are thought of as being the poets of Persian-speaking Afghans. However, they are also (with the exception of Bedil who resided in Mughal India and whose complex work has been, from the eighteenth century onward, virtually neglected inside Iran) held, by Iranians, to be 'Iranian' poets of national significance.

By drawing these poets into the narrative of national identity formation Iran effectively lays claim to them, while denying the same to others, outside the modern-day borders of the state, who might perceive themselves as having a similar or equal claim. 'Hafez is a national icon,' Ali Reza explains. Marjan, echoing the lofty proclamation of literary historian and (briefly, in 1948) prime minister of Iran, Abd al-Hosein Hazhir (see Ferdowsi 2008), concurs, 'Hafez and Saadi express the heart of the Iranian people.'

A 'heart of hospitality' is reflected in the poetry of Hafez and Saadi. The precise nature of this hospitality is, however, variously understood. The utility of Hafez and Saadi as national symbols is in part due to the way in which their poetry is able to absorb and reflect a diversity of meaning. Indeed, as Manoukian (2004) puts it, poetry speaks 'the unspeakable' and while history, which is seen to deal in truths, remains controversial and, ironically, untrustworthy, poetry acts as an articulation of the Iranian self.

A state-sanctioned and widely accepted interpretation places classical Persian poetry in the interpretative context of the spiritual or religious. Here, through the motif of the beloved, we can recognise immediate correlations to Derrida's Biblical allegories of the endless substitution of host and guest in the act of welcoming—and being welcomed by—the divine. A counter-narrative insists on the worldly and sensual character of this

literature. Tropes of the wine-glass, the tavern, the garden and the lover are stripped of their other-worldly connotations and speak to notions of the hospitable Iranian, becoming images that create a 'sense of hospitality' around the figures of Hafez and Saadi. One of the recurring motifs of classical Persian poetry is the walled garden: a metaphor that acquires corporeal presence when we come to consider hospitality in place.

The encapsulation of poetry within a discourse of national identity means that Iranian-ness becomes tied up with the expressed themes of cosmopolitanism. This cosmopolitan imaginary draws on notions of both the borderless world and of shared rights. A vaguely articulated but persuasive narrative of rights is woven through discussions around both Hafez and Saadi. Saeidah Samimi, Parvaneh Adelzadeh and Kamran Pashaei Fakhri (2015) identify a nascent human rights as a central concern of the work of Hafez and claim, in somewhat hyperbolic fashion, that Hafez 'could offer solutions for construction of [a] utopia that people could live in peace and security' (Samimi et al. 2015, p. 8). The idea that there exists a link between human rights and Persian poetry is pervasive in Iranian society. Cited in support of this narrative is the apocryphal tale of Saadi's *Bani Adam* being engraved on a wall at either the United Nation's Office in Geneva or Headquarters in New York. Although inaccurate, this is a story that has acquired a patina of truth in Iran and amongst the Iranian diaspora, seeming to validate both the notion that human rights is a thematic priority of Classical Persian poetry and that there is, indeed, an Iranian cosmopolitical instinct.

A word on hostages and hospitality

The internet throws up strange distortions of Derridean deconstruction. A search of Iranian hospitality, before I have finished typing the words, directs me toward 'Iranian hostages' and 'Iranian hostage crisis.' For Derrida, playing on the French word *hôte*, meaning both host and enemy, hospitality is intimately entangled with the darker possibility of hostage taking,

So it is indeed the master, the one who invites, the inviting host, who becomes the hostage—and who really always has been. And the guest, the invited hostage, becomes the one who invites the one who invites, the master of the host. The guest becomes the host's host. The guest (*hôte*) becomes the host (*hôte*) of the host (*hôte*) (Derrida 2000b, pp. 123, 5).

Hospitality and hostage taking both feature heavily in the way in which the English-speaking world, at least, imagines and makes sense of Iran and Iranian culture. In 1980 John Limbert, a US diplomat and one of the fifty-two hostages held in the US embassy from November 1979 to January 1981, participated in a remarkable television interview with then president Khamenei, in which he expertly drew on Iranian modes of hospitality in order to level a veiled, but to Iranian listeners, unmistakable, criticism of the Iranian government and its support of the hostage takers. 'There is one problem,' Limbert breaks in, after praising the conditions under which he and the other hostages were being held, 'you are too inclined to *taarof*. For instance, it is a quality of Iranians that when a guest comes you don't want to let them go at all. You want to keep your guest and have them remain longer with you. If I say "it's enough," you say, "stay longer." I say "it's long enough," you say "it's too soon to go" When you engage in *taarof* too much it can upset your guest' (in Sullivan 2009). In more recent accounts by Western travellers to Iran, hospitality is silently haunted by the ghost of the hostage and the unrealised expectation of violence (see Housden 2011; Majd 2013; Maslin 2009).

The trope of hospitality surfaces repeatedly in the way in which both Afghans and Iranians broach the topic of Afghan migration to Iran. In the shadow of hospitality, hostility, as Derrida has shown, lurks as a constant presence. In the context of hostile-hospitality, the figure of the hostage shifts, with hostage-ness alighting sometimes on the host and sometimes on the guest. Both Afghans and Iranians, in different ways, perceive themselves as held hostage—Afghans by shifting policies that promised abundance only to wither away to a bare skeleton of asylum over a period of decades, and Iranians by Afghan migrants themselves who are seen to have ‘taken advantage’ of Iranian hospitality.

Refugees: reflecting the nation

Through this chapter I have traced the articulation of hospitality within narratives of Iranian national identity. The presence of Afghan refugees in Iran serves to affirm extant notions of Iranian hospitality as it surfaces in Islamic, historic and literary modes of being. There can however be considerable dissonance between the imaginary of the nation and the reality of its treatment of refugees.

In a comparative study of Canadian and Australian migration law, Catherine Dauvergne (2005) argues that refugees are ‘the mirror in which the nation seeks a reflection of its beneficence’ and that the admission of refugees acts to ‘confirm and reify the identity of the nation as good, prosperous and generous.’ The very idea of Australia as ‘good, prosperous and generous’ reinforces whiteness as a normative code of belonging, while simultaneously allowing the ongoing (spatial and social) exclusion of indigenous Australians and certain categories of refugee (Due 2008). Likewise, in Iran, the very

notion of Iranian hospitality places the treatment of Afghan refugees beyond scrutiny and acts to effectively disguise the hostile and exclusionary nature of the nationalism with which hospitality is entangled.

Turning to Derrida's notion of *hostipitality* we can begin to recognise complexities and contradictions within the mythology of the hospitable nation, as it applies to and is enacted in the context of the refugee *Other*. These complexities become more apparent as we shift the discussion of hospitality from the theoretical sphere to consider how it may be experienced in place within and around the city of Shiraz.

Chapter Four: Place and Belonging in the City of Shiraz

Hospitality in place

In this chapter I seek to ground the discussion of hospitality in place. I recognise place as an inevitable condition of hospitality, shaping and being shaped by relations of power between host and guest. Derridean hospitality has always been tied up with questions of place and with the impossibility of *placing* the Other, the stranger or guest, who remains forever on the threshold between here and there, inside and outside, proximity and distance (see Friese 2004). The tensions between place and movement are laid bare in the politics of the border and the narratives of nationhood that adhere to it. I look to how nation-space acts to create and constrain identities of Self and Other, Iranian and Afghan, citizen and refugee; and how these identities come to be practised *in place*.

In order to highlight the intersections of place and hospitality it is necessary to move through different spaces, enacting scalar shifts between nation, city and site. These spaces are not merely enveloped, one within the other, but are deeply interconnected and cannot be understood in isolation. Even as hospitality draws on motifs of the state (on, for example, borders and citizenship) it is experienced at a far more modest scale in what Geertz (1996, p. 262) calls ‘the world around here.’ Central to my thesis is the notion that ‘the world around here’ speaks back, in significant ways, to the imaginary of the nation. I attempt to capture diverse ways of thinking space by theorising it, at all its various scales, in terms of hospitality and in the context of uneven relations of power and place-making capacity between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees. The places I focus on are (in descending order of size) the nation-space of Iran, the city-space of Shiraz and, within and around the city of Shiraz, sites of historical, literary and Islamic significance.

Entering Iran

The customs officer slides my passport across the counter and, without speaking, waves me on. I look swiftly to my right where a dozen young Afghan men wait patiently in line, new navy blue passports clutched in hand. At the head of the queue an Iranian man is locked in furious, whispered dispute with a bored looking official. I suspect the Afghans may be in for a long wait but right now, in my first minutes in the country, I don't pause to witness their passage through passport control.

Even at this early hour, the luggage collection hall of Imam Khomeini Airport is bustling. As I step off the escalator a woman dressed in a dark *manteau* [overcoat] and matching *magnaeh* [head covering], a style of dress I associate with the semi-official uniform of female public servants, thrusts a long-stemmed rose into my hands. I pause. In my travel weary state, I can't work out what's expected of me. Already a crowd is banking up behind me on the escalator and somebody leans over my shoulder, speaking in English, 'It's for you.' Only later do I realise that the rose is, in fact, an unusually elaborate form of advertising.

We drive across Tehran as the winter sun rises from behind the Alborz, casting a watery glow over the industrial sites and shanty towns that crowd up against the road. The last leg of our journey will take my family on a one-hour flight directly south towards the Persian Gulf. This flight is quite possibly the most alarming part of the trip, notwithstanding the frenetic taxi ride on the notoriously dangerous freeway between the international and domestic airports. My anxiety is in no way mitigated on spotting our Iran Air pilot lean across from the ramp stairs as we board to swipe at ice that has

built up on the cockpit window. I notice that he uses a chequered cloth of the kind sold on the street, often by Afghan children who dodge between cars in order to earn a handful of *rial* hawking cleaning products, CDs and chewing gum. The whole way to Shiraz the aircraft engine roars like a lawn mower and the plane shakes and rattles. Far below I see Iran spread out, a patchwork of desert browns and yellows. We cross over snow covered peaks, which thrust skywards like the jagged edges of a broken drinking glass. As we near Shiraz, we pass over a vast, expanse of salt-lake in pink and white. The further south we travel the more *inhospitable* the landscape appears. 'The natural environment is so harsh, we have cultivated hospitality to compensate,' Marjan jokes, on one of the many visits I make to her home during the course of my fieldwork. Mayling Simpson-Hebert (1987), in her study of the hidden but essential role of women in domestic hospitality in the desert town of Dezful, draws the same parallels between the physical environment and extraordinary practices of Iranian hospitality.

The vast majority of Afghan refugees make their way to Iran via a very different route to the one I take. Nine-year-old Sumayra asks endless questions about airplanes and tells me she wants to be a pilot when she grows up, 'But not in the army. We have all had enough of war. I want to fly passengers around the world. I will go to America. To Afghanistan. To Africa.' She smiles, a cheeky grin, unaware of the sort of obstacles that make such a dream, for a female Afghan refugee in Iran, all but impossible to fulfil. 'Maybe I will come to Australia. You can wave to me when I fly over.' Sumayra has never been on an airplane or even seen one up close. She has, in fact, never travelled beyond the Fars province, but in her mind she inhabits a world much bigger than the space to which she is confined by virtue of nationality and poverty.

Sumayra's family travelled overland from the Kandahar region to Quetta in Pakistan, remaining for years in one of the sprawling refugee camps in the city's south-east. Deteriorating conditions in the camp and an influx of Taliban militia led the family to a second exile. In 2002 they paid smugglers a small fortune to take them across the Iran–Pakistan border near Zahedan. Wanting to put as much space as they could between themselves and the heavily policed border region the family travelled in the back of a truck almost directly westward until, as Sumayra's father puts it, they 'bumped into Shiraz.'

Most Afghans take a less circuitous, although no less hazardous, route, directly from Afghanistan. Alarming stories proliferate amongst the Afghan community about horrific abuses on the border and every year a trickle of stories about migrants shot dead by border guards makes headlines in Afghanistan and, less commonly, in Iran (see Sharfyar 2013; BBC Farsi 2015).

Deaths on the border are an almost inevitable consequence of policies that conflate human smuggling with drug trafficking under a broad umbrella of border security. Walls, trenches and razor wire act as a static defence, while personnel from Iran's Law Enforcement Forces, Islamic Republic of Iran Ground Forces (the regular army, including young conscripts completing their compulsory military service), Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), and the paramilitary Basij Resistance Forces conduct operations in the border regions. It is rumoured that the Revolutionary Guard have, additionally, been involved in arming and training local militia in border villages (Koepke 2016, p. 289).

In Shiraz's Adel Abad prison—an ugly, squat building partially hidden behind cement walls and razor wire fencing—a not insubstantial proportion of prisoners are Afghans,

many of whom have been charged with drug-related offences. Across Iran over 200 000 Afghans are held in prisons and hundreds are executed every year (Ahmadi, Z 2014; Egorov 2015).

Bilal has been behind bars for over two years. Razieh who is a distant relation and a friend of Bilal's sister explains how the ambitions of a young Herati, to earn money in order to marry his fiancée, were dashed before they had even begun to take form. 'It was all arranged. He [Bilal] had handed over half the money and the arrangement was that the rest would be paid when he found employment in Tehran. But then on the border he was told he must take the cargo *bar dush* [on the shoulders—a slang expression that refers to the low scale movement of opium across the border using human smugglers]. If he refused, he would lose his deposit and be handed over to the border guards.' Razieh spreads her hands out in an expression of resignation. 'What choice did he have?'

Yaghoub lives just a few blocks from the Adel Abad prison. Now in his late sixties he is homesick for a land that he has not seen for over thirty years. 'I wonder about those [Afghan] boys inside. Do they remember the green hills of Afghanistan? The clean air and the streams that run ice cold in the spring? Here we are [all] hemmed in [as if in prison] and my heart cannot rest.'

Narrating boundaries

The Iranian nation is imaginatively constructed through recourse to narratives of religion, history and poetry. This imagining does not take place only (or for the main part) in the mind, but in place. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet (2000) utilises the notion of

‘frontier fictions’ to provide a helpful corrective—or, in her words, ‘an alternative paradigm’ (2000, p. 19)—to Benedict Anderson’s (2006) theory of imagined communities. The idea of frontier fictions retains the constructivist quality of an imagined community, while simultaneously pointing to the longevity and geographical integrity of *Iranzamin* (Iranian land) and the continuing thrall of Iran’s cartographic borders on the Iranian mind.

The ancient territorial conception of *Aniran*—derived from the Middle Persian term *Aneran* meaning that which lies outside the Iranian realm—lends itself to ‘the nationalist dramatization of Iranian history’ (Zia-Ebrahimi 2016, p. 840). It further posits Iran’s neighbours as fundamentally (and indistinguishably) *Other*. In a 1931 publication of the same name, the idea of *Aniran* is foregrounded (see Katouzian 2000). In three short stories by three of Iran’s twentieth century literary greats (Sheen Partow, Bozorg Alavi and Sadeq Hedayat), the character and resilience of the primordial Iranian nation is revealed at key moments in history: namely, the Greek-Macedonian conquest of the Achaemenid Empire under Alexander, the Arab ‘Islamic invasion’ from the west; and the Mongol invasion from the east through Afghanistan in the thirteenth century (see Zia-Ebrahimi 2016). Each of these moments is traced over and through the narratives of Iranian identity that are being explored in this thesis.

Afghans are made *Other* in Iran by way of specific processes that magnify the small differences, actively erasing a shared history and emphasising cultural divergences, however minute, between Iranians and Afghans. Much of this has occurred within the context of efforts to territorialise history (and culture), placing it firmly within Iran’s modern day borders.

The notion of *Aniran* reifies the border, making it a defining object of the Iranian nation. However, it fails to capture how the border is imagined and experienced in the everyday and in places far from the border regions, or to explain how those who cross over the border might come to be constituted as Self or Other. In this chapter, I take the notion of the border and seek to shift it from the (geographic) periphery by considering the way in which those who cross borders carry the border with them. I follow Kathleen Staudt and David Spener (1998, p. 4) in conceiving of the border as an 'ongoing, dialectical process that generates multiple borderlands spaces, some of which are not located very close to the official international boundary itself.'

Borders are not merely lines on the ground but are manifestations of social practice and discourse, constructed by way of narratives that bind people together in the imaginary of common experience, history and memory (Paasi 1998). This understanding of borders allows us to locate multiple border sites that are complicit in the imaginative construction of Self and Other. The border between Afghans and Iranians is not comprised solely of an international boundary between two sovereign states but is produced and reproduced in everyday interactions between individuals. Further, it is in the context of these boundaries that collective identities are formed. Indeed, identities are often discursively represented in terms of a distinction between Self and Other and boundaries therefore constitute part of what Anssi Paasi (1998, p. 84) calls 'the "discursive landscape" of social power.' Importantly, this discursive landscape is 'not limited to border areas, but extends into society and its social and cultural practices, wherever it is produced and reproduced' (ibid.).

Nation-space and refugees

In the early 1950s political theorist Hannah Arendt drew attention to the way in which human rights are intrinsically linked to place. 'The fundamental deprivation of human rights' she notes in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, 'is manifested first and above all in the deprivation of a *place* in the world' (Arendt 1951, emphasis added). This theme of place (and, most specifically, nation-place) as it acts to construct and constrain refugee identities is picked up by Malkki as she contextualises the study of refugees within 'the national order of things' (1992, 1995). By foregrounding a taken-for-granted link between people, place and identity, Malkki sought to denaturalise and thus open up a field of inquiry into 'the ways in which power works through the organization and conceptualization of space and movement' (Stepputat 1999, p. 416). Ultimately, Malkki (1992, p. 31) points to a 'powerful sedentarism in our thinking' that has led to particular ways of formulating displacement as pathological and inherently problematic.

The pathologisation of refugeeeness has implications for Afghans that reach beyond the theoretical sphere to shape interactions with the Iranian state via policy that prioritises repatriation (voluntary or otherwise) and places the 'Afghan problem' within a biosecurity framework. Examples of this biosecurity framework include the conflation of people smuggling with drug smuggling at the border (see Koepke 2011; Stigter 2005) and, the intense focus on issues around family planning and the widely perceived fecundity of the Afghan migrant population *vis à vis* the Iranian citizenry (see Moghadas, Vaezzade & Aghajanian, 2007; Tober, Taghdisi & Jalali 2006). This same pathologisation is evident in everyday interactions between Afghan refugees and ordinary Iranians as they negotiate shared space in the city of Shiraz and its surrounds.

‘Ya Allah.’ Standing at the back door, garden shears in hand, Ibrahim calls out, alerting the household to the presence of a stranger. Dordaneh, my middle-aged host, flicks a light slip of cloth over her neatly-coiffed hair and rises from the carpet where, for several hours now, we have been immersed in a discussion ranging across topics from the presence of cosmopolitan imagery in the work of Saadi to the ongoing exodus of the *Shirazi* middle-class from the old suburbs of the city. For the last half hour our conversation has been accompanied by the sounds of sawing, the gentle hail of dry twigs raining down on tiles and the rustling of leaves as they are swept into a growing mound in the centre of the courtyard. Ibrahim has worked as a gardener and general maintenance man in this northern suburb, since a disabling injury forced him out of the construction industry where many of his Afghan compatriots, young and old, find employment. Hamid Sepehrdoust (2013) has shown that 80 per cent of Afghans in Iran are employed in just three sectors: manufacturing, construction and trade and commerce. Furthermore, the construction industry is heavily dependent on Afghans and would grind to a virtual halt were the Afghan proportion of the workforce summarily removed.

Ibrahim’s request for a glass of water causes considerable consternation and a flustered search for disposable drinking cups. Dordaneh invokes tuberculosis as a concrete threat, but later, when the conversation turns to broader questions around the presence of Afghan refugees in Iran other fears are raised. Months later, when I hesitantly relate this story to a young Afghan woman, she falls silent, looking into the distance and then shrugs, ‘We [Afghans in Iran] are used to this. From the time we are small children we are treated like we are something dangerous and contagious.’

Theories of globalisation and the notion of a borderless world that emerged in the 1990s saw the death of the nation-state declared prematurely (Moisio & Paasi 2013). Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1992, p. 12) point out that 'states continue to play a significant role in the popular politics of place-making and the creation of naturalised links between places and people.' The movement of goods and capital across borders has not been accompanied by or resulted in their dissolution. Borders continue to govern those who flee in search of refuge or asylum, and mark out the static nation in opposition to a moving external Other. Across the globe, territory is prioritised in the politics of excluding refugees and asylum seekers (Warner 1999). As such, and notwithstanding international instruments such as the UN Convention, place remains a 'major repository of rights and membership' (Kibreab 1999, p. 385).

Happenstance of geography and the use of technologies of control at the border allow some states to shield their territories and their citizens from the claims of asylum seekers, while choosing to integrate a select few. However, states with more porous borders, including Iran, tend to adopt strategies of reception and settlement that effectively prevent large numbers of refugees already present within their territory from being incorporated into society (Kibreab 1999, p. 388). With this in mind, refuge in Iran can be thought of as 'a state exercise of border control practices at national and global scales, as well as an ongoing, everyday process that takes place in local spaces and relationships' (Young 2011, p. 535). Refuge is a precarious right and is 'fought for and struggled over on uneven grounds in relation to a range of state practices and everyday negotiations that are involved in facilitating and/or denying refuge' (ibid.). Uneven ground, in this case, is not merely a metaphor for the relative distribution of power

between the state and asylum seekers or between citizens and refugees, but is quite literally the ground—those various sites and spaces—where refuge is invoked.

The emphasis on deterritorialisation in the literature obscures the weighty presence of processes of reterritorialisation with which it is inevitably entangled. As Casey (1993, p. 313), drawing on Archytian logic, puts it '[t]here is no being except being in place.' That is to say, we are all always enmeshed in place and all the movement in the world cannot move us beyond place. Afghan refugees, displaced from Afghanistan, are re-emplaced in Iran—a space that, via a politics of occasionally belligerent nationalism, is imaginatively constructed as an exclusively *Iranian*-space. To this end, Gaim Kibreab (1999) argues against a perspective that would equate globalisation with a deterritorialisation of identity, noting the 'propensity of many societies...to define themselves on the basis of their ethnic, national or spatial origin, or religion, as well as culturally and ethnically distinct territorial locations, by excluding those whom they consider as "others"' (Kibreab 1999, p. 385). Malkki likewise points to the need for the 'study of emplacement (the flipside of displacement) in the national order of things' (Malkki 1995, p. 517).

The anti-sedentarist thrust in refugee studies has called into question the compulsion to fix people in place, leading to the (theoretical) deterritorialisation of identity. Warner (1992), takes this deterritorialisation to its logical conclusion, declaring that, in an era of globalisation, 'we are all refugees.' In this particular formulation, place no longer stands as a repository of culture and anthropologists must make sense of a new kind of culture-in-movement. Movement appears to call into question the 'organic, naturalizing bias of the term culture' (Clifford 1992, p. 101).

In the case of Afghan refugees, notions of home and homeland have been shown to be rendered uncertain when it comes to a second and even third generation of exile (Abbasi-Shavazi et al. 2008; Kamal 2010a). Furthermore, it has been argued that the very idea of Afghanistan as a single entity (as opposed to a geographic collective of opposing tribes and ethnicities) is largely constructed in diaspora and, not incidentally, against the backdrop of hostile policies relating to migration and settlement (Chatty & Crivello 2005; Hoodfar 2010). Place, for Afghan refugees, is thus understood in terms of absence, and marks the trajectory of movement over and above the location of identity. What is missing from this account of place is an exploration of the way in which ordinary, everyday lived-space is constructed, experienced and contested by Afghans and Iranians in contemporary urban Iran. As Paolo Novak (2007, p. 555) points out, it is 'only by unravelling the different projects simultaneously attributing significance to the same people and territory, and their interactions, that the process of place-making can be captured.'

The elusive city

For months after arriving the city eludes me. From the passenger seat of a car suburbs rearrange themselves in new, unlikely patterns; bitumen unfurls beneath rubber, roads appear and disappear, intersecting—*Motahari, Amir Kabir, Sibooye*—I read the names out loud and try to hold them steady, but they slip away. Driving, we detour to avoid snarls of traffic, inconvenient one way streets and sudden, surprising road works. Looping back across our own tracks in a dizzying dance to the accompaniment of beeping car horns, we swing past the Tuesday Market with its roadside assortment of plastic goods and cheap imported clothing, past Ordibehesht Hospital at Chamran where

young women in towering heels skitter across the road in front of us, and onwards, turning right onto a bridge that spans the dry riverbed of the Dry River (*Rudkhane-ye Khoshk*). Later, on the return journey, coloured lights glow in the evening like ghostly sentries at the city gates, a purely decorative addition to the ring road that circles west and north of Shiraz: pink, blue, green, purple, almost home if, indeed, a site of voluntary displacement lends itself to being called ‘home.’ I spend hours of every day in a car, tracing my way across the city from the shiny new northern suburbs to the old city centre and further still to the dusty southern outskirts, or else waiting—idling in traffic that periodically slows to a crawl; in queues for petrol; or in carparks while others attend to business that would be impossibly complicated by the presence of a *khareji*. I begin to feel like a passenger to my own fieldwork. ‘Where is this going?’ I scrawl in large letters across the bottom of yet another page of dull field notes.

For a long time, I don’t know where it’s going. Spread across the living room floor I search for clues in maps that feature strange absences. A good chunk of the city’s northern suburbs beyond Mali Abad and its southern suburbs stretching towards the airport is elided, the elongated north-west, south-east orientation of the city—contained within a narrow valley between high, bare peaks—does not lend itself to two dimensional reproduction on a map that can fold to pocket size.

One day, in drizzling winter rain I hike to the top of a mountain and survey the city from a new vantage point. I locate the *Hafezieh*, the Shah Cheragh complex and Eram Gardens. I count dozens of cranes towering over half-built apartment blocks. In the distance the faintest pregnant outline of Mount Derak can be seen rising above low-slung cloud, while below me traffic snakes silently in a graceful figure of eight at the foot of the Darvazeh Quran [Quran Gate]. I seek shelter from the rain in some kind of stone

memorial, presumably raised in honour of Iran's war dead, and, in doing so, inadvertently dislodge an elderly homeless man who shakes his stick at me and mutters a string of what sounds, to my ears, to be pure nonsense, before disappearing over the crest of the hill. Alone, I feel impossibly distant from the life of the city below me, a stranger who seems to be always condemned to view Shiraz from a vast remove.

In the end, I take to walking. I walk to pick my daughter up from school in the suburb of Hafez, a hazardous route that necessitates picking my way across rubbish strewn wastelands and, in those places I can't leap across it, lowering myself into the deep drainage ditch that runs beside the road. I walk daily down the hill to one of the small local supermarkets, past the elderly Afghan man who repairs shoes and who, in time, shares with me the story of the arcing trajectory of his life—from Afghanistan's Herat province to a Shiraz street corner. I walk obsessively, only ever slightly altering my route, between the shrines of Shah Cheragh and Astane. To the alarm of Iranian friends and family I walk through the maze of narrow lanes in the suburb of Saadi, tucked away behind the poet's mausoleum. I walk in the day and, as the summer sun burns away the last memories of winter, at night amongst companionable crowds. I discover not a different city (the city is always singular) but certainly a city differently textured.

Walking in Shiraz

Walking is a practice that in recent decades has demanded increased scrutiny within the social sciences. Following Michel de Certeau's (1988) insistence on understanding the city by way of ground-level, everyday bodily practices, scholars have sought to substitute 'fixed or elevated viewpoints' with the 'mobile, grounded, and partial perspectives'

(Pinder 2011) that are available through a reintroduction of the body as ‘a sensual being smelling, remembering, rhythmically moving, jostling with other bodies and in the process constituting active, perhaps multiple, urban subjectivities’ (Rossiter & Gibson 2008). The walking body necessarily negotiates relations of power and can comprise a subversive act in the context of ‘efforts to control who strolls and how’ (Solnit 2001, p. 285). This emphasis on walking is ‘in keeping with a wider valorisation of mobility and the nomadic within currents of recent social and cultural thought’ (Pinder 2011, p. 675).

As an ethnographer I have sought to read an urban text—however faltering and uneven—that is written in the pedestrian, everyday acts—what de Certeau (1988) calls ‘tactics’—of being in the city. The text and *context* of the relationship between Afghan refugees and Iranian citizens is formed in the mobile practices of space.

I am choosing, at this point, not to engage in the long-running debate over the relationship between the concepts of space and place and the respective priority accorded to them (see Dourish 2006). As Doreen Massey (2013, p. 1) points out, space and place ‘bear with them a multiplicity of meanings and connotations,’ such that it is beyond the scope of this thesis to untangle their diverse use in scholarship. If I tend to favour the term place it is in recognition of a broadly held, although not unchallenged, view of place as lived, relational or practiced space (see Olwig 2006). It is worth noting that this differs to de Certeau’s (1988) formula of *space as practiced place*. Either way, it is precisely the experiential and relational nature of place (or space) that this research is concerned with.

Bodies in movement in and around fixtures of the city’s landscape speak to other tensions between vagrancy and fixity. In anthropology questions of place and space have

come to be linked to mobility via a critique of the discipline's historical tendency to view culture as bounded and rooted in the local (see Appadurai 1996; Clifford 1992; Gupta & Ferguson 1992). The spatial turn in anthropology ultimately led theorists to consider the many ways by which space is opened up through movement. The blurring of borders through the migratory movements of people and the circulation of goods in a capitalist system has assumed heightened theoretical significance, coming to be viewed as characteristic of an era of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000). The notion of liquidity, however, fails to account for the way in which fixed place continues to assert itself over and against moving bodies. While de Certeau's (1988) contention—that mobility is intrinsic to the creation of space—stands, it is equally true that place and space shape the way that bodies move individually and in relation to one another. In Shiraz practices of walking are variously facilitated and constrained by the built environment in which they take place.

City of culture

The city of Shiraz is significantly configured in Iranian narratives of identity. Located at the foot of the Zagros Mountains, many hundreds of kilometres south of Tehran, the history of settlement in the vicinity of Shiraz dates back to the prehistoric period (Potts et al. 2005). Cuneiform records show that by the time the great ceremonial capital of the Achaemenid Empire rose from the fertile plains to the north, Shiraz was a significant township (Whitcomb 1985). The city truly came into its own, emerging as the provincial capital, in 693 following the Arab conquest of nearby Istakhr (Movahed 2006). In subsequent centuries the fortunes of the city rose and fell on the back of successive dynasties: sometimes a grand capital, at other times reduced to a dusty provincial town.

The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw Shiraz established as a centre of cultural production, with classical geographers designating the city *dar-al elm* (abode of knowledge) or *borj-e-aulia* (tower of saints) (Limbert 2013). Indeed, as the country suffered through a series of dynastic upheavals, invasions from the east and internal strife, Shiraz experienced a flourishing of the arts and scholarship. It is this era, perhaps more than any other, which continues to shape the character of Shiraz. Indeed, despite having lost considerable influence in the political and economic fortunes of the country, Shiraz is today popularly considered a *cultural* capital (see Manoukian 2012). Here the notion of culture (*farhang*) has multiple layered meanings. Shabnam Holliday (2011, p. 18) notes the way in which *farhang* emerges as ‘a recurring theme in the constructions of Iranian national identity.’

The interpellation of the city of Shiraz as a site of culture was an important element of Pahlavi nationalism. As Manoukian points out, the very processes that saw government functions, state cultural institutions and industry centralised in the capital Tehran resulted not merely in the marginalisation of Shiraz, but in its reimagination as part of an ‘ancient land where fundamental features of Iranian culture were molded’ (Manoukian 2012, p. 26). Temporally, Shiraz came to be imaginatively situated in the past, while Tehran moved, at a frenetic pace, towards a modern future. Iranian culture was seen to reside *in place*: in the ancient ruins, historical monuments and verdant gardens in and around the city of Shiraz.

Here it is important to note that in the case of Shiraz the city spills beyond its boundaries. Manoukian (2012, p. 26) describes the change in the ‘administrative relationships among city, region and state’ under Pahlavi governance, that led to the conflation of the Fars province with the city of Shiraz, and to both being seen, interchangeably, as a singular

site par excellence of Persian culture. In this thesis the idea of the city expands to encompass the Achaemenid ruins located on the outskirts of Marvdasht some forty kilometres north of Shiraz. The Achaemenid past is imaginatively brought back into the city of Shiraz via visual referents that act to contract space and time.

The political revolution of the late 1970s and the subsequent cultural revolution that extended throughout the 1980s resulted in a major reorganisation of space within the city of Shiraz. The demolition of Pahlavi insignia and the construction of new monuments; the renaming of streets, squares and buildings; and the installation of temporary items such as billboards and banners, occurred with the purpose of signalling ‘the institution of a new order, a new image of the “people,” and *a new interpretation of the past*’ (Manoukian 2012, p. 51 emphasis added). However, even as Islamic or revolutionary space was inscribed over the extant city, earlier ways of imagining and practising space asserted and reasserted themselves. In this sense, the contemporary city can be thought of as a cultural palimpsest, where multiple layers of meaning can be read simultaneously.

In the Islamic Republic the notion of culture has been circumscribed within revolutionary parameters. Khamenei (2000, p. 18) argues that culture ‘encompasses all those issues that today display the spirit and content of what the revolution brought about and what the Iranian nation accepted with delight.’ This particular interpretation links culture to the revolution, even as it remains purposefully vague on the particulars. As opposition to Pahlavi visions of nationhood grew throughout the 1970s, religion was drawn into and partially displaced other ways of thinking about and enacting cultural identity in Iran. Following the revolution, the notion of Shiraz as a holy city—sometimes described as the third holiest city in Iran, after Mashhad and Qom (see Bamdad, Abedi, Valipour &

Shibaniyan. 2014; Shafiei, Zahedi & Nematollahi 2015)—was promoted over and above the idea of a cultural city. However, the prior inscription was never entirely negated, living on both in the memory of the city's inhabitants and in official and semi-official narratives.

Farhad Khosrokhavar and Olivier Roy (1999) argue that, following the Iran–Iraq war, there was a gradual assertion of culture—by which they mean something very similar to Pahlavi-era notions of *farhang*—over religion, in the articulation of Iranian identity. ‘Culture’ they write, capturing the zeitgeist of a generation increasingly disillusioned by the revolution, ‘is what is left when one no longer believes in utopia’ (Khosrokhavar & Roy 1999, p. 16).

Over a period of decades, the boundaries of what can and cannot be considered ‘revolutionary’ have been stretched and distorted. In Iran, there are multiple overlapping government and para-government organisations with variously supporting or competing visions of what constitutes culture and how it is to be practised. At a state level, culture falls under the administrative domain of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (*vezarat-e farhang va ershad-e eslami*). Documents produced by the Ministry reference Iranian-Islamic culture, pointing obliquely to an ongoing and occasionally fractious debate in Iranian politics (and society more broadly) regarding the priority of Islam over the nation and vice versa (see Holliday 2011; Mirsepassi 2011). Indeed, in 2011, as Ahmadinejad sought to counter clerical control via a populist politics of nationalism, a political crisis over this very question was only narrowly avoided (see Karami 2014; Milani 2011).

The Shiraz office of the Ministry of Culture is responsible for organising local cultural events, primarily related to religious figures, holidays, celebration of the revolution and commemoration of the Iran–Iraq war. In addition, it administers the mausoleums of Saadi and Hafez both of which are ‘important sites for the administration of culture and...among the most visible places in which state representational practices are enacted’ (Manoukian 2012, p. 73).

The government-funded Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (*sazman-e miras-e farhangi, sanaye-e dasti va gardeshgari*) manages the World Heritage sites of Persepolis and Pasargadae outside the city of Shiraz. In addition, it has oversight of numerous historical buildings and monuments within the city, often bringing it into conflict with the Shiraz Municipality and City Council.

In early 2015, a major dispute over the destruction of the city’s ‘historical texture’ bubbled over (Financial Tribune 2015). The dispute between, on one side, the Shiraz City Council and Shiraz Municipality and, on the other, the Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization and Iran’s Revitalization and Utilization Fund for Historical Places, centred around the historic urban precinct of Shiraz’s District 8. Ultimately the parties, on a ruling by the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urbanization, agreed to restore up to forty-four historic houses—some of which are nationally-recognised heritage sites—that had been demolished in the process of expanding the shrine of Shah Cheragh. This follows years of similar demolitions beginning in 1995, when the Shiraz Municipality approved the razing of 5 hectares of the historic core of the city in order to allow developers to connect Shah Cheragh to the Sayyid Ala al-Din Husayn Shrine at Astane (Andalib & Abdolazadefard 2013).

While the destruction of historic homes, bathhouses and schools has elicited concern in the context of what one government official described as ‘the recent increase in attention given to cultural heritage in Iran’ (Talebian in Financial Tribune 2015), less attention has been paid to the deleterious impact on local residents.

The restructuring of space in Shiraz has always had a political and social function. When the Pahlavi regime ordered the construction of straight, wide roads through densely built up urban quarters in the historic city centre it had the intended effect of loosening the grip of the traditional power structures of clergy and bazaar. Through the (partial and uneven) implementation of successive urban plans between the 1930s and 1970s, the orientation of the city was shifted away from the old neighbourhoods. The result was a decay of the urban fabric and a gradual demographic shift as earlier populations moved out, making way first for those displaced, in the 1960s and 1970s, by land reforms under the aegis of the government instituted ‘White Revolution,’ and later for Afghan refugees.

The rationale for the latest round of demolitions is partly based on the lack of urban services, along with high maintenance costs due to the inaccessibility of narrow laneways (Rafiee & Mahesh 2013). However, it is also aimed at evicting Afghans and poor rural to urban migrants who have settled in the area, and reconfiguring it as a space for upper and middle class Iranians to visit and experience ‘culture’ (Manoukian 2012).

Refugees in the city

There has been a sizeable Afghan population residing in Shiraz for almost four decades. A second and third generation of refugees now calls Shiraz home and, indeed, there is a

fourth generation on the cusp. Yet the place of Afghan refugees in the city remains peripheral. Afghan refugees must carefully negotiate a place for themselves in relation to the city as a space of culture, a site of hospitality and a microcosm of the Iranian nation. Drawing on notions of *farhang* that straddle both the idea of shared values or identity and that of ‘high culture,’ Afghans are popularly represented in Iran as *bi-farhang* or uncultured. I meet Ramin, a middle-aged Iranian man, outside the Saadi mausoleum on a mild April morning just after the New Year holiday. He is standing outside the gates with his mother-in-law—an impeccably dressed *Isfahani* woman. I had overheard them discussing the relative merits of tourist attractions of Shiraz and Isfahan and sidled close enough to break into the conversation. Ramin is disparaging of Afghan migrants, describing them as ‘uncultured’ and ‘a blight’ on the Saadi precinct.

Such notions of culture and unculture have echoes in representations of Persia and Persians in the Orientalist literature of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Edward Granville Browne, for example, in his 1914 study of modern Persian poetry, decries the ‘pernicious error’ of Western scholars in perpetuating—out of ignorance, if not outright malice—the myth that there is ‘no modern Persian poetry worth reading’

Afghans have developed and nurtured a significant ‘cultural life’ in exile. Olszewska’s in depth study of young Afghan poets in the city of Mashhad, puts to rest any notion that Afghans in Iran are not engaged in significant cultural production. Indeed, she describes the However, the rich and varied contributions of Afghans and their independent cultural endeavours—spanning traditional cultural fields of literature, visual arts, film and music, but also new forms such as creative engagement with social media and blogging—go largely, barring a few notable exceptions, unrecognised and unappreciated in Iran.

The city has emerged as a central trope in discussions around place, refugees and hospitality (see for example Lefebvre 1996 [1968]). This has occurred despite the fact that the 'camp' has often been erroneously perceived as the locus of refugee life (Dryden-Peterson 2006). In Iran, the vast majority (up to 97 per cent) of refugees live outside of camps, many of them in large cities, where at times they are 'hidden in plain sight' amongst other peripheral populations, including rural to urban migrants and urban poor (Fuchs 2012).

Thinking at the scale of the city allows the concept of citizenship to be shifted way from 'a bounded status governed by the nation-state to a substantive practice engaged in by all residents' (Young 2011). This can, perhaps, be thought of as a 'return to the city,' the city being, in its original sense, the locus of citizenship, 'the body of citizens collectively, the community' (OED, 2017a). Indeed, the city—reconfigured as a place of refuge—is a fundamental element of Derrida's politics of hospitality, ultimately underpinning the *Cities of Refuge* project (ICORN 2016). The notion of cities of refuge, originating in ancient Judaic principles, is reimagined by Derrida (2001) as an answer to what he sees as the inevitable failure of hospitality at the scale of the nation-state.

Since 2002, Iran has gradually imposed a series of 'no-go areas': restrictions on cities, regions and provinces in which foreigners can legally reside (see Barr & Sanei 2013; Farzin & Jadali 2013). Flimsily justified on the basis of national security, it has had a disproportionate impact on Afghan refugees (Justice for Iran 2012). A 2013 report by Human Rights Watch (Barr & Sanei) estimated that as much as two-thirds of Iran's territory had been designated a no-go area. While some of these areas constitute entire provinces (particularly in the northwest of the country and bordering Pakistan in the

east), across much of the rest of the country restricted zones comprise a patchwork of villages, towns and cities.

The city is a political space in which residents make claims to rights and contest access to citizenship. Framing citizenship (and its obverse—refugeeness) in ‘formal and territorial terms rather than substantive and structural terms will fail to recognize the role of the city as a political community’ (Dikeç & Gilbert, 2002, 65). Thinking at the scale of the city allows us to move beyond a concern with borders and the formal structures by which an individual is configured as a citizen or a refugee in order to get at the way these categories are practiced in everyday life. The city is comprised of multiple sites at which hospitality is extended or withheld (Young 2011, p. 536). These are places at which (and through which) the city and, at a broader scale, the nation, is imagined as a space of hospitality.

Sites of hospitality

Shiraz is imaginatively constructed as a microcosm of a ‘Persian’ whole, on account of its association with the claimed constitutive parts of Iranian culture—namely, Islam, history and poetry. Each of these constitutive parts is reified and made concrete—in the most literal sense of the phrase—at sites in and around the city.

Anthony Smith (1991, p. 16) defines sites as ‘sacred centres,’ that is to say ‘objects of spiritual and historic pilgrimage, that reveal the uniqueness of their nation’s “moral geography”.’ I take issue with the definition of a site as a ‘sacred centre’ on two grounds. The first relates to the idea of the ‘sacred’ as set apart, which fails to capture the way in which the sites I explore in Part Two of this thesis are integrated, to various degrees and

in different ways, with the everyday fabric of the city. The second objection is to the placing of sites at the 'centre.' I argue, instead, that these sites function as 'border sites,' discursively policing the boundaries between the Iranian Self and the Other.

Sites, in the Iranian context, are places of cultural significance that feature in the multi-faceted narrative of Iranian selfhood. Margaret Somers (1994, p. 614) links narrativity to identity, arguing that 'people construct identities (however multiple and changing) by locating themselves or being located within a repertoire of emplotted stories.' The notion that such stories are emplotted, or mapped, points to the way in which identity is at once imagined and imagined *in place*.

Numerous scholars have analysed how places actively produce collective and national memories (Barber 2004; Davidson 2016; Foote 2003). National memories are not so much rooted in the past as they are a repository of present concerns, hopes and anxieties. A site articulates something significant about the society (or societies) that have produced and preserved it. It is a symbolic reference around which 'broader associations of meaning can be flexibly organized' (Cubitt 2007, p. 203). Every culture remembers its past, however as Richard Terdiman (1993, p. 3) points out, what is distinctive and diagnostic is the modalities in which a culture 'performs and sustains this recollection.'

Paul Ricoeur (2004) traces the intersection of place and memory, describing how places are made memorable through the act of inhabiting them; 'the successive places we have passed through' he writes in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 'serve as reminders of the episodes that have taken place there. They appear to us after the fact as hospitable or inhospitable, in a word, as habitable' (Ricoeur 2004, p. 42).

I consider sites to be places that are, as Thomas Gieryn (2000) describes it, ‘doubly constructed.’ That is to say, built but also ‘interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood, and imagined’ (ibid.) in ways that speak to notions of Self and Other, citizens and refugees, hospitality and hostility. The sites that I consider in this thesis are places that perform the nation. In doing so, they mark out Iran from *not*-Iran, or, to draw again on the relevant historic territorial terminology: *Iran* and *Aniran*.

Other ways of telling

In this thesis, the city of Shiraz is foregrounded as an imagined microcosm of the idealised nation. Iranian cultural identity is produced and experienced in the *Shirazi* locale. Furthermore, notions of hospitality can be conceptualised at the level of the city. When Khamenei addressed Executive Officials on a visit to Shiraz in 2008 he noted, in the first instance, the reputation of the region and its people for ‘kindness and hospitality’ (Khamenei 2008). He then went on to list the cultural sites and tourist attractions of the Fars province as places in which the nation can be felt, experienced and represented. At the centre of Khamenei’s narrative of Iranian-Islamic culture, as it is articulated in the *Shirazi* locale, is the Shah Cheragh shrine. Conversely, at the very periphery of this official narrative are the Achaemenid ruins of Persepolis which function simultaneously as a symbol of despotism and ‘the product of the Iranians’ creative minds, their artistic skills, and their high-minded views.’(ibid.) Less ambiguous is the relationship of the Islamic regime to the Shiraz poets—Saadi and Hafez—who are redeemed as part of the Islamic-era heritage of the nation.

In Part Two of this thesis I explore these sites in greater depth, drawing more fully on ethnographic data in order to elucidate how these sites are interpolated in a narrative of Iranian hospitality. In Chapter Five I focus on the shrine precinct of Shiraz, incorporating two major hubs of religious activity and the historic neighbourhood that lies between them; in Chapter Six I turn to the Persepolis ruins just outside the town of Marvdasht forty kilometres to the north of Shiraz; and, in Chapter Seven I look to the Saadi neighbourhood adjacent to the mausoleum of the poet Saadi. I argue that each of these sites is meaningful within competing and overlapping narratives of Iranian selfhood.

While Kashani-Sabet (2000) perceives the locus of Iranian identity-formation as the frontier regions, I have proposed that frontiers, borders and boundaries are not only experienced 'out there' at the peripheries of the nation but also in the centre, in the everyday interactions between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees that take place in and around sites of national significance.

Forced migration—the forcible movement of people from one place to another—results in a 'throwntogetherness' of people who will have to relate to each other (Massey 2013). This relating can be theorised in terms of hospitality. The places in which it occurs function, in turn, as 'spaces of hospitality.' Mustafa Dikeç (2002) points to the way such spaces appear in a hospitality literature concerned with multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism without ever being made concrete. In this chapter I have introduced place in an attempt to bring hospitality down-to-earth. What has been missing, to this point, is an exploration of hospitality as it is lived and negotiated in place within and around the city of Shiraz.

'Exile, immigration and the crossing of boundaries are experiences that provide us with new narrative forms or...other ways of telling' (Said 1989, p. 225). In Part 2 of this thesis I explore 'other ways of telling' by foregrounding Afghan and Iranian experiences of hospitality in and around the city of Shiraz.

Part Two

Chapter Five: Religious Sites

Fieldwork in the shrine precinct

I pull the navy blue *chador* from my bag, shaking the creases from it and wrapping it around myself in what I hope is a reasonable imitation of the Afghan and Iranian women who wear this impossibly awkward garment with elegance and aplomb. Not graced with natural elegance, I always seem to find the *chador* slipping sideways off my head, taking my headscarf with it or wrapping itself around my feet, tripping me up. Entering the Sayyid Ala al-Din Husayn Shrine through the tented women's entrance I am invariably pulled aside by one of the female volunteers—sometimes gracious and indulgent, other times officious and impatient—to have my *chador* correctly draped in accordance with the strictly enforced dress code for women visitors to the shrine.

The research that informs this chapter was undertaken between February and October 2014 in the historic shrine precinct of Shiraz's District 8. When Anne Betteridge undertook her study of Shia women's ritual life in the mid-1970s she identified (and visited) upward of eighty shrines in and around the city of Shiraz, with many more discovered 'as building projects go forward and new burial places are unearthed' (Betteridge 1992, p. 192). The most important of these shrines are *imamzadeh* (tombs of the immediate descendants of any one of the Imams—the political and spiritual successors of the Prophet Muhammad and holy figures within the branch of Twelver (*Ithna Ashariyah*) Shiism that dominates in Iran). Other shrines are associated with local figures or historical events and are considered minor sites in a religious landscape that is laid over the physical geography of Iran and spills beyond the borders of the nation. The area I identify as the shrine precinct of Shiraz covers approximately sixty hectares in the south of the old city, and incorporates the impressive Shah Cheragh complex, the Sayyid Ala al-Din Husayn Shrine (colloquially

known as *Astane* or, in the *Shirazi* vernacular, *Asune*), and a disputed number of other buildings of historical and cultural significance (Naghsh-e-Jahan-Pars 1998). It also, crucially, comprises a residential area and is home to as many as six thousand people (Pardaraz 2003).

Over the period of my field work I spent upwards of sixty hours ensconced in the peaceful, mirrored space of one or another shrine, sometimes with a book in hand or in quiet contemplation, at other times in conversation with women visitors to the shrines or with one of the hundreds of volunteers who act as both guards and guides and are an invaluable source of information about practices of *ziyarat* (pilgrimage), interesting snippets of local history, and insights into the varied motivations of those who visit the tomb.

In addition, I walked several hundred kilometres, tracing minutely-varied routes between the major shrines, through the adjacent bazaar and along narrow residential streets. I talked to Iranians who live in the area and to those who had grown up there but had since joined the mass middle-class exodus to the northern suburbs of the city. I spoke with Afghan refugees who rent homes in the shrine precinct, sometimes several families to an apartment, and—as the area is increasingly reconfigured as a centre of Shia Iranian culture—live with the dual threats of eviction and deportation. Sometimes these were merely brief conversations with those who crossed my path; more often they comprised in-depth interviews arranged in advance and conducted either in the interviewee's home or at one of the shrines; for the most part I was able to meet with the same individual or family over a period of weeks or longer.

In this chapter, I draw heavily (although not exclusively) on interviews conducted with two women: Fahima and Zahra. A total of four semi-formal interviews were conducted with Fahima and three with Zahra over a period of two and a half months. Two interviews with Zahra were conducted at the Astane shrine, all other interviews were conducted in the interviewee's home. An interpreter was present for the interviews with Fahima and for the interview at Zahra's home. These semi-formal interviews were supplemented with a number of informal conversations, with these women and other research participants, that took place in the course of daily activities over the same period and beyond.

I was introduced to Fahima by Elham, an Iranian woman who grew up in the vicinity of the Astane shrine and has since moved to a comfortably middle class suburb on the northern outskirts of the city. Fahima was employed as Elham's house cleaner in the lead up to the New Year, having been recommended to her by a friend. This particular dynamic of employer and employee was reproduced time and again in relationships between Iranians and Afghans and created some potential ethical hazards in my research that, in this case, were mitigated by an extremely slow and cautious approach to involving Fahima as a research participant.

Fahima and her husband Khodadad departed Afghanistan in 1980, crossing the border into Iran along with hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees in flight from the Soviet occupation. Settling in the shrine precinct of Shiraz, they have lived through changes in policy and felt acutely shifts from hospitality to hostility in the attitude towards Afghan refugees.

Fahima and Khodadad's grown children, Nazanin and Amir, have a different awareness of their place on the edges of Iranian society, having been born and raised in Iran and, in their thinking, having only the most tenuous links with Afghanistan.

I initially met Zahra, an Iranian teacher, at the Sayyid Ala al-Din Husayn Shrine, where she was running an informal school for local Afghan children. I caught up with her and her students on numerous occasions at the shrine and later met her husband Reza, a Shia scholar who, despite holding no formal position, was recognised as something of a community leader and religious expert in his neighbourhood.

Fahima and Zahra, along with the other people who 'speak' through this chapter, bring different perspectives to bear on questions of hospitality. By focussing on the shrine precinct and the people who live there, or otherwise have some abiding connection to the place, I have sought to establish how religious shrines in Shiraz come to be placed within the broader narrative of national identity, and how hospitality is experienced at and around the shrines.

Living in the shrine precinct

On a mild spring morning I sit in Fahima's front room—a necessarily multi-purpose space combining living room, kitchen and bedroom. Today, Fahima has pushed the folding doors back, so that the room is open to the shared courtyard, an alarming metre and a half drop below us. Fahima has been washing carpets and sudsy water pools at the base of an enormous spreading fig tree. Her husband, Khodadad, is away on one of his mysterious absences, and her son, Amir, is working the morning shift at a furniture warehouse. Usually Fahima would be working, too, cleaning houses in the wealthy

northern suburbs. But now that the New Year rush is over there is little work available and Fahima is enjoying a much-deserved break. 'In a week or two it will all start again, but for now...' She smiles and spreads her hands expansively.

Fahima is slight and energetic. Her hair, beneath a loosely wrapped scarf, is almost entirely grey and I can't help thinking of her as very much older than the age she says she is. Counting back through the events of her life, she arrives at a number, seemingly as surprised as I am, 'Almost fifty.'

Fahima doesn't know exactly how the decision to leave Afghanistan was reached. 'There must have been some discussion,' she frowns, struggling to recall events of more than three decades ago. 'No. The first I remember of it was the bus trip to Herat. I vomited the whole way. Everybody thought the poor village girl had motion sickness but it was something else,' Fahima laughs, her hand hovering over her abdomen to indicate what the something else was. She has already, on an earlier occasion, told me about the baby boy buried in her first year in Iran and how she felt then that she was burying some last link to her homeland.

'In Herat we ate *bolani* and my husband told me that we would be leaving for Iran in the morning. He told me not to cry. That my sister and her husband would be joining us soon and, in any case, we would be back in Afghanistan in the spring.' That was in 1980. Khodadad and Fahima were part of the massive exodus, many millions strong, fleeing the country in search of a safe haven beyond the reach of the Soviet army. It would be fourteen years before they returned, briefly, to Afghanistan. By then, Fahima's mother had died and her father had remarried, breaking off contact with his older children. Much of the rest of the family had dispersed, including Fahima's older sister, who never

did make it to Iran but years later relocated to Pakistan, where she died in a border camp under circumstances that, to Fahima's way of thinking, have never been satisfactorily explained.

Fahima and Khodadad are Shia Hazara from the northwest of Afghanistan. Fahima works out that they must be second cousins on her mother's side and were married when they were 'barely more than children.' For several years after relocating to Iran they remained in the border region of the (then) Khorasan province. Coming from rural Afghanistan to rural Iran required, for Fahima and Khodadad, no great adjustment. Language and religious practices were broadly familiar and, as Fahima points out, there were 'so many Afghans coming to Iran that sometimes it felt more like Afghanistan.'

'We worked hard, picking crops through the season. At this time many [young Iranian men] were racing off to fight Saddam. There was plenty of work to be done and we [Afghans] were considered a blessing.'

When I ask Fahima about hospitality, it is these first months in Iran that she recalls. After the death of her son at just a few weeks old, both their Iranian and Afghan neighbours pulled together to provide financial and practical support to the young couple. 'But,' she explains, 'somewhere along the way things turned sour.' Tensions between the extant Iranian community and the new refugee arrivals from Afghanistan simmered and could not be alleviated by statements emerging from the upper echelons of government in support of Afghan refugees. After less than three years Fahima and Khodadad relocated to Shiraz.

'Why Shiraz?' Fahima ponders my question for a moment. 'We had heard from other Afghans that life here was good, that the weather was pleasant and the people

welcoming. A Hazara man from a village near ours [in Afghanistan] said there would be work for Khodadad in a textile [dyeing] factory just outside the city.’ Then she adds something which may draw closer still to the truth, ‘We had to go somewhere and here seemed as good as anywhere.’

On another occasion Khodadad adds further detail, revealing that he, along with many of his Afghan peers in the region of Khorasan, was being placed under intense pressure to join the war effort on the Iran–Iraq border. Expansive promises—of citizenship granted and compensation paid—were made but, in Khodadad’s words, ‘any Afghan who was fool enough to go knows what those promises were worth. If even they survived the war.’

When they first moved to Shiraz, Fahima and Khodadad were living just a few streets from where they are now in ‘a nice house.’ As Fahima explains ‘It felt like a new beginning. [Khodadad] had a steady job and in a year or two was promoted to foreman.’ Their daughter Nazanin was born in March 1987, ‘just a few weeks after the maternity hospital was struck [by an Iraqi missile].’

‘Back then, I visited the Astane shrine regularly. Every week I went to classes [there]. Just Afghan women. We learnt the Quran and sometimes a nurse or teacher would come and talk to us about life in Iran.’ These days, she makes only rare visits to the shrine, usually in the company of other Afghan women and for some particularly utilitarian purpose.

In the early 1990s Nazanin began school. Had they remained in Afghanistan it is quite likely that Fahima and Khodadad would have considered it scandalous for their daughter to receive a formal education. However, in Iran they were convinced by a government

directive that framed education as a moral and religious obligation. Fahima speaks with pride of seeing her daughter head off to a local girls' school in her pink uniform and white *magnaeh*. She shows me a photo of Nazanin, small and serious looking, with a dozen other first year students, both Iranian and Afghan. The photo, a rare documentary record of the family's early life in Iran, has been held on to when almost all other household artefacts of that era have been lost. In the photo Nazanin and her fellow students are standing in the courtyard of the Shah Cheragh Shrine, chubby hands clutching close small white *chadors*.

Nazanin remembers the occasion, a rare excursion and one of the few cultural sites then deemed suitable for class visits.

We went to the shrine in the morning. I was nervous because I had to leave my shoes behind. They were new white shoe with a pink bow that matched [my school clothes]. I was so proud of them. I remember later [that day] in the courtyard [of the shrine complex] a woman stepped on my foot and broke the bow off one of those shoes. She called me a 'dirty Afghan' and made me cry.

In 1994, the life that the family was beginning to build in Iran fell apart swiftly and dramatically. Fahima disputes the notion that their return to Afghanistan in May of that year was a voluntary repatriation, claiming that they were forcibly deported in the context of a bitter workplace argument.

'I did not return to a country that I could recognise. Everything was destroyed. There was nothing left for us in Afghanistan.' Their return journey to Iran after eight months of precarious living in Herat was fraught with complexity and danger. At the border a series of misadventures caused the family to become separated. Fahima, with the two older children, Nazanin and Amir, made her way circuitously back to Shiraz where she

expected to find her husband already waiting. Khodadad, in the meantime, was picked up by Iranian border guards and severely beaten, before both he and their youngest daughter Golshan, were sent back to Afghanistan. Fahima pauses when she tells this story, the pain of it still raw. Twenty years later the events of that period continue to reverberate—the shock of being separated at the border; the need for Fahima to provide for her children as they made their way to Shiraz and for months prior to Khodadad joining them; Khodadad’s brief imprisonment and, most painfully, the death of three-year-old Golshan, struck down by a sudden, vicious illness on the Iran–Afghanistan border.

These days, Khodadad seeks doubtful comfort from grief in an opium addiction. Fahima, meanwhile, mourns the loss of her daughter, the husband she once knew and the life they might have lived.

One day I walk with Fahima to the Astane shrine. At the entrance she exchanges a handful of coins for two small squares of shiny green fabric. She tells me that they have been blessed by the saint and presses one of them into my hands. ‘I will give the other to Nazanin.’ She grins, ‘This daughter of mine is too busy to visit the *imamzadeh*, so I must do it for her.’

Shrines: past and present

‘There [at the Shah Cheragh Shrine] you will discover the true Iran—which is found where the glory of Islam meets the beauty and majesty of Iranian history.’ For Reza and his wife Zahra the shrine precinct of Shiraz is an orienting feature around which life is organised. Visits to the shrine punctuate the week and for both of them,

independently, the shrines are important spaces at which religion—heavily imbued with notions of charity and hospitality—is enacted.

The Shah Cheragh complex (housing the mausoleum of Sayyid Amir Ahmed bin Musa, popularly referred to as the King of Light, and his brother Sayyid Mir Mohammad, along with the shrine-like tomb of Shahid Ayatollah Dastgheib, a contemporary of the Iranian Revolution) is an important site of pilgrimage for Shia Muslims in Iran and, in addition to its religious functions, is a significant tourist site. Even on the quietest days—a wet Wednesday in midwinter for instance—the area in the immediate vicinity of the *haram* of Ahmad bin Musa, son of the seventh Imam of Twelver Shiism tradition and the brother of the revered Imam Reza—whose elaborate shrine in the city of Mashhad is undoubtedly the jewel of Iran’s holy sites—is crowded with supplicants. In the women’s section *chador*-clad worshippers mill thickly around the tomb. The *chador* here acts partially and temporarily as a social leveller, erasing for a brief time distinctions of wealth, class and relative religiosity that are ordinarily on display (see Bălăşescu 2003). Women, momentarily united in their veneration of the martyred saint, press up against the tomb, murmuring whispered prayers, fingers threaded through decorative mesh. A volunteer sprays rose water from a plastic canister, a sweet scented fog that mixes with the smell of stockinged feet and bodies pressed close. Mothers pass children forward and urge them to press their lips to the cold metal, other women slip private prayers and wads of cash through the lattice.

On Thursdays, year round, the shrine heaves with humanity. An ear attuned to the sharp variations in dialect and accent amongst Iranians drawn here from the different regions of a country that has historically been segregated by the tyranny of mountain and desert, reveals the broad appeal of the shrine as a site of pilgrimage.

On a summer evening I sit on the carpeted balcony outside the women's entrance. Pigeons flutter, sleepily confused in the floodlights that transform night to day, the fountains in the centre of the courtyard have been turned on and light refracts in the spray of water, a feeble imitation of the shining, mirrored space within the shrine. There is a companionable drone of conversation amongst the group of women who remain outside. Menstruating women are prohibited from entering the shrine, a fact that, as a foreigner, I am cautioned about on repeated occasions. Many of those waiting outside make hushed euphemistic reference to this as a reason for not joining friends and family members at the *haram*.

For a good part of an hour I watch those entering (and exiting) the shrine, taking note of a steady trickle of Afghan women—usually in groups of three or more and often with children in tow—who push their way past the heavy drapes concealing the glittering interior. Amongst the crowds I spot, too, the occasional tourist, taking in the elaborate engravings, patterned tiles and richly detailed architectural features. Coming from Germany, Japan, the US, they surrender cameras at the entrance, the women donning hired *chadors* scrawled with permanent marker in an effort to discourage thieves from making off with them.

While it is, in theory, forbidden for non-Muslims to enter the shrine, the rule is not enforced with any degree of fervour. Indeed, on one occasion a turbaned official invites me into the administration block and expounds enthusiastically on the proselytising function of gracious architecture, launching into a series of tales about Western 'unbelievers' who have been instantly converted to Islam on entering the *aramgah* (literally: resting place). 'Overwhelmed by the light' is how the official describes it.

Movement inside the shrine is dictated by a number of different logics, the foremost perhaps being the segregation of the sexes. Women and men enter the shrine complex through separate security entrances. The busy northern gate of the complex is adjacent to the main shrine where the highest volume of traffic is directed. The interior of the shrine is divided in two by a moveable wall, with half the *haram* accessible to women and half to men. Full circumambulation of the tomb is thus frustrated by a politics of gender that informs the architecture of the site. Cyclical movement around the *aramgah* functions as a kind of sacral mimesis of the *hajj*—pointing, implicitly, to the way in which *ziyarat* has come to act as an informal alternative for those Shia for whom performing *hajj* is prohibitively expensive or otherwise inaccessible (see Meri 2002; Privratsky 2001). Indeed, Said Amir Arjomand (1984) describes a historical shift in the weight of importance between the *hajj* and *ziyarat* in Iran, as Shia theologians sought to emphasise the significance of the Imams as a distinguishing feature *vis-à-vis* Iran's Sunni neighbours.

Shrines generally allow for less organised forms of movement than other religious spaces, such as mosques (Honarpisheh 2013). At the Astane shrine elderly women sleep in the cool interior, mothers chat, keeping only half an eye on children who race across the carpeted space and thread their way between pillars, earning a reprimand from the more worshipfully inclined. Girls in their later years of high school and young women studying for the university entrance exam sit at the very back of the mosque bent over books or quietly comparing notes.

Katayoun has volunteered at the Astane shrine since retiring from her job three years ago. She has an enormous wealth of knowledge about the family of the eighth Imam, the history of the Sayyid Ala al-Din Husayn Shrine and the identities of those buried in

the adjacent covered graveyard. Furthermore, she has a flair for storytelling and brings a delightful lyricism to her unique blend of myth and history.

It was light emanating from the graveyard that guided the faithful. When they excavated the body there was a scent of roses and they found the martyr perfectly preserved in his grave. Even before they saw his name engraved on his ring they knew this must be an *Imamzadeh*. The brothers—peace be upon them—fled to the holy city of Shiraz during the illegitimate reign of the Abbasids and were martyred in this very place.

The identities of the three sons of the seventh Imam who are reputedly buried in Shiraz—having either met an ignominious end at the hands of agents of a hostile Abbasid Caliph (the preferred local tradition) or died at an old age and in partial exile—were, for centuries, obscured. It was only during the thirteenth century and as the Mongol Empire pressed westward toward the Fars province that the Salghurid Atabeg, Abu Bakr bin Saad bin Zangi (1226–1260), discovered the burial sites and had fitting mausoleums built. In the fourteenth century queen Tashi Khatun, of the Mongol Shia Injuid dynasty (1335–1357) which ruled an area stretching from the Persian Gulf to Isfahan, including the city of Shiraz and the entire Fars province, transformed the mausoleum of Ahmad into a major site of pilgrimage. In the intervening centuries the shrine of Shah Cheragh, along with adjacent shrines housed in the same complex and the nearby Astane shrine, has been built and rebuilt. This brief history of the shrine precinct of Shiraz is as it is related, with lesser or greater detail, in guide books, encyclopaedias and academic treatises (Baker & Smith 2005; Bamdad et al. 2014; Betteridge 2004). But there are other histories, touching on questions of hospitality at the shrines, which might also be told.

Hospitality at the shrine

Betteridge (1992), drawing on Victor Turner's work on pilgrimage and liminality, conceives of shrines as *thresholds*. Indeed, the word *astane*, by which the Sayyid Ala al-Din Husayn Shrine and the area immediately adjacent to it is known, is translated as threshold and carries with it the idea of a place through which a person enters into something. As in English, it is often used in a metaphorical sense, such that we have, for instance, '*dar astane sal-e no*' (on the threshold of the new year).

In Derrida's work the threshold marks the place of hospitality, being a permeable boundary between the inside and outside (Derrida 2000). Furthermore, the threshold exemplifies the tensions between hostility and hospitality. Shrines can be thought of as places of anti-structure where the 'conventional relations of cause and effect are suspended,' such that 'supernatural powers may be brought to bear on problems' (Glazebrook & Abbasi-Shavazi 2007, p. 196). The term *imamzadeh* refers to both the shrine itself and to the individual (a descendent of the Imam) buried there. Thus the shrine can be conceived of as a sort of dwelling place and a local (and eminently accessible) link to the divine.

Shrines are commonly associated with miracles. Indeed, there is an extensive hagiographical literature that has arisen around the Imams and *imamzadeh*. In the courtyard at Astane, anecdotes of miraculous interventions are shared. One day, at the entrance to the shrine, a middle-aged woman presses a scoop of sultanas, puffed chickpeas and sugared almonds into my hands. The giving of food is an act of gratitude (and a promise upheld) for answered prayer. The shrine acts as a border or threshold between the between the mundane and the divine and allows people to experience the hospitality of the divine.

Iranians have, historically, called on other aspects of shrine hospitality, the most notable being the practice of *bast neshin* or sanctuary taking (see Chapter 2). Peyman Eshaghi traces a politics of taking sanctuary in Shiite shrines as a ‘key practice in Iran’s pre-modern legal system’ (Eshaghi 2016, p. 494). Perhaps the most noteworthy incident of taking sanctuary at a Shiraz shrine occurred when the infamously cruel founder of the Qajar dynasty, Agha Muhammad Khan (1789–1797), briefly took refuge in the Shah Cheragh shrine during the 1769–1777 uprising by his half-brother, Hossein Qoli Khan, against Zandian rule (Perry 2006). More commonly, shrines in prior centuries were a space that—dependent on the will of the shrine custodian—offered a modicum of protection for escaped prisoners and those accused of serious crimes, including capital offences. In this context sanctuary-taking functioned as a ‘strategy to gain time and a mechanism to delay a final decision about somebody on trial’ (Eshaghi 2016, p. 493). As long as an individual remained in the shrine and was not deemed to have abused the right to sanctuary, he or she could enjoy protection from the law and was kept by way of endowments to the shrine set aside for this very purpose.

Eshaghi’s strictly historical focus elides more recent appeals to the tradition of *bast neshin*. When the Iran–Iraq war broke out in 1980 Adham was a student at a middle school in the vicinity of Shah Cheragh. He describes an event of the early war period that made a lasting impression:

One day we heard that refugees from Khorramshahr were hiding out in the shrine. We couldn’t believe our ears. What cowards! We thought they should be off defending Iran from Saddam and dying as martyrs if need be. After school we went racing over planning to teach them a lesson. There was already a big crowd gathered, heckling. When I saw them I felt ashamed and went home.

Displaced from the devastated city of Khorramshahr the ‘refugees’ were accused, in the court of popular opinion, of desertion in the face of the enemy. There was little dissension when Shiraz’s Friday Prayer Leader Ayatollah Dastgheib ordered the asylum seekers out of the shrine and turned water cannons on those who refused to leave (see Adelkhah 2016, p. 23).

A school at the threshold

Most weekday afternoons Zahra lugs an oversized bag of school books and colouring pencils to the shrine at Astane. Amongst the mirrored tiles, the plush carpets and the scent of rosewater, she conducts a makeshift school. The first time I met her she was seated on the floor towards the back of the mosque, a semi-circle of children—boys and girls ranging in age from about seven to twelve years—arranged around her, books spread out amongst them.

I began working in schools [as a teacher] not long after the revolution. Those first Afghans [in Iran] would not send their daughters. We would try to convince the mothers, [saying] ‘This is your Islamic duty.’

Over a period of almost three decades Zahra has witnessed, from the classroom, the impact of changing attitudes and policies in regards to the education of refugees in Iran.

[Afghan] children would appear in and disappear from the classroom. You couldn’t know if the parents had taken them out to work or if they had lost their residency [and with it] the right to attend school. As a teacher this is a hard situation.

When one of her young Afghan students was barred from school Zahra agreed to take on the task of tutoring in order to prevent the girl from slipping behind her peers, ‘Just until the problem with the residency permit could be sorted.’ A few months of tutoring turned into a full school year and one student into another and then another, ‘Until I

had eight or ten children every day and more still, if I hadn't had to say no.' Besides teaching the children across a range of subjects and year levels, Zahra engages in a kind of low-level advocacy. 'Some of the principals [of local schools] dread hearing my voice on the telephone. They know I've come to beg another favour [and] ask them to take yet another Afghan child into their school.' Zahra indicates towards two Hazara girls, about eight years old, who are sharing the same second year text book. 'If I can help them to catch up on their work, [a local girls' school] has agreed to take them.' Other Afghan children are not so fortunate. Too much school has been missed due to changing government policies, irregular residency status, prohibitively high school fees or their family's need for income from a child's employment.

At the shrine Zahra is a familiar figure, well known to the volunteers who check visitors' handbags and exchange shoes for numbered tokens at the entrance. The willingness of those who act as the everyday custodians of the shrine to welcome Zahra and her students into the space, indicates something beyond a mere tolerance of this activity.

Katayoun is disparaging of Afghans, referring to commonly expressed fears in regards to crime and disease. Nevertheless, she frames charity towards Afghans at the shrine in terms of a sacred duty and praises Zahra as 'a true Muslim.'

Hamdiya, the Afghan mother of one of Zahra's youngest students, hovers at the edge of the class. There is a comfortable familiarity to the shrine and the rituals of Shia worship, which is not found in a school room. Hamdiya, growing up in rural Afghanistan, never attended school. Her youngest daughter started school last year in Jahrom, but after the family moved two hundred kilometres north to Shiraz in pursuit of employment, all four of Hamdiya's children were rendered ineligible to enrol for the

school year. Seven-year-old Zarnish is taking classes with Zahra but hasn't given up hope of returning to school. Her parents try to keep the children from knowing the worst of their struggles with 'the *amayesh*,' the government scheme for registration of refugees. 'But how can we hide it when they are told not to come back to school?' For the first time Hamdiya and her husband are seriously considering the possibility of returning to Afghanistan.

Policies restricting Afghan refugees from accessing education were specifically targeted with the intention of making life in Iran an unappealing prospect for Afghan refugees. For Zahra, despite being broadly supportive of the Iranian government, the knowledge that her informal school contravenes the spirit of an official policy of 'encouraging voluntary repatriation' is of little consequence.

Afghans at the shrine

The most distinctive characteristic of Shiism is devotion to the Imams (Liyakat 2000). The shrine of the eighth Imam in Mashhad is the most important Shia site in Iran and attracts many millions of visitors every year from across Iran and further afield (Momeni, Sarrafi & Ghasemi-Khozani 2008). Afghans have a long history of pilgrimage to the Imam Reza shrine. Sovereignty over the city of Mashhad has historically passed from Iranian to Afghan control and back. Although some Afghans claim that the Prophet's son-in-law the Imam Ali is buried not in Najaf in Iraq, but in Mazar-e Sharif in northern Afghanistan it is more widely held that no Imam travelled as far east as present day Afghanistan (Dupree 1978).

Diana Glazebrook and Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi (2007) in their study of Afghan migrants living in Mashhad propose that proximity to the *haram* of the Imam Reza is a major factor affecting the return intentions of Afghan refugees. They point to a pattern of settlement in the city of Mashhad that they suggest is related to ease of access to the shrine (Glazebrook & Abbasi-Shavazi 2007).

The Shah Cheragh Shrine online news site (Shahecheragh 2016) published visitor figures of almost 3.5 million to the shrine in the Persian calendar year of 1395 (approximately April 2015 to March 2016). Afghans are heavily represented amongst visitors to the Shah Cheragh and Astane shrines. 'I come to the *haram* every week, once, sometimes twice.' Fahima's neighbour Zeynab explains, 'Usually I bring my daughter so that she too can receive the blessing of the Holy Prophet's family, but sometimes I come alone or meet up with friends.' Few Afghan visitors make a journey to the shrines longer than a taxi ride or bus trip across town and many, like Zeynab and Fahima, live in the local area. Devotion to the *imamzadeh* is not a factor in the decision to settle or remain in the city of Shiraz. Indeed, on another occasion Zeynab explains how the shrines function as substitute places of worship, 'God willing one day I will go to Mashhad. But as long as Imam Reza remains out of reach I will make *ziyarat* to the *imamzadeh*.'

For Shia Afghans living in Shiraz, shrines have multiple functions. *Imamzadeh* are sites of 'presence' or divine hospitality where people 'seek or feel a contact with God, or with the deceased who acts as a protector and conduit' (Manoukian 2012, p. 118). They are also, as Donna Honarpisheh (2013, p. 387) notes, settings for 'emotional release,' places where it is both welcomed and encouraged to express extremes of joy and grief that would otherwise be strictly private matters. At a more mundane level, shrines function as meeting places. Betteridge (1983) shows how, in pre-revolutionary Iran, shrines

played an important role in female sociality, allowing women who might otherwise have been restricted in their movement to travel freely across the city and meet together unsurveilled. Rehana Ghadially (2005, p.82) describes a similar phenomenon in the South Asia context where shrines and shrine visitations by women of the Daudi Bohras sect play 'a vital role in the creation and maintenance of a women's sub-culture that, besides being fulfilling in itself, also serves to reduce dependence on men.'

The revolution drastically altered gendered space within the city, paradoxically allowing the opening up of spaces that had traditionally been male dominated or accessible only to a relatively small cohort of educated, urban, upper-middle class women (Amir-Ebrahimi 2006). Likewise, Michael Fischer (2003) noted the centrality of shrines to the religious practices of working-class communities in the 1970s. Today, shrines continue to play an important role in women's lives and, while they can be said to 'cross-cut social hierarchies...different social groups experience them in different ways' (Manoukian 2012, p. 118).

Kimia sits at the back of the mosque area within the Astane shrine, school books spread out around her. 'Here, I can study in peace. I know that I won't be harassed and my mother is happy for me to stay here two, three or four hours. At home I can't get five minutes uninterrupted.'

Kimia comes here several times a week, the quietness of the shrine offering an ideal environment for studying towards her pre-university certificate. Often she meets with other young women, Iranian and Afghan, who are likewise seeking to escape the noise or chaos of small, crowded homes or the expectations of parents whose views, and experiences of education don't necessarily align with those of this younger generation.

Shared spaces in and beyond the shrine

‘This is my friend Anita,’ Kimia has somehow found me in the crush of bodies at the Astane shrine. I had made arrangements to spend the afternoon catching up on field notes in the usually quiet surroundings of the shrine, forgetting that Sunday afternoons are when hundreds of women descended on the place. I had just been preparing to give up and head home, when Kimia spotted me. She worms her way through the crowd, dragging behind her a short and slightly embarrassed looking girl, whose dark complexion reddens as we were introduced. Like Kimia, Anita often comes to the shrine to study. She tells me she is hoping to qualify for the prestigious science stream, which would eventually allow her to enrol in a highly prized medical degree. ‘Should we go?’ Kimia turns to Anita, who nods in assent, and turns back to me, ‘Just a moment. Wait here.’ She disappears again, into the thicker crowd in the direction of the *aramgah*. I raise my eyebrows, silently asking Anita if she knows what’s going on. It’s five minutes before Kimia returns, ‘Okay. Let’s get out of here.’ Later I ask her if she had gone to pray, but she only smiles and turns her head away. We find our shoes at the entrance of the shrine and make our way out into the late afternoon sunshine, wandering away from the shrine towards the bazaar.

Kimia and Anita walk hand in hand and I try to slow my pace to theirs. It’s hot and a block or two from the shrine I remove my chador, folding it up and slipping it into my bag. Only the most half-hearted objections are raised when I suggest we make our way into the cool interior of an ice cream shop. The three of us find a table that is positioned to receive a cold blast of air conditioning. Crunching down on fine, icy noodles, in their now-sweet, now-sour syrup, the girls chat quietly, filling me in on key details of a

conversation that seems to be largely concerned with somebody I finally identify as Anita's brother. I feel, bizarrely, as if I have returned to my high school years.

Anita's family are from Estakhr, seventy kilometres north of Shiraz. She met Kimia when she first moved to city, to study, three years earlier, finding a certain affinity in their shared status as strangers. During the week Anita boards with a widowed aunt, an elderly woman who, by Anita's account has little patience for her teenage charge. On the weekends she travels home to visit her parents and a brother, Arshan, who is a year or two older.

Months later, and well after the event, Kimia confesses that Anita had been acting as a courier, ferrying letters between Kimia and Arshan. Such innocent expressions of romance are often fraught with anxiety in Iran. Like many girls her age, Kimia dreamt of forming a relationship, although in accordance with the expectations of conservative families (perhaps even most families) in Iran, her dreams didn't countenance a boyfriend, but a husband. She struggled deeply with the knowledge that her actions in communicating with Arshan, were breaching deeply held beliefs about female propriety. Even more painful to her was the awareness that any relationship between an Afghan girl and Iranian boy was almost certainly doomed by community attitudes to such cross-cultural marriages.

There are, of course, tens of thousands of marriages between Iranians and Afghans in Iran. Such marriages have been well documented due to the anomalies of a law that confers citizenship exclusively through the male line, thereby leaving children born to Iranian mothers and Afghan fathers essentially stateless (see Zahedi 2007). However, it seems to be a common practice to deny the evidence of such relationships. 'I don't know

any Iranian who would give their daughter to an Afghan,' Dordaneh tells me. Conversely, Kimia's father, quite unaware of his daughter's mild flirtations, insists that no self-respecting Afghan father would have his daughter married to an Iranian man.

The Shiraz shrines in the national imaginary

Shrines are places that affirm and give concrete reality to the Shia identity of the Iranian nation. The veneration of saints is a common phenomenon within Islam (Cornell 1998; Goldziher 1971 [1890]; Meri 2002; Taylor 1999). However, in its Sunni variant pilgrimage to shrines lack the official imprimatur enjoyed in Shiism. When Shiism was established as the state religion of Iran under Safavid rule, extant practices of local saint veneration were reformed in accordance with particular beliefs about the sanctity of the family of the Prophet and the miraculous powers inherited by his descendants. Furthermore, saint veneration was promoted as a means of propagating and popularising Shia beliefs and practices, thereby 'reinforcing and validating imperial control' (Ferg 2008, p. 5).

Upon ascension to the throne the fourteen-year-old Shah Ismail (1501–1524), the first Safavid leader to be recognised as King, declared Twelver Shiism the official religion of the Safavid state. A strategic move, this acted to demarcate Iran from its Sunni neighbours (primarily the powerful Ottoman Empire to the west and Uzbeks to the east), provided a cohesive identity to his subjects and, importantly, created social structures along the lines of which state power might be consolidated (Quinn 2000). Under the Safavids, Iran was, for the first time since the Arab conquest some eight centuries earlier, united within its historical borders. By the end of the Safavid era, the Imams and their descendants had become the source of miraculous intervention in daily life, and their shrines places that Iranians came to plead their case with the divine (Arjomand 1984).

Where the veneration of saints had once occurred at the local level, with shrines dedicated to a whole panoply of figures of Islamic (and other) origin, these places of worship were now drawn into an official discourse of Shiism that acted to uphold the Safavid claim of divinely ordained rule. In this atmosphere shrines proliferated, such that '[w]ithin reach of practically every community in Persia, however small, a shrine of some sort is to be found' (Spooner 1963, p. 87). Indeed, new shrines continue to be unearthed to the present day. Hasan Zolfaghari (2007) gives a figure of 70 000 shrines in Iran. Along with the ongoing proliferation of shrines is a proliferation of jokes about shrines. Adham tells me a somewhat convoluted joke that features a village mullah and a donkey, the gist of which is that the veracity of claims to holiness cannot be proven in the context of an enthusiastic uptake of *ziyarat* as an expression of piety in Iran.

The Shah Cheragh Shrine is widely considered the third most significant Shia site in Iran. As such it has been drawn into the national narrative of Iranian identity. Lectures and sermons are delivered at the shrine in order to 'help the community understand and affirm both their Shiite identity and the history of injustices done to the Prophet's lineage' (Ferg 2008, p. 22).

On a searingly hot afternoon, traffic on Hejrat Boulevard grinds to a halt. Outside the car a river of pilgrims streams across the street. Some of them carry flags in green or black or hold aloft banners that indicate where they have begun their journey. Many of them wear neon safety vests over clothing more traditionally associated with pilgrimage. All of them look hot and tired, but also strangely buoyed by the experience. In the context of the Islamic Republic undertaking pilgrimage to shrines becomes a statement not only of 'Shia piety' and 'devotion to the imams' (Takim 2012, p. 66) but, importantly, underscores commitment to the revolution and the Shia state.

Shah Abbas I (1571–1629) was the first Safavid ruler to devote considerable resources to the renovation of Shia shrines (Blow 2009). His funding of the expansion of the Imam Reza shrine, after making a pilgrimage on foot from the capital Isfahan to Mashhad in 1601, set a precedent for the increasing politicization of shrines. Following Shah Abbas, Iran's rulers sought not only to keep the religious establishment on side by funding extravagant building projects around shrines, but also sought to 'create physical testaments to their political authority' (Zarkar, Baghoolizadeh & Shams 2013, n.pag). Thus we have a situation where the sacred 'becomes spatial, and the spiritual becomes interpreted and articulated through the physical' (ibid.). Fatema Soudavar Farmanfarmaian (1996) points to the political value of shrines as a way of, historically, deflecting 'the flow of pilgrims and their money from the more important shrines of Ottoman-controlled Iraq.' Shrines lay bare the intertwined histories of power and religion in Iran. Indeed, to the present day, political and religious actors have used shrines as sites at which to articulate and contest narratives of nationhood.

Between Khomeini and Derrida: locating hospitality

On one of my last visits to Fahima's home, just weeks before I leave Iran, I am surprised to find her husband Khodadad seated on the steps, smoking a cigarette and nursing a glass of tea. He has the haunted look of a drug addict and sits slumped against the wall like a man defeated by life. Fahima appears unusually subdued and the conversation, which on other occasions has flowed easily, becomes stilted. Khodadad sits just outside the room and makes no contribution until we move on to talking about Khomeini, at which point he calls out a comment too brief and quickly spoken for me to catch the import of. 'He wants me to show you a picture of the Imam.' Fahima reaches up to a shelf on the wall above their small box-like television and pulls down a small black and

white print, one of the familiar photos of Khomeini, in a patterned cardboard frame. 'He says to tell you that Khomeini is our *marja* (religious guide).' Evidently my response to this revelation lacks the requisite enthusiasm, as Khodadad comes to the doorway and launches into a monologue:

Khomeini told us that there are no borders in Islam and we believed him. At first it was like coming to our own country. To our own home. The Iranian was my brother and we were equal before God and the law. But Iranians no longer care for Khomeini. Today, in their eyes I am worse than an unbeliever. Less than a dog. I know this. I am called this [a dog] every day.

When I look back through my notes I identify an undercurrent of bitterness to many of Khodadad's observations about Iran. He is far less forgiving than Fahima, who perceives hospitality as shifting, forming and re-forming, instead emphasizing a constant hostility thinly disguised as hospitality.

During the Khomeini era the official policy towards Afghans fleeing the Soviet occupation was encapsulated in the metaphor of the 'open door.' Asylum was granted to Afghans on a *prima facie* basis—that is to say, on account of their identity as Afghans, and without undertaking any process of establishing identity or interrogating the motivation for flight.

The 'door' is, of course, a key idiom of Derridean hospitality. 'For there to be hospitality,' Derrida argues,

there must be a door. But if there is a door, there is no longer hospitality. There is no hospitable house. There is no house without doors and windows, but as soon as there are a door and windows, it means that someone has the key to them and consequently controls the conditions of hospitality.

The conditions of hospitality at the scale of the nation are controlled by (hostile) borders, (hostile) immigration laws and (hostile) visa regimes. The hospitable nation is a

construct that inevitably dissolves under the weight of its internal contradictions. Yet the open door as a metaphor for un-policed borders speaks to ideal of ‘pure hospitality’: a hospitality that ‘consists in welcoming whoever arrives before imposing any conditions on him, before knowing and asking anything at all, be it a name or an identity “paper”’ (Derrida 2005, 7).

Khodadad’s brief musing on Iranian hospitality gives insight into the way in which the open door might make the shift from the realm of philosophy to that of practice. In the process, we see how—as a metaphor for ‘hospitality beyond hospitality’—it has, in fact, limited utility. Indeed, as Treanor (2011, p. 63) argues,

We are not hospitable if we simply throw open our doors, even if we ask no questions and allow unconditional and unchallenged entry, simply because there is no one at the gate to question the stranger. An unmanned gate or port of entry is no more hospitable than an uninhabited house. Hospitality requires someone who is implaced, someone who will greet, and question, the stranger.

Similarly, Casey (2011, p. 63) makes the point that, “‘Where are you from’ is not always a question put to a foreigner by a police state in order to discriminate and exclude; sometimes it is a question put to a stranger by [a] host in order to make welcome.’ The open door under Khomeini has not translated into an ongoing sense of hospitality or welcome for Afghans in Iran. This cannot be attributed to the asking of questions, but rather the failure to ask questions. Having received unconditional hospitality at the border, decades later Afghans find themselves hostage to an ongoing narrative of guestness, even as their everyday lives are shaped by the hostility (at worst) and disinterest (at best) of the host.

A refugee and a foreigner walk into a shrine

I already felt enough like a comic act, floral *chador* billowing behind me. It should have been a disguise, hiding me amongst the countless other *chador*-clad women in the immediate vicinity of the Astane shrine, instead, it acted like a flag of my foreignness. Today, the usual whispers of *khareji* seem magnified, the fleeting glances transformed into long, puzzled stares. A motherly Iranian woman brushes past me and then pauses, laying a hand on my arm. Her face, scrubbed clean and slightly lined, evinces a concern far out of proportion to the situation, 'Is everything alright?' she whispers. For a moment I don't understand exactly what she is asking and then, face reddening with embarrassment, I nod, 'Yes, everything's fine.' A foreigner in the company of a middle-aged Afghan woman is evidently sufficiently unusual to draw comment.

Walking through the suburban precinct of the shrine with Fahima, I gain a greater appreciation of the power dynamics that circumscribe Afghan life in Iran. For months now, Afghans (both men and women) have been describing to me their sense of visibility and vulnerability in the public spaces through which they move. However, as we make our way from the street into the courtyard of the Astane shrine there is a subtle shift. Here I am the stranger, the non-Muslim, whose ability to comfortably negotiate the sacred space of the shrine is compromised by my inscription as *khareji*. By way of contrast, Fahima moves comfortably and confidently, the ritual steps are enacted as body-memory, without conscious thought, while I struggle to execute a poor imitation: always a heartbeat behind and lacking the required grace. The Iranian volunteers at the shrine greet Fahima in an unstudied manner that bespeaks equality amongst worshippers at the shrine. This is a mode of interaction between Iranian and Afghan that

I have not previously witnessed, and one that hints at the potentialities of Iranian hospitality.

Power and politics beyond the shrine

During the Pahlavi era shrines became sites of confrontation between religious leaders and the authorities. The struggle over sacred space was particularly pronounced during the era of *kashf-e hejab* (1936–1941), when Iranian women were prohibited by law from covering their hair with anything more than a Western style hat (Zarkar et al. 2013). The imposition of modernity over tradition extended beyond decrees about *hejab* (for women) and the wearing of bowler hats (for men) to radically alter the urban fabric of Iran's cities.

In 1933 the Iranian Parliament unanimously passed the Street Widening Act. From the mid-twentieth century Shiraz was transformed, as broad straight roads in a grid-like pattern were laid down with little regard for the existing organic structure of the city (Andalib & Abdolazhadeh 2013). During the 1960s the expansion of the city was drastically accelerated and the historic core, including the shrine precinct, lost its physical, social and economic significance (Arjomand Kermani & Luiten 2012). This program of urban transformation cannot be understood in isolation from government efforts to sideline the clergy and traditional bazaar.

Even after the revolution there was no immediate pivot back to the shrine precinct in terms of the organisation and orientation of the city. Indeed, Azadeh Arjomand Kermani and Eric Luiten (2012, p. 1859) note the decline of the historic centre as a result of 'unbridled development and modernization' in the post-revolutionary period.

To walk with Elham through the residential streets that lie between the Astane and Shah Cheragh Shrines, is to take a journey that straddles past and present. Elham points out various landmarks, unremarkable to my eyes, but imbued with memories of a childhood spent roaming the neighbourhood. Here is the nook-in-the-wall shop still selling the same range of lollies Elham used to buy on her way home from school. There the home of a *shahid* killed in the last months of the 'imposed war.' It was rumoured, Elham tells me, that on hearing news of his death his mother attempted suicide by eating ground glass. We stop outside one house and Elham urges me to peer through the bars on the front gate. The courtyard inside is overgrown with grass and the interior of the house exposed to the elements. 'An Afghan family lived there for a few years when I was a child, but then the government claimed it. They were going to demolish it. This whole area was to be redeveloped.' She laughs 'They still haven't got around to it.'

When Elham was born in the early 1970s the shrine precinct was a largely working class neighbourhood, with significant ties to the clergy and bazaar. The urban modernisation program of that era had a highly uneven impact on the city of Shiraz. While wide roads were laid through parts of the historic centre, often with little or no regard to the cultural and historical value of the area, many of the narrow twisted lanes, inaccessible to vehicles, remained essentially unchanged.

In the decades following the revolution those who could afford to do so moved out of the area, while those with few other options, including recently arrived migrants from rural Fars, families displaced by the Iran–Iraq war and Afghan refugees, remained. The shrine precinct has been subject to significant depopulation and urban decay, and has come to be considered an undesirable residential area (Rafiee, Mahesh, Tali & Emtehani 2012).

Urban planning in the shrine precinct has continued to support the narration of a particular story about Iran and Iranian identity. The current government sees heritage conservation as a means of achieving religious objectives (Andalib & Abdolazadefard 2013). The administrators of the Shah Cheragh complex and the Sayyid Ala al-Din Husayn Shrine, with the backing of the state (including the explicit support of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei) have had the financial capacity to manage large-scale redevelopment projects (Arjomand Kermani & Luiten 2012). This has often resulted in the prioritisation of the shrines against competing needs, including those of local residents. In early 2015 the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urbanization passed a resolution banning further development in the immediate vicinity of Shah Cheragh, and, in the face of sustained opposition from the Shiraz Municipality and Shiraz City Council, ordered the restoration of a number of significant heritage sites that had been demolished in 2013 (Financial Tribune 2015).

‘We only had a few days warning before the bulldozers moved in.’ I am standing with Nazanin at the end of one of the many narrow streets that run adjacent to the *Masjed-e Jam‘e Atigh* (the old congregational mosque). The *masjed* lies directly between the Shah Cheragh and Astane shrines and pre-dates both, having been commissioned by Saffarid ruler, Amr ibn al-Layth (861–879) in the ninth century CE. I walk through the *masjed*, on route from Astane to Shah Cheragh, at least once a week. Grass has worked its way through the pavers and there are graffiti stencilled on the distinctive square *khodakhaneh* (house of God) in the centre of the courtyard. The entire place has a forsaken air and is usually deserted, bar a team of construction workers who, excavating as slowly and carefully as archaeologists, are laying new drainage pipes in the northern quarter of the courtyard. Just once, walking through the mosque on a Thursday

afternoon, I find the space transformed by scaffolding, platforms and speakers set out in preparation for Friday prayers.

Nazanin and her husband had been sharing a ground floor apartment with her in-laws—Hazara refugees from the Nimruz province in Afghanistan's south-west. A rubble of broken masonry and a single wall is all that now remains of the home the young couple lived in for the first three years of their marriage. Amongst the bricks I spot a section of pink kitchen wall tiles, largely intact and looking incongruously homely amongst the devastation. Although there's no way to prove it, Nazanin and her husband strongly suspect that their landlord was collecting rent on a property already slated for demolition.

In the mid-1990s, local authorities sought to leverage the significance of Shah Cheragh as a national icon in order to further promote the Astane shrine through a program of urban reconfiguration by which the shrines have been expanded and linked together by a major thoroughfare. In 1995 and 1996, the Shiraz Municipality demolished almost five hectares of the historic core. Much of this demolition occurred with little or no consideration for the local culture and architectural heritage of the area (Andalib & Abdolazadefard 2013).

A signpost adjacent to the Astane shrine thanks local residents for the sacrifices they have made. It leans crookedly to the side and appears to be an artefact of some other, earlier time. Between the two shrines ongoing development will see the building of a shopping complex, administrative block and a massive multi-storey hotel capable of accommodating many hundreds of pilgrims. One day, walking in the strip of shade at the edge of the already completed northern end of the construction site I am chased

down and questioned by one of the security guards, posted there to discourage drug addicts from loitering in the area. On another occasion I walk around the cool, unlit space of the new shopping mall. Half a dozen shops have already opened or are in the process of moving stock in, but at this stage it seems unlikely to pose any great threat to the nearby bazaar. At the southern end, nearer to the Astane shrine, construction crews are still working on building the hotel. Men push wheelbarrows of cement along narrow scaffolds many metres above the ground. A significant number of those labouring on the site are Afghan—the construction industry being one of the primary employers of Afghans across Iran (Sepehrdoust 2013).

Rustin Zarkar, Beeta Baghoolizadeh and Alex Shams (2013) point out the way in which the ‘transnational and middle-class nature’ of religious tourism to the Imam Reza shrine in Mashhad, makes it more accessible, ‘even as the old neighborhoods surrounding the shrine itself face a wave of gentrification and demolition.’ Manoukian (2012) has traced the same processes at work within the city of Shiraz as areas that had been relegated to the poorest segments of society, including Afghan refugees, are now being claimed anew as spaces of culture for the enjoyment of middle-class Iranians.

The shade of charity

There is such missionary zeal to Zahra’s invitation that, the third time it is proffered, I feel obliged to accept. Perhaps, too, I feel that if I want my claim to be an anthropologist taken seriously it would be remiss of me to pass up the opportunity to, in Zahra’s words, ‘Ask any questions you have.’ On a Wednesday afternoon I make my way from the Shah Cheragh shrine to the Taleghani neighbourhood. Here the roads are wider and the high

brick walls are topped not in broken glass (as is a familiar sight in poorer neighbourhoods) but in curved wrought iron bars. Reza and Zahra live at the end of a short laneway that opens up between a bakery and a shop selling plastic goods and cheap home furnishings. I introduce myself through an intercom set into the wall and somebody buzzes me in to a small paved courtyard. Where there would usually be a garden bed, here there is a square pond with half a dozen goldfish swimming sluggishly in shallow water. Somebody has laid the decorative metal grating of a window frame over the water, resting it on four evenly-spaced bricks, but whether it is there to stop a child falling in or to save the fish from the stray cats of the neighbourhood, I can't be sure.

When I arrive there is already an array of shoes left messily at the front door—fashionable sneakers and high heels. A hum of conversation wafts out of an open window. If I didn't know better, I would suspect that a party was underway. Once a week Reza and Zahra host a gathering to discuss topics around religion. These are not the same group of young people you might see at a neighbourhood mosque on a Friday morning. There are no dark *chadors* or scruffy beards in sight. Male and female guests mingle, if not easily, at least openly. In my notebook I describe 'an edgily democratic air'—although, as I will come to discover, Reza ultimately pronounces his verdict and his guests, at least outwardly, fall into line.

I am something of a curiosity here and all eyes are on me as I stumble through a truncated version of the themes of my fieldwork. Zahra is true to her word and invites me to ask my questions of the group. My first, a query about Islamic hospitality, sparks a dizzying discussion about the nature of the host. Somebody recites a snatch of poetry, something about a doorway and the beloved. It is a segment altogether too brief and

too generic in its imagery for me to place. Eventually, though, we descend to the mundane: 'When it was required of us Iran threw open [its] borders and welcomed our Afghan and Iraqi brethren.' Reza nods in agreement at this assessment and declares with a finality that brooks no disagreement, 'The shade of charity is the sign of a true Muslim.'

In a harsh desert environment hospitality evokes the imagery of shade. Shrines have always had the quality of an oasis, a place that rises up out of its surroundings, offering a form of refreshment for those who step into the cool, shadowed interior. The multiple mirrors, green-tinged light and muted sounds create the effect of being submerged in water. In the city of Shiraz, shrines function as spaces of refuge and sites of hospitality that straddle the divine and the mundane. In this chapter I have traced the (hidden) history of hospitality at the shrine and its diverse iterations in the present. I have explored the notion of the shrine as a 'threshold' over which all Shia Muslims are (in theory) invited, without fear or favour, to pass. At the same time, I have pointed to the inherent hostility of the threshold as a bordering device that at once invites and repels. I have shown how Iranians and Afghans make use of shrines in diverse ways, such that hospitality is differentially experienced.

I have used the Shiraz shrines as a launching pad to explore the idea of the open door and to point to its limitations as a metaphor for hospitality. Hospitality, in Iran, is intimately entangled with ideas about Islamic identity. Indeed, following the revolution the Islamic government explicitly articulated notions of hospitality as, at once, a religious obligation and a characteristic of Iranian personhood. However, as the shrine precinct of Shiraz is reconfigured as a space of culture and drawn into the project of national identity formation, it is paradoxically rendered *inhospitable*. Afghan refugees in Iran find

themselves caught between the expressed ideal of Islam as a global (or borderless) identity and a political project which draws Islam into constructions of national selfhood.

In the following chapter I look to the way in which notions of Islamic identity are challenged by alternative renderings of Iranian selfhood that draw on Iran's pre-Islamic history. I trace oases of hospitality that arise in those narratives of nationhood that adhere to the Achaemenid ruins of Persepolis and intersect with mythologies of Perso-Iranian origins in the Fars province.

Chapter Six: Historical Sites

Towards Persepolis

The sun hasn't yet risen above the mountains and, although the day will be hot, at this early hour there is a chill in the air. The Afghan men, milling by the road, shuffle in an effort to keep warm. A few smoke, puffing on a popular brand of Iranian cigarettes and one man pours glasses of strong, black tea from a flask and passes them around. Amongst the group there is a quiet hum of conversation. Here, the distinct tempo and meter of Dari—often modified by Afghans living in Iran in order to more closely resemble standard Iranian Persian—can be heard. Adham disparagingly describes the Afghan variant of Persian as 'clumsy' and 'unsophisticated.' One Iranian-born Afghan student describes to me an almost instinctive ability to switch dialects between the Dari of home and the Farsi that is required of her in order to partially disguise her Afghan Otherness when interacting with Iranians.

A blue utility truck pulls over, raising a choking dust and the men are suddenly alert, an edge of competitiveness entering the formerly companionable crowd. The driver leans out of his window and speaks briefly to the man with the tea flask. Moments later half a dozen Afghan men pile into the tray of the truck and it roars off. Over the course of the next hour or two almost all the men waiting here will find work—some heading back into Shiraz to bulk up construction crews with cheap labour, generally performing the heaviest and most dangerous work, others being driven out to the rich farmland on the fertile plains to the north of the city, where they will wrap damp cloths around their faces and spend the day walking between rows of crops, spraying a fine mist of pesticide from canisters strapped to their backs.

I am heading forty kilometres north of Shiraz to the city of Marvdasht to visit an NGO that runs classes—amongst other activities—for Afghan residents of the city. Many of

the young Iranian men and women who work at the NGO travel daily from Shiraz. On this occasion, I have arranged a lift with two of the volunteers and caught a taxi out to the start of the highway in order to save them a trip across town in heavy morning traffic.

The early morning light casts a soft, forgiving glow as we drive through the outer suburbs of Shiraz. Once comprised of villages, this area has in recent decades been incorporated into the expanding city. Even the medium-scale industrial sites that cling to the very edge of Shiraz are rendered almost picturesque and soon enough give way to more conventionally pleasing landscapes—first vineyards rising on steep slopes and then vast fields of crops, in green and gold, unfurling towards distant mountains.

Marvdasht is a city of approximately 140 000 that lies in the shadow of Persepolis (*Parseh* or *Takht-e Jamshid*). Indeed, it could be said that the city is, metaphorically speaking, overshadowed by the Achaemenid ruins. In guidebooks and travelogues Shiraz is linked to Persepolis, and tour guides routinely group the two together, such that a tour package would generally include a whirlwind visit to the most significant sites in Shiraz followed by a day (or half a day) at Persepolis. Marvdasht, an industrial town and the centre of a thriving agricultural region, is as indistinct as any other large town in the Fars province. By way of contrast, the city of Shiraz lays particular claim to Iran's Achaemenid history. Indeed, the city's proximity to the Achaemenid ruins has lent weight to the claim that Shiraz is the quintessentially Persian city and, moreover, a centre of Persian culture.

In this chapter I explore how Iranians and Afghans in Shiraz and in Marvdasht interact with the Achaemenid ruins of Persepolis, how the site is experienced and how it comes to be incorporated into ideas about Iranian identity that are variously shaped as inclusive

or exclusive. I ask how hospitality is foregrounded in popular constructions of Iran's pre-Islamic history and consider what this means in terms of Persepolis being configured (or reconfigured) as a space of hospitality. I look to how the *sofreh* functions as a metaphor for Iranian hospitality and ask how this might extend our understanding of hospitality more broadly. Finally, drawing on conversations and interviews with Afghan refugees and Iranian citizens living in Marvdasht and Shiraz, I map the reach of hospitality in everyday life.

I began research in Marvdasht in April 2014 and continued until October 2014, making (at a minimum) weekly trips from Shiraz throughout that period. Two Afghan families contributed substantially to this chapter: the Hashemzadeh family and the Sharifi family. Their life stories and perspectives on hospitality point to the diversity of Afghan experience in Iran.

The hospitality of Bahram, an Iranian man living and working in Marvdasht opened doors to allow me to access ethnographic data that would otherwise have been unavailable. Bahram was born in Marvdasht in 1974 and has grown up with a constant awareness of Iran's pre-Islamic history, as it is mediated through the government-managed site of Persepolis. He is acutely aware of the way in which such historical artefacts are drawn into and act to uphold particular narratives of national selfhood. Bahram made explicit the link between Iranian hospitality and the Achaemenid past, identifying hospitality as a characteristic of Iranian identity that could be traced back through millennia.

Bahram introduced me to the Afghan tenants working on his family's property just outside Marvdasht. For many Iranians and Afghans, it is the landlord–tenant or employer–employee dynamic that structures the relationship between them.

Furthermore, it is a relationship in which Afghans often find themselves exploited: having to accept sub-standard accommodation at a rent that my Iranian informant, Dordaneh, described in terms of an 'Afghan tax', essentially a unashamed price hike to offset the perceived disadvantages of renting to Afghans; or forced into unsafe work conditions, usually at a pay rate far lower than Iranian workers in similar roles, and without the protections of a contract, insurance or any official oversight of the workplace [citation].

Over the course of a single afternoon in August 2014 I sat on the carpeted floor of the Hashemzadeh home, consuming multiple cups of delicately brewed green tea and plates of fruit and biscuits, as they shared the story of their flight from Afghanistan more than three decades earlier and their experiences of history and hospitality in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Throughout this particular interview I was conscious of Bahram's presence and the particular power dynamics within the room. I knew that the circumstances of the interview both inhibited the flow of information and placed subtle pressures on Agha-ye Hashemzadeh and his family to host me as guest and researcher. My initial feeling was that the data arising out of this encounter would have to be discarded. It was only after making contact with Ali Hashemzadeh on my return to Australia and entering into an ongoing conversation with him, that I felt sufficiently comfortable of retaining the account of our meeting. This remains an enlightening snippet of the field, precisely because of the interaction that occurs between the Hashemzadeh family and their Iranian landlord and employer.

While interviews with the Hashemzadeh family were conducted with remarkable efficiency over just four or five hours (supplemented by later, long-distance conversations with the youngest son of the family), discussions with Shakufeh Sharifi, along with her siblings and parents, extended over six months from May to October 2014. All of the conversations occurred at the Sharifi residence on the outskirts of Shiraz and were transcribed into notebooks either at the time or immediately after. Recent traumatic events predisposed the family to reticence and the information that I gleaned about their lives was obtained over multiple visits and often by happenstance.

Finally, my sense of what constituted a historically oriented hospitality was scrutinised in discussion with Adham and Marjan. Over a period of months, we discussed the varied ways in which the past is made present in nationalist discourses of Iranian identity. In particular, we talked through the place of Persepolis as a site of national imaginary. Persepolis looms large in contemporary Iranian society, what I sought to understand was the degree to which a historical nationalism intersects with notions of Iranian hospitality and how that is experienced by Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees living in and around Shiraz.

Persepolis: past and present

You see the hills first. Mount Mercy [*Kuh-e Rahmat*], rises up out of the plain, bare, with the exception of some low shrubs clinging precariously to the seemingly sheer surface. About two thirds of the way up a pair of perfectly symmetrical square markings are carved out of the rock face. The graves of long departed kings, they resemble giant doorways opening into the mountain. As you draw closer you see the famed columns

(already familiar from an urban architecture that has drawn inspiration from the Achaemenid past) reaching up to the cloudless sky. Half a kilometre from the artificial plateau—the *takht* or throne—upon which the site is elevated, you leave behind the car in which you’ve made the hour-long journey from Shiraz. The walk towards the ruins has the effect of impressing upon you your insignificance in time and space. The closer you come to the site, the smaller you feel yourself to be. The powerful message inscribed in the original design of the city—a royal residence that fully encapsulated the grandeur of an expansive empire and communicated that same grandeur to those who came, willing or otherwise, to pay tribute to the king—has barely lessened in the intervening centuries. Indeed, an awareness of the way in which Persepolis has acted to serve, more recently, as a symbol of power and an affirmation of continuity (or disjuncture) with the past, adds additional layers of significance to the site.

Construction of Persepolis began in approximately 515BCE under Darius I and the City of Persians (*Parseh*) continued to be developed ‘in piecemeal fashion’ under successive kings for a period of almost 200 years (Mozaffari 2014, p. 51). In its initial incarnation as a royal city, Persepolis had a relatively short life span—it was destroyed in 330BCE when Alexander of Macedon brought the Achaemenid Empire to an abrupt end.

The conflagration that burned Persepolis to the ground has been recorded variously as an intentional act of revenge, a drunken orgy of destruction or a pre-meditated and carefully executed political act (Borza 1972). The site was subsequently abandoned; however, it has continued to form the backdrop against which various rulers have laid claim to the legacy of the Achaemenid Empire. The earliest recorded such event at Persepolis was orchestrated by the Greek Ptolemy who was installed as administrator of Persia by Alexander and is said to have held ‘an elaborate military banquet and religious

sacrifice' at Persepolis at the end of the fourth century BCE (Mousavi 2002, p. 212). In 2011 the (aborted) New Year celebrations planned by President Ahmadinejad would have made similar use of Persepolis as a backdrop and visual referent to power and nation, had the plan not been summarily and unceremoniously quashed by the Supreme Leader (Milani 2011).

Reading Derrida in the shadow of Persepolis

Hospitality at Persepolis can be traced through the site's various incarnations, first as a royal city, later as a place where myth and legend acquired historical legitimacy, an archaeological dig and a tourist destination.

In Western narratives of the Middle East, hospitality is one of several ideas that are called on as explanatory themes (O'Gorman & Prentice 2008; Stephenson 2014; Vukonić 2010). Conway (2009, p. 5) describes hospitality in the Middle East as 'the most esteemed virtue, disclosive of the true moral character of an honourable agent.' She points, by way of evidence, to the tradition of the *caravanserai* [travellers' inn].

Caravanserai are places of traditional hospitality in which the traveller was offered rest and refreshment. They date back thousands of years to the Achaemenid period and proliferated during the Safavid era. Today they are, for the most part, redundant. Notwithstanding the presence of tribal and nomadic peoples, contemporary Iran is largely a sedentary and increasingly urban society. Indeed, approximately three-quarters of the population live in towns and cities and that proportion is increasing year-by-year. While a small number of *caravanserai* have been redeveloped as hotels or restaurants, the 'remainder are left to decay under the care of the Cultural Heritage

Agency' (O'Gorman & Prentice 2008). By way of contrast, the mythology of the *caravanserai* has continued to exert itself over Iranian notions of the hospitable self.

Not all visitors at all times have been welcomed to the Persepolis site. Throughout the Qajar period there was frequent wrangling over access by European archaeological teams. Naser al-Din Shah expressed outrage over the removal of artefacts to France and was placated by an invitation to visit the exhibition of Persian antiquities at the Louvre.

In a series of interviews conducted in Melbourne, Australia, in the early 2000s, Aidani (2007) recorded the ways in which Iranian migrants spoke of and experienced hospitality. Hospitality in this context, was notable for its absence. Iranian migrants considered themselves guests, however their sense of guestness was troubled by their self-categorisation as a people unusually expert in the intricacies of hospitality. This expertise was explicitly linked to Iran's pre-Islamic past,

for many of the participants the concept of hospitality implies a relationship to history that is structured in circumstances, 'real actions' and perceptions as embodied in Persian culture and traditions as well as in the deeds of their ancestors (Aidani 2007, p. 216).

Aidani notes that Cyrus, in particular, is held up as a defender of human rights and an exemplar of hospitality.

Cyrus the Great is considered a messianic figure in Jewish history. According to the Biblical account he released the Jews from Babylonian captivity and allowed the exiles to return home in order to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Aidani (2007) cites this as a key mythology that Iranian migrants call on when referencing notions of inherent Persian hospitality and questioning 'why hospitality is not offered to them in "alien" lands' (Aidani 2007, p. 184).

What can we make of Derridean hospitality in light of this notion that Iranian hospitality is ‘embodied in Persian culture and traditions as well as in the deeds of...ancestors’ (Aidani 2007, p. 216)? In order to read Derrida in the shadow of Persepolis I need to begin by asking who or what is included in these terms ‘culture’, ‘tradition’ and ‘ancestors.’ This is that point at which the nationalising of the mythology of the Achaemenid past, initially under the auspices of Reza Shah Pahlavi, becomes significant in understanding the processes by which Afghans are today made Other to the Iranian Self, thereby becoming subject to Iranian hospitalities and hostilities.

In this chapter I explore how practices of hospitality that emerge out of the mythologies of Iran’s pre-Islamic history, expand our understanding of hospitality as it has developed in accordance with the myths and metaphors employed by Derrida.

Hospitality is, of course, practice, and does not therefore exist as an embodied reality in the way that Aidani’s informants refer to it. The idea that there is a direct causal link between some sort of imagined nascent Achaemenid human rights regime and contemporary practices of hospitality, points to the way in which hospitality functions at the level of myth. Indeed, hospitality *works*, as a shared language, precisely because of this mythological element. It is no more absurd for Iranian’s to call on Cyrus as part of a national narrative of hospitality, than it is for Derrida to call on Abraham or Homer.

Living with Persepolis

According to the Marvdasht Municipality, the city and its surrounds is home to approximately fifteen thousand Afghans in as many as three thousand households (personal correspondence 2014). The relationship of the Afghan population of

Marvdasht (and, to a lesser extent, of Shiraz) to Persepolis is complex and highlights the way in which Afghans in Iran are positioned in relation to notions of culture. Achaemenid sites are central to a historical narrative of Iranian identity and come to validate Iranian claims to 'have culture' and 'be cultured.' 'Our government is not wild like the Taliban,' explains Bahram—an Iranian resident of Marvdasht—before turning glum and adding in a low voice, 'Whatever some people might think.'

It is a child's mishap with an ice cream that leads me to Bahram. In the early afternoon most of the shops in Marvdasht are shut and remain so until the worst of the day's heat is past. The main road, running through the centre of the city and out towards Persepolis, is deserted, with the exception of some sluggishly moving vehicles and, in the distance, a group of Afghan labourers who are sleeping in the sparse shade cast by trees planted intermittently on the median strip. When I scurry through the door into the cool and slightly musty interior of the store that I mistakenly take to be a children's clothes shop, the man behind the cracked glass counter rises to his feet, surprised. Few foreign tourists stop off in this part of Marvdasht, instead making their way straight to Persepolis from Shiraz and back in the space of a day, or else staying a night at a hotel on the very edge of the Achaemenid site. Bahram is effusive in his greeting and, after he has searched through piles of cheap Chinese-made t-shirts and colourful stretch pants in a fruitless effort to find something that will fit a six-year-old, insists on offering around bottles of pomegranate juice and small wrapped squares of nougat. This show of hospitality is one I associate with carpet salesmen in the bazaars of Shiraz or Isfahan and usually puts me on guard. Bahram, however is genuinely warm and, if there is any ulterior motive, it is only to quiz my husband about life, as a migrant, in Australia. Forty-five minutes after we enter the shop, and now in possession of several t-shirts printed

with familiar Achaemenid icons (a new line that Bahram is trying to palm off to the more nationalistically inclined residents of Marvdasht), we are sitting down at a plastic-topped table, polishing off an order of kebabs. Bahram, between mouthfuls of saffron rice and chicken, regales us with tales of his cousin who previously worked as a guard at *Takht-e Jamshid*, 'Making sure visitors don't pocket the stones.'

For Bahram, the Achaemenid site is a source of pride that features prominently in his construction of what it means to be, in his words, 'a true Iranian.' This idea of a 'true Iranian' is powerfully evocative, incorporating multiple complex layers of meaning. 'A true Iranian,' Bahram explains, 'has certain qualities. This is not about religion, or language, or [place of] birth but about loyalty, love of country and hospitality.' These, Bahram assures me, are 'the qualities of Cyrus the Great and were built into the foundations of the nation when the City of Persians rose from the plains.' This stirring speech is followed by the sheepish admission that he hasn't actually been out to Persepolis for 'well over a year.'

We wait outside the kebab shop while Bahram goes to get his car. He has promised to show us something, although just what the something is he is not revealing in advance. When we pile into the vehicle I am expecting to head north towards Persepolis, but we head in the opposite direction, driving ten minutes out of town, to where fields of wheat stretch to distant hills. At the end of a narrow, unpaved road we pull up in the meagre shade of an almond tree. 'My family's,' Bahram indicates carelessly towards a huddle of five or six low, white-washed houses and the fields beyond, 'but you have to see this.' He walks towards the closest of the houses calling out as he approaches, 'Hajji. Hajj Agha.' Bahram brushes aside our concern at turning up unannounced and at a time most

people are having an afternoon sleep. 'They're our tenants. Afghan.' As if, somehow, these two facts excuse a breach of etiquette.

Agha-ye Hashemzadeh rises to the occasion and, with a shout out to his wife that guests are arriving, ushers us through a curtain hanging over the front door and into the cool interior of his home. Eyes adjusting to the low-light after the brightness outside I see a room remarkable mostly for its sparseness. With the exception of the threadbare carpets laid across the floor, the only decorative item is a framed print of the *haram* of Imam Reza: the sort of image that can be purchased for the equivalent of a few dollars in the bazaar.

Agha-ye Hashemzadeh came to Iran in 1980, residing initially in the vicinity of Mashhad, then Tehran—where his wife, a refugee from central Afghanistan, was living with her family—and finally settling in Marvdasht. The couple has three children. Their older son works as a casual labourer—by law restricted to working in Marvdasht, he is amongst the men waiting by the roadside on the outskirts of Shiraz each morning in the hope of obtaining work in the city. Their daughter has recently moved to Tehran with her husband and has embarked on the long process of migrating to Northern Europe, and their younger son, Ali, is at school and 'will be home shortly if you wait around.'

Bahram assures them that we will be gone soon and he is 'just wanting to show the foreigner the house.' He points out the doorframe and when I look puzzled he calls me over to look closer, 'Look up, see.' I peer up at the lintel which is of exposed stone, a familiar pale sandy colour. 'From *Takht-e Jamshid*,' Bahram announces proudly, 'My grandfather [or great-grandfather] and his father, dragged it down here to build the house. They weren't the only ones, lots of old houses around here are the same.'

‘We live in a palace,’ Agha-ye Hashemzadeh quips. He waves his hand towards the lintel and then around the simple room, ensuring we don’t miss the irony of the statement. The presence of historical artefacts in his home doesn’t faze him. ‘I’ve heard they were good kings, back then.’ Agha-ye Hashemzadeh is remarkably good-natured in the face of the unexpected presence of half a dozen curious guests, in his living room. Nor does he express discomfort over his landlord’s proprietary interest in the space. ‘When we needed a place to lay our heads, Khomeini welcomed us. How can I say something against my brother who has sheltered me in his home?’

By the time we have drunk the obligatory glass of sweet green tea, and been offered and refused further tea and sweets, Ali has made his way home. He is eager to contribute to the conversation about Iran’s ancient kings. ‘We have studied this at school. When *Takht-e Jamshid* was built the Persian Empire stretched halfway across Afghanistan.’ He smiles, ‘I guess you could say they are our kings too.’

While Ali is prepared to lay claim to the Achaemenid kings, few Iranians would acknowledge Afghan refugees in Iran as equal heirs to the Achaemenid legacy. Indeed, when I make this proposition to Marjan—drawing on Ali’s quip—she is momentarily dumbfounded. ‘I suppose that is true.’ She struggles to find the right words, before finally turning Ali’s statement on its head ‘Afghanistan is a part of Greater Iran and, in some sense you could say it belongs to us.’

The Hashemzadeh family represent both the changing expectations of and limited opportunities for Afghans in Iran. All three children have received an education that was not (and, for the most part, is still not) available in rural Afghanistan. As a consequence, their horizons stretch further than those of their parents. As the youngest child Ali is,

however, acutely aware of the forces that will almost certainly curtail his considerable ambition. His older brother was a gifted student of mathematics and, Ali informs me quietly, a talented musician, 'Now he digs holes for a few *rial*.' For Ali the future lies somewhere else – west like his sister or east back in Afghanistan, 'Where my school certificates will count for something and I can make a difference.'

Ali's interest in history extends to a lively curiosity about the world in general and for every question he is asked he has one in return. He is interested to hear about the lives of Afghan refugees elsewhere in the world and bitterly compares the capacity of (a very limited number of) Afghans to obtain citizenship in Western countries with the experience of remaining permanently in limbo in Iran. 'Iran and Afghanistan share thousands of years of history...but here we are treated like beggars from nowhere.'

Bahram interjects at this point, and there is a subtle shift in the room as he asserts his authority, 'Afghans are welcome in Marvdasht.' He turns to Agha-ye Hashemzadeh who is now focussed studiously on the almost empty glass of tea in front of him, as if reading something of great import in the leaves. 'Maybe in Tehran it was like this, but you have not had any problems in Shiraz [Fars Province] have you?' There is a pause, which is only broken when Agha-ye Hashemzadeh's wife passes around a platter of watermelon, murmuring entreaties to continue eating. Bahram looks mutinous, but takes a slice, using the edge of his fork to cut the fruit into delicate mouthfuls.

As we drive back towards town, the sun a fiery red ball low in the western sky, Bahram—wounded by Agha-ye Hashemzadeh's failure to confirm the hospitable treatment of Afghans in Marvdasht—offers his own take on the question of Afghans as guests of the Iranian nation,

We did not invite Afghans here to our country, but we will not turn away a guest who arrives on our doorstep unannounced. [Indeed,] this guest will be treated as well as a member of our own family and better. This is the Iranian way. Even now after thirty years our sense of hospitality inhibits us from saying 'enough'. The good guest must know himself that the time for departure has come.

Having given us due warning of the Iranian propensity for excessive hospitality and concomitant expectation that a 'good guest' will know when to graciously refuse further generosity, Bahram offers to drive us out to Persepolis, 'We could swing by my cousin's house. He could come along to give you an expert tour.' Night, however, is already fast approaching and Bahram doesn't protest or repeat the offer, when we say that it's time to be getting tired children back to Shiraz. Dropping us off in the centre of Marvdasht, he leans out of the car window and, as we offer effusive and heartfelt thanks for his kindness, makes us promise that we will look him up next time we are in town.

Persepolis as tourist site

My first visit to Persepolis was in December 2009. The day was clear and there was no breeze at the foot of Mount Rahmat. By the time I had ascended the double flight of ceremonial stairs I was uncomfortably warm in my winter scarf and heavy *manteau*. At that time of year, and on a week day, there was only a handful of visitors wandering across the *Apadana*—the vast audience hall where the Achaemenid kings received delegates from subject nations.

Tourists to Persepolis—having paid an entrance fee (a tokenistic amount for Iranian visitors, significantly more for foreigners)—ascend the site via a wooden staircase built over the original stone double flight of steps. From there, most make their way through the same awe inspiring 'Gate of All Nations' through which visitors, millennia ago,

approached the Achaemenid king. Movement through the site is restricted only by occasional barriers erected to protect particularly significant (or unusually vulnerable) monuments. Graffiti, etched into stone, reveals the richness of what Ali Mousavi (2012) calls the ‘afterlife’ of the site. Evidence of centuries of visits to Persepolis and the subsequent accretion of meaning, is on display.

The earliest extant marks made by visitors to the site are etched figures that act as a crude visual link between the Sasanian Kings (224–651) and their Achaemenid forbears. Inscriptions by various Iranian rulers (most noticeably of the Shia Buyid dynasty that reigned from Shiraz between 945 and 1062) had a similar function, asserting a mythical continuity between past and present.

Arabic inscriptions and a *mihrab* etched in the Palace of Darius attest to efforts to integrate Islam with pre-Islamic history at the site. Similar processes occurred across Iran in the context of the Arab conquest, providing legitimacy to significant historical monuments and in some cases, protecting them from destruction. Eighty kilometres north of Persepolis the tomb of Cyrus at Pasargadae was, for centuries, known as the burial site of the mother of King Solomon (of Biblical and Quranic history), a method by which local residents disguised the ‘non-Islamic’ origins of the site (Baldissoni 2016).

Over hundreds of years, local visitors have scratched their names, in Farsi, Armenian and Hebrew, across Persepolis. And from the seventeenth century onwards, European—and later, Indian—names have proliferated, most notably on the Gate of All Nations. As St John Simpson (2005), senior curator of the ancient Iran and Arabia collections at the British Museum, points out, ‘The passage of time has led to these names becoming an important part of the site’s history.’ Foreign tourists to Persepolis, both past and

present, by consequence of their presence at the site extend the reach of the historical narrative beyond the borders of Iran.

Kian and Behrouz live in Marvdasht and are regular visitors to Persepolis. On a spring morning during the busy New Year holiday period they make a game of guessing where foreign and domestic tourists, queuing at the ticket stand, hail from. They are remarkably astute at recognising minute variations in dress and deportment that provide vital clues in this exercise. 'See his shoes,' Kian urges, 'Definitely from Tehran.' Behrouz deliberates, 'Could be from Isfahan?' The matter is resolved almost immediately when the man turns to his companion and speaks briefly. 'Tehran,' the boys are in agreement on the man's accent. Foreign tourists can be even easier to pick. Behrouz raises his eyebrows and indicates silently in the direction of a small group—two women and a man—standing to the side in the meagre shade cast by a temporary canvas wall. 'Korean' he says.

The site is a major drawcard, bringing tourists from across Iran and further afield. In a hotel in Isfahan, members of a tour group from Germany expound enthusiastically on the two days they spent in Shiraz. The highlight of their time was, they agree, the visit to Persepolis. By way of contrast, the relationship of the Iranian government to the Achaemenid ruins remain fraught, at best. The Iranian Revolution marked an abrupt about-face in the relationship between history and state. Visits by foreign tourists to Persepolis virtually ceased in the decade after the revolution, only resuming in the mid-1990s as a minute trickle of foreigners negotiated their way through burdensome visa requirements and official suspicion that cast all Western visitors as potential spies. Iranians were, likewise, discouraged from visiting Persepolis, the ruins being

rehabilitated as a site of culture and national pride only when then President Rafsanjani made a tour of the ruins in 1991 (Sciolino 2000).

Foreign visitors have historically played an important role in elevating Persepolis to a site of national significance. Certainly in its original incarnation, Persepolis was intended to be a royal city in keeping with the power and influence wielded by the Achaemenid kings over an expansive empire (Mousavi 2012). Furthermore, it was specifically designed as a place in which the king would receive tribute from ambassadors of subject nations (Reed 2010).

Michael Curtotti (2016) argues for a 'Middle West' in place of the 'Middle East' in recognition of the intertwining of cultures in this region of the world, beginning with 'Alexander the Great' and culminating in the emergence of the modern West through the melding of Greek and Ancient Persian cultures.

Khareji-ha and Afghan-ha

On a late afternoon visit to Persepolis in 2014 I stop to speak briefly to a site guard who is just packing up for the day. Kamran is from Shiraz and has been working at Persepolis for just over a year. To him this is, 'More than just a job. *Parseh* is the heart of Iran.' I ask him about foreign tourists and make some light-hearted comment about the differential entrance fees applied to Iranians and non-Iranians. He looks mortified and apologises far more than necessary, insisting that I am 'not really a foreigner' and 'almost Iranian.'

'So, what about Afghans?' I ask. Are Afghans 'almost Iranian' or are they considered foreigners, when it comes to such commercial transactions? He laughs, 'Why would an

Afghan come here [to Persepolis]?’ The question is entirely rhetorical, but he doesn’t pause before answering, ‘No. No. Afghans aren’t foreigners. They’re too poor.’

How is foreignness and Afghan-ness differentially inscribed? Shiraz is increasingly attempting to configure itself as a tourist destination, a place that is desirable and welcoming to foreigners (see Khamenei 2008). *Khareji* [plural: *khareji-ha*], while literally denoting someone (or something) from outside or abroad, and once a disparaging term for a non-Muslim (see Amanat 2012, p. 33) has come to mean a particular type of foreigner: usually Western, often white and always possessed of a disposable income. This narrative replaces an earlier one (not entirely discarded) in which *khareji* were treated as suspect bodies—spies, saboteurs and morally corrupt. This shift in inscription has occurred parallel to the shift in the way Afghans have been perceived—from fellow Muslim to non-Iranian.

Two months after my brief conversation with Kamran I return to Persepolis. This time I am here not only in the company of my husband and children, but also with Kobra and her son and daughter. It was Kobra who, while flicking through photos of Persepolis saved on my computer, had asked if we would take her with us to visit the site. She has never before been to Persepolis and I feel the irony of acting tourist guide to someone who has lived their whole life a mere fifty kilometres away. In the event, our plans are postponed several times, as Kobra doesn’t wish to advertise either the day trip or relationship with my family to her husband, who has made an unexpected—and to Kobra unwished for—return to the family home after an absence of months.

We intend to leave Shiraz at daybreak but it’s mid-morning before we finally depart. Four children climb noisily around the car and only settle down when the threat of

withholding ice cream is invoked. Several kilometres south of Persepolis we stop, pulling into the shade of a pine grove and emptying the boot of the car of picnic supplies: charcoal, chicken marinading in yoghurt and lemon juice, saucepans of rice, bottles of soft drink and two oversized watermelons. We will wait now for the midday heat to dissipate before tackling the unshaded walk to Persepolis.

Kobra is always good company. We talk, keeping half an eye on the children who are engrossed in building some sort of complicated hideout of fallen branches and grass. The time is long past when this might have been constituted as an interview and if we touch on the topics of my research it is only in the incidental way of friends and acquaintances who find themselves following familiar patterns of conversation.

Later though, walking amongst the imposing stone ruins of Persepolis, Kobra falls silent. When a guard calls out roughly, reprimanding her son for wandering too close to an area designated as out of bounds, it is my husband who steps in to assure the man that we are not—contrary to his exaggerated claims—allowing the boy to run wild. Kobra, who has always approached life with an abundance of spirit and more confidence than I can muster on the best of days, seems suddenly diminished.

Persepolis as archaeological site

Don García de Silva Figueroa was the first Western traveller to identify the ruins as the same City of Persians described by the Greek scholar Diodorus of Sicily in his *Bibliotheca historica* (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991). De Silva had been appointed ambassador by Spain's Philip III. He arrived at the court of Shah Abbas in 1617, bringing his interest in classical history and antiquities to the field. Up to that point the site—much of which

remained buried for the next three centuries—had been known locally as the palace or *takht* (throne) of the mythical Jamshid. Subsequent European visitors sought to place Persepolis within a narrative of Western history that drew on Greco-Roman and Biblical sources (Abdi 2001). Within this narrative, particular figures, already established within the Western canon, have assumed great significance.

Kamyar Abdi (2001, p. 52) argues that nationalism along with archaeology was imported into Iran in the nineteenth century ‘by Western-educated Iranians or the introduction of Western concepts into the Iranian society.’ A consequence of this is that Iranian constructions of selfhood have been partially mediated through Western and Orientalist frameworks. During the Pahlavi era, American scholars Phyllis Ackerman and Arthur Upham Pope played a pivotal role in shaping emerging discourses on Iranian art and culture. Holding a sincere belief in Persian racial superiority, Pope elevated Cyrus as a hero and founder of the Iranian nation (Grigor 2009). He insisted that ‘the Persians’ are animated by ‘the same lively imagination, the same delicate touch that created marvels for Cyrus’ (Pope in Grigor 2009, p. 28).

Under Reza Shah Pahlavi Iranian interest in archaeology and history was ramped up. The implementation of an antiquities law saw greater Iranian control of Persepolis, which had been partially lost through the granting of generous concession to French archaeological missions. Reza Shah took a close personal interest in excavations, visiting the site on a number of occasions. In 1932 he praised the director of excavations, German archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld, stating, ‘You are doing the work of civilization here, and I thank you’ (in Abdi 2001, p. 110). Such comments capture the way in which Reza Shah positioned Iran, globally, and presented his project of identity formation as

one that drew heavily on history even as it aspired to the modernising power and relative technological advancement of the West.

On his ascension to the throne Mohammad Reza Shah presented himself as the latest in a long line of kings that extended back, unbroken, to the founder of the Achaemenid Empire, Cyrus the Great. The 1971 celebration of the monarchy, taking place primarily at Pasargadae and Persepolis, was a moment in which the Shah sought to elevate himself before a diverse audience of foreign leaders and representatives. The entire occasion was a grand piece of theatre, with the invited guests playing the unwitting role of supplicants or emissaries to the king, mirroring the reliefs on the Apadana stairwell at Persepolis.

As a consequence of the self-serving ends to which the Pahlavi regime had harnessed archaeology, it came to be perceived as a 'pseudoscience in service of the court to glorify despotism and justify royal oppression of the masses' (Abdi 2001, p. 70). Archaeology, in the post-revolutionary period, fell into disfavour. As Abdi (ibid.) records, archaeological activities dwindled away to almost nothing, only reviving in the 1990s, coinciding with the first official visit to Persepolis by a President of the Islamic Republic.

History and Islam

Persepolis was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in October 1979, just months after the establishment of the Islamic Republic. At this time the site was under considerable threat, as the Iranian government sought to reconfigure the relationship between history and nationalism in Iran. Manoukian (2012) describes the way in which

Achaemenid history—instrumental to Pahlavi nationalism—came to be ‘edited out’ of emerging narratives of national identity in the immediate post-revolutionary period.

It is rumoured that shortly after the return of Khomeini to Iran, Sadegh Khalkhali—the notoriously hardline cleric who was given the moniker ‘the hanging judge’ for his propensity to pass harsh sentence on perceived enemies of the revolution—gathered a mob and marched to Persepolis with the intention of razing it to the ground. According to Mehdi Hodjat (1995, p. 215) the way in which the Shah had utilised Persepolis caused it to be excluded, in the minds of the Iranian people, from ‘the category of respectable relics’ that were, on Khomeini’s orders, to be preserved. Although there are no definitive sources around these events the story goes that two days after the ‘victory of the revolution’ (11th February 1979) a crowd set out from Shiraz with the intention of destroying Persepolis (ibid.). In an account by Fariba Amini—daughter of then governor general of Fars province—her father, Nasratollah Amini, was instrumental in protecting the site, declaring ‘You will destroy Persepolis over my dead body’ (Amini 2004).

Bahram, a child at the time of the revolution, has a slightly different take on these events, claiming that Persepolis was saved only by the ‘devotion and bravery of the people of Marvdasht’ who ‘lay themselves down in front of the bulldozers.’

Afsaneh, an Iranian woman who left Shiraz shortly after the revolution and has since settled in Sydney, Australia, traces her disillusionment with the revolution to rumours of the destruction of Persepolis. ‘One day the story passed around that they had destroyed *Takht-e Jamshid*. People were laughing and cheering. Although, praise God, the rumour turned out to be false, that was the moment I knew I would leave Iran.’

In the intervening years the Achaemenid sites, including Persepolis, have been partially rehabilitated. This rehabilitation has occurred in tandem with shifting notions of what it means to be Iranian. The emphasis on religious identity (and government-led efforts to negate nationalist forms of selfhood, replacing them with visions of a borderless Islam) has given way to an official discourse of nationalism that seeks to balance the occasionally contradictory claims of Islamic and Iranian identities (see Holliday 2011). In many ways this represents the ascendancy of pragmatism above ideology as the determining framework within Iranian politics (Takeyh 2006). Indeed, following the Iran–Iraq war, ‘pre-Islamic monuments and places were once again cautiously admitted into the repertoire of national Inscriptions’ (Mozaffari 2014).

Abdi (2001, p. 72) argues that ‘the hostility toward history and nationalism that characterized the revolution of 1979 was inherently incompatible with...Iranian culture’ and points to calls by Iranian scholars as early as January 1981 for a ‘rapprochement with history.’ Such rapprochement with history has been gradual and uneven.

In a speech delivered in Shiraz in 2008, Khamenei (touching on the tourist potential of pre-Islamic monuments in the Fars province) stated that Persepolis is ‘the product of the Iranians’ creative minds, their artistic skills, and their high-minded views’ and, as such, ‘Persepolis and other monuments should be introduced to the world’ (Khamenei 2008). Even as Khamenei made these statements, he asserted the inferiority of Persepolis *vis-à-vis* Iranian cultural production of the Islamic era and reiterated the claim that ‘such monuments belong to dictators of history.’ Importantly Khamenei situates Persepolis (and other pre-Islamic monuments) in relation to the *rest of the world*. Indeed, in this speech, Khamenei acknowledges the significance of Iran’s pre-Islamic dynasties within a Western narrative of history. Suggesting that Iran’s monuments might expose the

relative poverty of Greek monuments and reposition pre-Islamic Iran as superior to the Greek and Roman forbears of the modern West.

Persepolis is important to Iranians because,

They [Iranians] are bound to their glorious past, to the religious and spiritual impact of Islam, and to the technological and modernizing appeal of the West. Parseh [Persepolis] seems to satisfy the complex and sometimes intertwining urgencies of all three of these profound impulses (Mousavi 2002, p. 246).

The Persepolis site reinforces notions of Iran as a hospitable place, linking contemporary Iran to the Achaemenid past in which, as Marjan puts it, 'Iran welcomed the whole world.'

The hospitable *sofreh*

A heavy, sugary smell fills the basement carpark, almost entirely obliterating the usually pervasive odour of damp carpet and petrol. I have been invited to a *mela*, a night-long event at which *samanu* [wheatgrass paste] is cooked in preparation for the New Year. The pot in which the *samanu* is slowly simmering over a gas ring is huge, I can barely peer over the rim, and stirring the mix with a large wooden paddle proves awkward. As the night progresses more and more women crowd into the stifling space, the cold air that enters each time the garage door is opened and the curtain—blocking the women from the sight of any curious neighbour or passer-by—briefly drawn aside, is a relief. Women sing, enthusiastically as each new person steps up to the pot to take their turn stirring the thickening paste, and then trailing off as people return to conversations. My host, a short-statured Afghan grandmother, periodically disappears upstairs, returning

with trays of tea and thin round sugar discs flavoured with lime or cardamom. Amongst the guests I recognise some of my host's granddaughters, young teenagers, who stand back from the action with studied disinterest. In the morning, plastic bowls of *samanu* will be distributed to many of the Afghan households in the neighbourhood. At least some of these bowls will make their way onto the *sofreh-ye haft seen*, forming a vital symbolic element of the new year that, my host explains, reminds her of the sweetness of these shared moments.

Having thought about how we might read Derrida in the field, I now want to propose reading Derrida *with* the field. In this case, taking the metaphor of the *sofreh* and placing it alongside other metaphors of Derridean hospitality (the house, the threshold, the door) in order to expand our understanding of the hospitable.

The *sofreh* has a mythological presence in Iran that is traced back to the pre-Islamic era. The ritual elements of the *haft seen sofréh* can be confidently dated back to the Sasanian period. However contemporary practices around the New Year are imaginatively inscribed in the earlier Achaemenid era and, in place, at Persepolis. The Achaemenid site is creatively drawn into the new year celebrations, through for example, visual representations of the ruins and celebratory events associated with the New Year that (sometimes controversially, as in Ahmadinejad's populist attempt to co-opt Achaemenid history) occur in the vicinity of Persepolis and Pasargadae. In addition to its extraordinary function in ritual, the *sofreh* has a mundane meaning. Crossing between both the ordinary and the extraordinary, we can read the *sofreh* as a metaphor for hospitality. Indeed, the imagery of the *sofreh* is already productively applied to the Iran–Afghan relationship, drawing it into the framework of hospitality.

In a 2006 article published in a local Marvdasht paper (Marvdasht Nama), the unnamed author writes about the hospitality of the people of Marvdasht in terms of a *sofreh* laid out before the town's Afghan 'guests':

They have been sitting at the same tablecloth as us, the tablecloth which the host has been laying down before them for twenty-five years, and the host never raised his eyebrows [in complaint] that, God forbid, the guest become upset.

Ultimately the author is drawing on notions of hospitality to make that point that Afghans are not, in fact, welcome in the town.

We don't want our good deeds destroyed by ugly and inhospitable behaviour towards Afghan guests. Therefore, we must fold our hands and in a legal and reasonable way request that these guests—who have become hosts—leave, in order to bring back the peace and safety of Marvdasht.

The final point of the article is made no less brutal for being hedged in poetry: 'Although the guest is dear, like the breath it can choke you if it comes in but doesn't go out.'

The renowned Afghan poet Kazem Kazemi, who writes out of his experience of exile in Iran, references the *sofreh* in his famous 1991 poem, *Return*:

Tonight the spell of exile will be broken;
Tonight, I will wrap my empty *sofreh*
Around the nights of celebration.

We can see here how the *sofreh* functions as a shared symbol of hospitality. Both Afghans and Iranians call on the symbol of the *sofreh* to point to respective failures of hospitality on the part of the host and the guest.

Mullah Azami, reflecting on the terminology of the open door in the context of Iranian policy towards Afghan refugees throughout the 1980s, articulates the

failure of Iranian hospitality as ‘an open door but an empty *sofreh*.’ The open door, has not in other words, translated into the sort of reciprocal relationships of the hospitable *sofreh*.

A failure of reciprocity

The key was already turning in the lock when it occurred to me that I hadn’t actually told my host that the guests coming that day were Afghan refugees. Later, I told myself it had not been an intentional omission, but the truth was, I had felt awkward about suddenly being catapulted—still in the early weeks of my fieldwork—from guest to host. Feeling my way cautiously and conscious of taking liberties in someone else’s house, I had preferred to keep silent on issues that I instinctively knew would complicate the situation.

The first twelve days of the New Year are a period of time traditionally set aside to reciprocal hospitality. It was Zakiya who had invited me to her mother’s *mela*, just days before the New Year. At that stage, I was still tentatively trying to establish myself in the field and I was carefully cultivating the few contacts I had amongst Afghans in Shiraz. Visiting Zakiya and her family in the New Year was not, of course, an entirely cynical exercise in exploiting a developing fieldwork relationship, but it didn’t yet have the naturalness of friendship and I was uncomfortably conscious of avoiding any missteps this early in my research. A reciprocal visit was to be expected and I was determined to fulfil my obligations as a good host

But of course, if I was host at the moment of Zakiya’s visit, I was also guest in the house in which I was staying. We were all on a second round of tea and Zakiya’s teenaged son

was telling us a story about a precarious bicycle trip half way across Shiraz to visit an Iranian classmate who happened to live only a block or two away in this same northern suburb, when my host arrived home. Zakiya must have known almost immediately that whatever welcome I had extended was now firmly withdrawn by the owner of the house, as she greeted them in a manner that could only be described as distinctly frosty, before making a hasty and uncharacteristic retreat to the kitchen, where she noisily began washing glasses. ‘You have been too kind,’ Zakiya is gracious but determinedly deflects my feeble attempts to persuade the family to stay longer, cajoling her children into shoes and jackets.

I spoke to Zakiya twice more on the telephone in the months ahead, but we didn’t again meet. For my part, I was deeply embarrassed at my failure to appropriately reciprocate the hospitality that had been extended to me. What Zakiya felt about the situation I could only guess.

Persepolis in Shiraz

Stepping into Adham and Marjan’s home, my eye is immediately and inevitably drawn to a plaster replica of a stone relief from Persepolis. Framed and highlighted in gold paint, it hangs on the wall above the settee, visually dominating the room. In time, I notice other references to Achaemenid history—a room thermometer held upright by an Achaemenid guard; a stylized *faravahar* worked into the pattern on a floor rug; fluted columns adorning the archway between kitchen and living room. Achaemenid kitsch allows for the dissemination and ongoing reproduction of a particular narrative of Iranian identity outside the purview of the state. As such, the purchase and display of such items creates the effect (almost entirely illusory) of being a political act. Over tea,

Marjan hands me a replica Achaemenid column complete with the same double-headed bull-shaped capital that has caused such unease for the clerical leadership of the Islamic Republic (see Manoukian 2012, p. 62). She has been using it to prop up a dozen slim novels and volumes of poetry that line the mantelpiece. I heft it in my hand, surprised by the weight of it, 'It reminds me of who I am,' Marjan explains, 'What people I come from.'

Adham concurs, 'Before Islam there was Iran and Iran will remain.' Although he doesn't say it the unspoken words seem to reverberate through the room, so that I jot them down in my notebook as if they have been declared aloud: 'Iran will remain...even when the Islamic Republic is no longer.'

For Adham and Marjan the ancient past has a daily presence and immediacy that speaks to notions of what it means to be Iranian. 'This is our heritage,' Marjan states with obvious pride, going on to reiterate her earlier statement, 'It reminds me of who I am.'

The idea of Iran can be traced back to the concept of *ariya* that arose in the Achaemenid era and was adopted by the Sasanians as *Iranshahr*, linking Sasanian reign to that of the Achaemenids (Wieshöfer 2001). Territory has continued to play an important part in the way that Iranians conceive of themselves and the nation. Kashani-Sabet (1997, 1998) points to the way in which anxieties about loss of territory in the nineteenth century led to land and landscape being foregrounded within emerging narratives of nationalism in Iran. The enthusiastic embrace of the 'new' sciences of geography, cartography and archaeology occurred in conjunction with a reinvigoration of notions of *Iranshahr* and *Iranzamin*. It was during this period that the 'sketching of exact boundaries' and the mapping of Iran allowed Iranians to visualise the nation in new ways as a bounded entity

(Kashani-Sabet 1997, p. 22). In 1856 Naser al-Din Shah Qajar made a misguided attempt to seize control of the city of Herat and the Greater Khorasan region of present-day Afghanistan, provoking a military response by the British colonial powers and forcing Iran to recognise the Kingdom of Afghanistan. Indeed, efforts to extend Iran's territory to the north, east and west were invariably thwarted by, respectively, the machinations of the Russians, British and Ottomans. As such, Iran's borders have remained static since the late Qajar period.

Throughout the twentieth century, as nationalism flourished in Iran and the Achaemenid past was more firmly drawn into political narratives of the present, the extant cartographic representation of the nation assumed an ahistoric permanence. History is mapped onto territory (see Boyarin 1994) but, by the same token, territory is mapped onto history. As such, those placed outside the borders of the nation may find themselves bereft of certain histories and excluded from the historical narrative. As Ana Maria Alonso (1988, p. 41) notes in the case of Mexico, 'The nation appropriates the totality of the history enacted in its territory.' Here, she suggests that territory and history form the 'privileged political spaces within which the nation is imagined and through which 'sovereignty' is constructed' (ibid.), such that Mexico is able to call on pre-Columbian civilisation in order to lay claim to territory beyond the modern state borders. I suggest that in Iran present-day borders are in fact retrospectively applied so that history without (or outside) territory is elided.

Talinn Grigor (2007) points to a growing interest in, and emphasis on, Iran's pre-Islamic history that was, from the Qajar era onwards, reflected in the architectural domain. Replicas of Achaemenid columns became a distinct feature of public buildings, while various historic motifs were made to adorn homes and can still be viewed in some of

the few remaining Qajar-era mansions of Shiraz. The Pahlavi regime, in turn, utilised Achaemenid inspired architecture in the program of upholding dynastic power.

The incorporation of the Achaemenid past within the contemporary urban space of Shiraz can be traced to the Qajar period, intensifying significantly from the time of the Constitutional Revolution, to be whole-heartedly embraced by the Pahlavi regime.

The [Achaemenid-style] columns portrayed the empire as the embodiment of the racialized and Persophile Iran the Pahlavis were pursuing. The empire became a signpost for the past and present glory of the monarchy, a correlate to the urban expansion and a sign of the majesty of an ancient culture, whose contemporary expression was an orderly and successful advancement towards the future (Manoukian 2012, p. 23).

Indeed, Reza Shah Pahlavi sought to 'condense a large population with many variations into a small cultural sphere' via the promotion of Iran's Persian heritage *vis à vis* other possible markers of identity (Jaafarian in Zahed 2004, p. 17).

Within the contemporary city, visual elements of the Achaemenid past are reproduced, both as a way of maintaining (and controlling or circumscribing) a particular narrative of Iranian identity and (not incidentally), for the purpose of commercially exploiting popular attachment to a heavily mythologised history. During my fieldwork I took to documenting the multiple present uses in Shiraz of the Achaemenid past. From banks (*bank-e Pasargad*) to taxi companies (*taksi-e takht-e jamshid*) and from fireplace fenders to front doors, history makes itself felt in multiple ways in present-day Shiraz.

The perpetual refugee

While their parents remember the more welcoming era of the early Islamic Republic, and temper their expectations of life in Iran against their memories of Afghanistan,

young Afghans rail against the restrictions and wasted opportunities of life lived in perpetual limbo.

Shakufeh and her three siblings are angry. Like the vast majority of Afghans living in Iran the Sharifi family have a story of suffering that begins with war in Afghanistan and continues through years of hardship in Iran. Now, after almost three decades in Iran, first in Marvdasht and then, more recently, on the outskirts of Shiraz, they have decided to leave. They are reluctant to share their plans in any great detail, not least out of fear that doing so may cast a shadow of ill-fortune over the future, but reveal that they are planning to attempt the well-worn smuggling route through Turkey to a better life in Europe.

Monsutti (2008) traces the complex and highly developed migratory routes of Afghans from Afghanistan through Iran or Pakistan and onwards to Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. The precise number of Afghans in Europe can only be guessed at, although UNHCR statistics that provide a figure of almost 60 000 asylum claims from Afghans in industrialised countries in 2014 give us some indication (UNHCR 2014).

‘Even a year or two ago I would not have dreamt of leaving Iran,’ Shakufeh confesses. ‘I heard others saying “I am going here or there” and I would think, “No way.” Even if things are hard at least we can say we are neighbours, we share a border, a language, a faith.’ Shakufeh’s parents are Sunni Muslim from Afghanistan’s Sar-e Pol province. Having attended religious education classes through eleven years of schooling in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Shakufeh, along with her two sisters Zarifeh and Alina and younger brother Afshin, has embraced Shiism. Her parents are philosophical about this

turn of events. 'Our children are Afghan,' Agha-ye Sharifi explains, 'but they are also Iranian. Maybe, inside here,' he taps his head, 'They are more Iranian than Afghan.'

For Shakufeh it is not so much a matter of being *both* Afghan and Iranian as an uncomfortable sense of being *neither*. 'When I was a child, I used to go to bed wishing I was Iranian. In the morning I would wake up and check my face in the mirror,' she laughs quietly. There have been a small number of studies focusing on young Afghans in Iran and questions of conflicted identity (see Abbasi-Shavazi et al. 2008; Kamal 2010a; Monsutti 2010; Saito 2009). Sarah Kamal (2010b) describes young, Iranian-born Afghans as the 'burnt generation' belonging neither to Iran nor to Afghanistan. Similarly, Leslie Bash and Elena Zezlina-Phillips (2006, p. 122), in a study of young refugees in London, point to the experience of 'being neither here nor there' as a kind of psychological limbo that can 'make the emotional instability of refugee adolescence fraught with turmoil' (Kamal 2010a).

Shakufeh was able to attend school in Iran and excelled, eventually winning a sought after place at university. 'I know that, in this regard, I am more fortunate than many [Afghans]. This [knowledge] is a burden we bear whether we succeed or fail. It pushes us to work harder [than Iranian students].' Shakufeh's sister, Zarifeh, breaks in, 'This is true, the Afghan students were always at the top of the class.' She pauses, then observes wryly, 'Not that it made any difference.' The three sisters tell a story about Zarifeh winning, and subsequently being denied, a major literature prize in her last year of high school. They finish each other's sentences in a way that indicates that this particular anecdote has been told and retold within the family. For Shakufeh's brother the discrimination against and exclusion of Afghans within the education system has had longer-reaching consequences.

In early 2011 Afshin returned to Afghanistan hoping to pursue the university education denied him in Iran. Within six weeks he had been picked up by the Taliban and imprisoned in a private home-turned-prison. As his father tells the story Afshin sits silently, staring off into the distance. 'They knew he had come from Iran, that's why they took him,' Agha-ye Sharifi explains. Eventually his parents travelled back to Afghanistan, spending several months in tense negotiations and finally paying a hefty ransom in order to secure his release. The experience had a profound effect on Afshin. His sisters tell me in low voices that he now rarely leaves the house. 'At night I hear him walking around and in the day he sits on his bed. He used to read textbooks and study but now he does nothing,' Shakufeh tells me, on another occasion.

Beyond the emotional toll, the events have had a broader impact on the Sharifi family. By leaving Iran, Agha-ye Sharifi forsook the family's hard won *amayesh* registration, rendering them illegally resident in Iran.

Legality, while not necessarily a guarantor of rights and freedoms, is hard won and difficult to maintain (Olszewska 2015). As Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz (2010) point out, illegality is a conveniently flexible category that states are able to wield, weapon-like, with devastating effect against non-citizen populations. In Iran, shifting bureaucratic processes and multiple hurdles involving a considerable commitment of time, effort and money make it all too easy for legally resident Afghans to lose their status and slip into illegality—sometimes without even realising that their status has changed.

Unable to work legally and having used up a lifetime of savings in bringing Afshin out of Afghanistan, Agha-ye Sharifi has been fortunate to find a position as a watchman at an

orchard on the very edge of Shiraz. However, the wages are poor and much of it taken by his employer in board. The family live, year round, on the property and only rarely, on holidays and the occasional weekend, do they see the owners.

Iran no longer feels like the safe haven it once represented. 'We learned to speak like Iranians, to think like Iranians and to pray like Iranians. We thought this would be enough but now we see that it will never be enough,' Shakufeh speaks wryly, 'To belong here, on this ground, we would have to go back through thousands of years of history and make it our own.' History is a weighty presence for Afghans living in Iran and far from divining links between the Achaemenid past and present-day hospitality, Afghans identify a disjuncture between the way in which Iranians perceive themselves as bearers of a mythology of hospitality and the reality of a hostile reception.

'All I want is to stop being a refugee. To one day find a place I can call home.' Shakufeh is explaining to me why she has come around to the idea of leaving Iran. A sense of home and of homeliness remains elusive for Afghans in Iran. Hospitality is intimately tied to notions of the home. Indeed, it is to the home (the door, the threshold) that Derrida constantly returns in an effort to make comprehensible processes of hospitality that occur at the scale of the state. Rosello (2001) is critical of the theoretical tendency to conflate immigrants with guests and the nation with the home, suggesting that such an analogy obfuscates the intensely commercial nature of migration. Yet both Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees call on this same analogy as a way of making sense of their respective place in the world.

Jamshid has departed

When I depart from Iran in October 2014 the Sharifi family are still putting the final touches on their plans to leave the country. On my last visit, Shakufeh is quiet and serious. We sit outside the house on a low wooden bench, conversing quietly. In contrast to the sombre mood, the orchard around us is a joyous riot of autumn reds and golds. I ask Shakufeh if she will miss Iran when she has gone—if she will miss the changing seasons of Shiraz, the shape of the mountains that she knows as well as she knows her own face, the people with whom she has, if not a friendship, a lifelong familiarity. ‘No,’ she speaks fiercely, the tone conveying volumes of meaning. Then she softens. ‘Maybe. Who can say that I will not one-day look back in regret?’

When Aidani’s (2007) informants call on notions of Iranian hospitality, it is in order to critically assess the hospitality/hostility nexus in which they find themselves as migrants in contemporary Australia. Furthermore, it can be seen as an attempt to reconfigure the balance of power between [Australian] host and [Iranian] guest. In this chapter I have asked whether this same discourse of hospitality might be turned inwards to scrutinise the relationship between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees in Iran.

The Fars province lies at the heart of historical-nationalist narratives of identity. It is in and through the Fars province that I have explored these narratives, tracing what Mark Westmoreland (2008, p. 1) calls the ‘shining moments’ of hospitality across time and space. I have noted the way in which such narratives of nationhood are complicit in the creation of a ‘history with borders.’ In the context of this history Afghans are made Other and excluded from a narrative that, ironically, celebrates notions of hospitality and human rights.

However, constructions of cultural identity rooted in Iran's pre-Islamic mythology offer, too, the possibility of a space for hospitality. While the first generation of Afghan migrants continue to (ineffectually) appeal to the Khomeinist vision of a borderless Islam, the young Iranian-born Afghans in this chapter, propose different ways of imagining the hospitable nation—in terms of shared history and the mythology of human rights embedded in the Achaemenid past. At the same time, Afghan refugees point, with growing impatience, to the failure of hospitality in Iran.

I spend much of my visit to the Sharifi home photographing pages of poetry in multiple exercise books. In Chapter Seven I explore how poetry is, in itself, an important textual site of hospitality and one that functions as a bordering device, effectively placing Afghans outside the imaginary of a cosmopolitan nationalism. I look to how classical Persian poets are seen to articulate the nation, in ways that invoke both the hostile and the hospitable. I further trace how this tension between hostility and hospitality is experienced at and around the burial sites of Saadi and Hafez within the city of Shiraz.

As a metaphor it allows us to think beyond the open door to engage with notions of reciprocity and mutuality that lie at the heart of Iranian hospitality,

Knowing that these exercise books will have to be left behind, along with many other artefacts of three decades of life in Iran, Shakufeh has asked me to make a record of her poems. Later, looking through them, one in particular catches my eye. In translation much of the rhythm of the original is lost, but the poignancy of the words remains:

Jamshid has departed his throne.
The ancient kings have departed
Yes. The kings march off the margins
Of my history book and disappear.
The court of Darius has fallen silent
And all the grandeur of Cyrus

Is mere dust and ashes.
If I should come now,
Bearing gifts from a distant land,
To whom should I present my petition?

Chapter Seven: Poetic Sites

In search of the real Shiraz

‘A rose lives but five or six days. The flowers of this garden remain forever.’ Marjan recites a line of Saadi’s *Golestan*, putting words to a moment of time that eludes capture in ordinary prose. Poetry weaves its way into every day conversation in Iran and I soon grow used to one or another companion breaking into verse, elevating otherwise mundane tasks (walking to the bus stop, shopping for groceries) to extraordinary instances of cultural expression.

Marjan has a day off work and has invited me to visit Saadi’s mausoleum with her. As we make our way between manicured gardens—resplendent in purple and yellow, the beds of pansies edged with rows of potted pink and white petunias—Marjan reminisces about past visits. At the rear of the grounds we find a low stone wall and sit down in the shade cast by a towering cypress. Marjan breathes deeply, searching for some elusive perfume, ‘This is the real Shiraz.’

Her declaration is intended as much for her five-year-old son Arya, who has accompanied us on this spring morning, as it is for me. That this carefully nurtured oasis of garden and stream might be thought an authentic representation of the burgeoning city that lies beyond its high brick walls is counter-intuitive. Elsewhere, claims to authenticity adhere to the gritty or down-at-heel, the sort of impoverished urban precinct comprised of informal housing and small-scale industry that presses up against the Saadi mausoleum.

Shiraz is home to the burial sites of two of Iran’s most prominent poets—Khwaja Shams-ud-Din Mohammad Ḥafeẓ-e Shirazi (popularly known as Hafez) and Abu-Mohammad Muslih al-Din bin Abdallah Shirazi (who wrote under the pen name Saadi). The tombs

are located approximately four kilometres apart in the north-east of the city. Close by is the tomb of a third literary figure: the poet Khwaju Kermani, a lesser known fourteenth century contemporary of Hafez. Kermani's body is interred in a small cave on the rocky mountainside of the Allahu Akbar Gorge. From the site of his tomb tourists look down over the Quran Gate—that one surviving remnant of the ancient city walls constructed during the Buyid dynasty. In the mid-1990s, this area was transformed into a recreational park complete with waterfalls, stone stairways and faux-Achaemenid columns. On a mild summer evening the place is crowded with young Iranians competing for each other's attention and pulling out the latest model of mobile phone to pose for photographs high above the city.

The burial sites of these poets are places that function as major tourist attractions, invariably listed in guidebooks as amongst the most important sites to visit in Shiraz (Baker & Smith 2005; di Cintio 2010; Loveday, Wannell, Baumer, Omrani. 2010). For Iranians, pilgrimage to the *Hafezieh* or *Saadieh* becomes a moment of imagining and experiencing the nation. Persian poetry plays a prominent role in constructions of Iranian identity. 'Poetry is Iran's gift to the world,' explains Adham, 'Before we had mullahs and [a] nuclear [program], we had Saadi and Hafez. When these things pass away, poetry will remain.' Poetry, in the Iranian context, can be understood as a form of banal nationalism (see Billig 1995). The everyday poetic is the 'stable imaginary,' granting Iranians 'a location and an identity in the world' (Manoukian 2004, p. 41).

In this chapter I explore the intersection between poetry and identity in the city of Shiraz and ask how classical Persian poetry comes to encapsulate notions of hospitality as simultaneously characteristic of the Iranian nation *and* a cosmopolitan virtue.

Much of the ethnographic data that informs this chapter was drawn from interviews and observations undertaken in the Saadi neighbourhood: both within the garden in which the poet's tomb is located and in the residential precinct surrounding it. The area immediately adjacent to the mausoleum of Saadi is home to a high concentration of Afghan migrants and refugees. Not incidentally, it is popularly perceived by Iranian residents of the broader city as a place of certain (but largely unspecified) danger. Few Iranians will voluntarily venture beyond the immediate cultural precinct of the mausoleum and into the narrow, malodorous alleyways of the residential area. Foreign tourists—bussed to the front entrance of the site and kept to a tight schedule—remain largely oblivious to the locale's undesirable reputation and its criminalised migrant population (see Brown 2011).

Saadi—the place—is imbued with multiple and occasionally contradictory meanings. Various actors lay claim to the space and it is both worked on by and works on these actors in distinct ways. I seek to trace how the space is experienced as a site of hostile hospitality by both Afghan and Iranian residents of the Saadi neighbourhood, as well as by visitors (past and present) to the mausoleum. Untangling the multiple meanings attached to the site requires looking to the way in which the space is used both bodily and imaginatively—engaging with questions of nationalism, identity, poetry and migration, through which hospitality threads as a constant of Iranian constructions of national selfhood.

The Shiraz poets

'Fal-e Hafez. Fal-e Hafez.' The young Afghan boy waves a handful of coloured paper strips, each one printed with a line or two of poetry. The telling of fortunes (*fal*) is practised in a variety of ways in Iran, but perhaps the most widely utilised and socially acceptable is the *fal-e Hafez*: the divining of fortunes through the random selection of poetry drawn from the vast oeuvre of Hafez. My family (myself and my partner Abbas, along with our two children) are picnicking by an artificial pond in one of the central parks in Shiraz. In the evening this area will be transformed into a fun fair, packed with families queuing for loud rides, but now the heat of the day keeps most people away. The group of young Afghan boys taking a shortcut through the park are surprised to spot potential customers, but the boldest of them isn't going to waste this opportunity to make a few extra coins selling his *fal*.

The surest place to hawk the *fal-e Hafez* is immediately outside the *Hafezieh*. This, however, is prime space and jealously guarded by the cohort of middle-aged Iranian men plying their fortune-telling trade to foreign tourists and young Iranian couples. Hafez is closely associated with love and it is not unusual to see young men and women wandering together around the *Hafezieh* or sitting in some secluded corner whispering poetry to each other and almost, but not quite, holding hands. The high walls and single entrance allow for due warning of the approach of roaming *basij*—young men organised around a neighbourhood mosque who have official imprimatur to harass, rough-up and arrest those considered guilty of breaching government imposed codes of morality and gender segregation.

The use of the poetry of Hafez for the purpose of fortune-telling or guidance dates back centuries. Indeed, it is said that a dispute about whether Hafez's body could be buried

in a Muslim cemetery—opposed by the *ulama* [Islamic clergy] of the time on the grounds that Hafez had written extensively about the morally questionable topics of love and drunkenness—was resolved when a verse from one of his own *ghazals* declaring that heaven awaited Hafez despite his many misdeeds, was randomly selected (Grigor 2009).

‘No, no, no.’ Abbas waves the boy away. He doesn’t retreat but tries a smattering of English, then seeing us unmoved by this display of learning, resorts to imploring in Dari-inflected Persian. Abbas relents partially, ‘Where’s your bird?’ He is referring to the common custom of having a trained budgerigar pull the *fal* out from amongst any number of potential alternatives. This addition to fortune-telling is mostly spectacle. The *fal* can be achieved equally well by allowing a copy of the *Divan-e Hafez* to fall open at any given page or indeed, clicking a button on your computer screen or phone, while you ‘hold that question [over which you seek guidance] in mind’ (Shahriari 2005). With this small engagement the boy senses that he has won over a customer and turns on the theatre, ‘My bird has died.’ He strikes a tragic pose and then looks at us slyly, ‘But if you would just accept my *fal* I will be able to afford a new bird.’ We laugh, the deal has been clinched and we hand over a selection of coins and small denomination notes in return for four fortunes.

Classical poetry makes its way into everyday life in Iran via multiple routes. Many, if not most, Iranian homes contain a copy of the *Divan-e Hafez* and the book is treated with the sort of reverence generally reserved for the Quran (Dezhakam 2009). Indeed, in Marjan’s home it is the *Divan* that sits, year round on a bookstand, opened to show its richly decorated margins. During the thirteen days of the New Year the *Divan* is placed on the *haft seen* cloth, alongside seven items that symbolise hopes and wishes for the coming year.

Hafez and Saadi are, without a doubt, two of the best known and most highly regarded Iranian literary figures. Quotes and aphorisms of the two poets are woven into ordinary conversation and there are few Iranians unable to recite at least a line or two of their poetry. Patricia Higgins and Pirouz Shoar-Ghaffari (2014, p. 351) describe how 'Pride in a distinctively Persian Iranian heritage' is cultivated at an early age through reference to classical Persian-language literature in elementary school textbooks of both the Pahlavi and Islamic Republic eras. They go on to note that Saadi's poetry consumes an increased proportion of lesson time in the Islamic Republic. From the third year of school, Iranian children are introduced to the poetry of Saadi and are expected to memorise short segments. Visiting the mausoleum of Saadi just after the New Year we find ourselves in the midst of a visiting school group. Boys, in their grey pants and checked shirts, swarm around us, clamouring loudly. A few test out well-rehearsed phrases in English before dashing off.

The association of Hafez and Saadi with Shiraz has granted the city a kind of mythic status in terms of poetic practice and imagination (Manoukian 2004). Shiraz is popularly referred to as a 'city of poets'—a designation that received official imprimatur with the nomination of Shiraz to the UNESCO Creative Cities Network as a City of Literature (Payvand News 2006). Furthermore, elements from within the prose and poetry of Saadi and Hafez, descriptions, for example, of love and the natural environment, are 'projected into the landscape of the city and its surroundings' (Manoukian 2012, p. 26).

Saadi was born in Shiraz early in the tumultuous thirteenth century. He spent up to three decades wandering through lands devastated by the Mongol invasions, travelling west through Iraq, Anatolia, Syria and Egypt and east through India, Pakistan and Central Asia. He returned to Shiraz as it enjoyed a period of relative tranquillity under Salghurid

Atabeg Abu Bakr bin Saad bin Zangi from whom Saadi took his pen name and for whom he wrote some of his most famous panegyrics. Saadi died in Shiraz in 1292, an old man who had lived a varied and, at times, exciting life and who, in his later years, had been feted by a succession of potentates who made their way through the revolving door of Shirazi politics of the period. Saadi was buried in a tomb commissioned by Shams al-Din Juvayni (1263–1285), the vizier of the Mongol Ilkhan Abagha (1265–1282). In subsequent years a cemetery sprung up around the tomb of Saadi, those buried there obtaining some intangible benefit from their physical proximity, in death, to an individual whose fame lent him a patina of holiness. The present mausoleum was built in the mid-twentieth century and replaces an edifice built two hundred years prior by Karim Khan Zand (1751–1779). The new mausoleum was ‘reconstructed on a design entirely different,’ writes archaeologist and historian André Godard, adding despairingly, ‘Nothing remains of the old monument’ (Godard in Grigor 2009, p. 103).

Within decades of Saadi’s death Shiraz saw the emergence of another poet whose fame would overshadow, although never entirely eclipse, the considerable renown of Saadi. Hafez was born in 1320 and ‘lived through decades of bloodshed and anarchy in his native city’ (Limbert 2004, p. 49). Unlike Saadi, Hafez remained his entire life within the confines of Shiraz, forgoing the opportunities to travel that his growing fame afforded him. He wrote a number of *ghazals* in praise of a city that was, as John Limbert (2004, pp. 120–1) notes:

An unstable and violent place, where squabbling, self-destructive drunkards and blood-thirsty hypocrites often ruled, and where the inhabitants saw natural disasters, sieges, invasions, street fighting, marauding tribes, and arbitrary and ruinous taxation constantly threatening their precarious security and prosperity.

During the fourteenth century, as the city was pummelled by internal and external violence, it remained an important centre of literary production. ‘The rich cultural life of Shiraz in the age of Hafez occurred in spite of (or perhaps because of) the instability of this period’ (ibid.). Hafez died in 1393 and was buried in the Musalla Cemetery—a Muslim cemetery to the north of Shiraz that subsequently became a popular site of Sufi pilgrimage, before being transformed, in the late 1930s, into a garden and tourist destination (Grigor 2009).

The garden in the Iranian imagination

‘Ah Shiraz,’ Dariush a native of the desert city of Yazd sighs, ‘City of poets and gardens.’ Initially, I failed to recognise echoes of the imagined garden in the multiple urban green spaces, faithfully irrigated parks and colourful flower-strewn median strips. The frenetic building activity and the bare hillsides, stripped over centuries of every last skerrick of green, give the city the appearance of a place having gone through some apocalyptic event, a war, perhaps, or an earthquake. Only with time did I come to see Shiraz as Iranians see it, as a city of gardens.

The garden has a long and illustrious history in Iranian mythology, predating Islam and extending back to the Achaemenid period (Shahidi, Bermanian, Almasifar & Okhovat 2010). The term ‘paradise’ (in Modern Persian *‘firdaus’*) is derived from the Avestan *‘pairidaeza’* meaning an enclosure or park and bringing to mind the formal walled gardens of Persepolis and Pasargadae (OED, 2017b). With the advent of Islam, the connection between the garden and paradise was further developed (see Brookes 1987).

Solmaz Mohammadzadeh Kive (2012, p. 85) calls on Foucauldian notions of the heterotopia in order to describe the Persian garden as an 'other space'—a place 'utterly different from yet fundamentally connected to the rest of places.' Aerial photographs of Shiraz reinforce this notion of difference, showing the *Saadieh* as a rectangle of deep green in a vast sea of dun coloured rooftops and dusty streets. The high walls surrounding it and the formal arrangement of space within, mark the garden out from the urban environment in which it is located. The Persian garden is both an actual physical place and 'an ideally ordered space' that 'bears the image of Paradise' (ibid.).

Angela Sarell, who lived in Shiraz in the late 1930s and wrote under the pseudonym Angela Rodkin (ca. 1942), commented that, 'It is one of the most charming of Shiraz customs that anyone may come along and ask to visit a garden or even picnic in it without even having met the owner.'

The garden is central to the formation of the Iranian home as a space of hospitality (Tehrani & Duffy 2015). Indeed, in traditional homes of Shiraz and other areas of southern and central Iran, the garden is physically located *at* the centre of the home, within an internal courtyard around which the living spaces are arranged (Memarian & Brown 2006). Courtyard gardens draw visitors in and demarcate the cultivated inner environment from the harsh, arid exterior and, as such, form a types of oasis, a space that is intrinsically hospitable. However, the garden as a space of hospitality is predicated on separation from the surrounding environment. In the context of the Persian garden this separation is achieved primarily through the creation of enclosed space. Hamed Khosravi (2014) suggests that it is, in fact, the wall that makes the garden, arguing that the 'wall here is not a defensive wall...It divides and separates, therefore it produces space' (Khosravi 2014, p. 45). Here we begin to see how the garden is

illustrative of Derrida's *hostipitality*, welcoming the guest by virtue of its capacity to deny welcome (see Derrida 2000).

The walled garden as metaphor, offers another way of thinking hospitality: not in terms of the house and the door, but in terms of the garden and the gate. The garden and the gate carry their own set of distinct meanings. In the Iranian context, the garden functions as a microcosm of the hospitable nation. The wall of the garden and the border of the nation perform the function of producing space. In both the garden and the nation, 'The interior is managed, organised and ruled by the (divine) sovereign power, while the exterior is an unknown, unmanaged, and therefore uncivilised domain' (Khosravi 2014). There are manifold intersections between Persian poetry and the garden in the *Shirazi* locale (see Meisami 1985; Schimmel 2004; Whitcomb 1985). Hafez drew heavily on garden imagery within his poetry (Meisami 1985; Mosazadeh-Sayadmahaleh, Esmaeilzadeh-Estakhrbajar & Bibalani 2010, 2011a, 2011b). Saadi's most famous works *Bustan* (The Orchard) and *Golestan* (The Rose Garden), likewise revolve around the garden as an allegory. The spaces around both poets' tombs were reconfigured as gardens in the mid-twentieth century. Existing cemeteries were razed and the tombs of those who had, as a mark of devotion, been buried adjacent to the poet, were erased from the landscape and replaced with flowers, grass and paving stones. Grigor (2009, p. 97) makes the point that the 'cleaning out of graves at *Hafezieh* had much to do with modern ideas about individuality and glorification' and that, 'Elevated from the ground Hafez's tomb symbolized his superiority to all in life and, especially, in death.'

The reconfiguration of space that occurred with the construction of the modern day edifices over the existing tombs of Saadi and Hafez represented the ascension of secular notions of nationhood over the religious. Indeed, less than half a century earlier the fiery

and influential religious scholar and Shiraz prayer leader, Ali Akbar Fal-Asiri led a mob to the Musalla Cemetery and had a partially completed shrine around the tomb of Hafez destroyed, on the grounds that it was being built by a foreigner and a Zoroastrian, at that.

As long as it remained a cemetery, religion exerted control over the way in which the space was experienced. However, after it was transformed into a garden, ways of moving through and practicing space were altered, being taken out of the domain of the religious and placed within the 'secular.'

The tomb of the poet became accessible to both Muslim and non-Muslim Iranians, as well as foreign tourists. The mausoleums of Saadi and Hafez are placed within the wider context of the garden. Furthermore, the presence of ticket booths, park-style benches, tea-houses, bookshops and administrative buildings have cumulatively acted to reinforce the modern identity of the place, both as an 'edifice of national patrimony and a tourist hot spot' (Grigor 2009, p. 83).

In 2015, Alireza Bayatpour, then Governor of Shiraz, issued a report stating that there were 'more than 5000 foreign tourists coming to the Fars province every week,' more than double the number that were coming in 2013 (Tab Nak 2015). He went on to note that, while in other Iranian cities poor migrants are confined to the outskirts of the city, in Shiraz they are present at the very places that are considered tourist attractions. This was presented as a problem and one that Bayatpour expressed a commitment to resolve, presumably via a continuation of the demolition and reconstruction of areas such as the Saadi neighbourhood. In some parts of Iran it is this very dynamic that has led to the formation of no-go areas: regions from which Afghans are banned from living

in or even visiting. In 2012, for example, Bahman Hajvand, the head of the Now Shahr district administration in the northern province of Mazandaran posited Afghan's as a threat to the tourism industry, 'the presence of ethnic Afghans in the centre of Now Shahr is forbidden. Now Shahr is a tourist destination and their presence is absolutely forbidden' (in Ruzname-ye Hasht-e Sobh 2012).

Daniel Knudsen, Jillian Rickly-Boyd and Charles Greer (2014, p. 54), drawing on the example of Copenhagen's Amalienborg Palaces and the surrounding district of Frederiksstad, explore how the reconfiguration of historical sites as tourist spaces acts to orient the projection of power, 'from inward (toward the body politic) to outward (to the international community).'

Importantly, tourist sites do not spring, fully-formed, into being, but are planned, cultivated and nurtured in ways that represent some particular aspect of nationhood. As such, they are grounded in relations of power and become implicated in the 'construction and reproduction of identities at a number of scales' (Light 2001, p. 1054). Projects of national identity formation are often thought of as being concerned with the creation and ongoing cohesion of the 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006). However, such projects can equally be projected outwards, to become an affirmation of Self via the gaze of the Other.

Walking in the garden of the poet

'I used to imagine Hafez walking through this place, stopping to imbibe the scent of a rose or resting in the shade of these same trees.' My companion for the day, a young

Iranian woman, speaks in a low, confessional tone. 'It came as a great disappointment to discover that it [the *Hafezieh*] is only fifty, sixty years old.'

On an overcast late-winter morning I walk from the Jahan Nama Garden, down the hill towards the *Hafezieh*. I make my way past the National Library, set a distance back from the road behind an imposing fence, past a small supermarket and a bakery where the last remnants of the morning crowd queue. I pause for just a moment to watch the huge flat loaves being expertly pulled out of the stone oven on long paddles and flipped onto the counter in quick succession, before continuing on around the corner, threading my way between the sculptures that have proliferated since my last visit to Shiraz, spilling out across the pavement from the theatre. Outside the *Hafezieh* a construction crew is laying pavers to mark the newly designated pedestrian zone. They are in a race against time as the New Year approaches and I spot three or four Afghan men bent over the task, swelling the numbers and reducing the odds in favour of the workers.

Today only one man is hawking his *fal-e Hafez* outside the entrance to the mausoleum. He holds a yellow and green budgerigar in one hand and leans crookedly on a crutch that is propped under his other arm. I glance at him swiftly, trying to judge in a moment if he is of the right age to be a wounded veteran of the Iran–Iraq war. At a kiosk adjacent to the entrance I purchase, after gently (and unsuccessfully) haggling over the appropriate fee, an entrance ticket to the *Hafezieh*. Inside the Musalla Garden I take the right hand path heading straight towards the raised portico through which the familiar domed pavilion of the *Hafezieh* can be glimpsed.

The *Hafezieh* is an instantly recognisable symbol of the city of Shiraz and of the Iranian nation. It is Marjan who points out to me that an image of the *Hafezieh* adorns the final

page of all Iranian passports. My own passport, having fulfilled its purpose of allowing me to enter the country and embark on fieldwork, *sans* the added complexities of obtaining a visa, has been buried away in a drawer. This is a document that is envied by Afghan refugees, for whom citizenship in this, the country of their exile, remains tantalisingly out of reach. On the other hand, it is scorned by many Iranians. 'Useless' Adham grumbles, 'Where can I go on my Iranian passport?' Flicking through it I confirm that the passport does, indeed, contain a line drawing of the *Hafezieh*. In this context, the tomb of Hafez is affirmed as a 'symbol of national citizenship' (Grigor 2009, p. 219).

The present-day mausoleum of Hafez was designed and built by French architect Maxime Siroux in 1938 (Bombardier 2014). The reconfiguration of the entire surrounding area and the removal and replacement of existing architectural elements of the tomb itself, formed an integral part of the Pahlavi modernisation project and a bold attempt to 'appropriate the Sufi significance of the site into Iran's secular historiography' (Grigor 2009, p. 83). The remaking of the Musalla Cemetery and the supplanting and altering of Sufi rituals and traditional Islamic practices of commemorating the dead, 'served as a platform to instruct the public on "life along modern lines" and rectify undesired public behaviour' (ibid., p. 86).

Space at the *Hafezieh* and *Saadieh* was (and remains) 'tightly regimented with entrance tickets and tourist guides, gift shops and benches' (Grigor 2009, p. 103). The form and function of these spaces act to shape the way in which visitors move through and behave within them. The *Hafezieh* and *Saadieh* straddle the space between religious and secular sites. Honarpisheh (2013, p. 386) notes that 'the tombs of Iran's poets rival those of its most important religious figures,' describing them as sites of pilgrimage through which visitors move in mimicry of movement at Shia shrines.

Unlike the *Hafezieh* which, from the time of its construction, was separated from the surrounding urban context and ‘completely inserted in the administered landscape of the city,’ the *Saadieh* is enmeshed in the local ‘somewhat unruly’ neighbourhood which has sprung up around it (Manoukian 2012, pp. 78–9).

During the year of my fieldwork, the month of Muslim fasting falls over the hot summer months of *Tir* and *Mordad* (June/July). During Ramadan the long languorous afternoon siestas, for which the inhabitants of Shiraz are renowned, stretch and balloon. Outdoor activity during daylight hours becomes impossible, the unrelenting heat made worse by restrictions on drinking in public that apply equally to those who are and are not observing the fast. Towards the end of Ramadan, we visit the *Saadieh*. It is a way of retaining some connection to my research in the context of a virtual moratorium on interviews in the weeks prior.

The streets on approach to the mausoleum are bustling as people make use of the cooler hours after nightfall to visit friends and family. Reciprocal visits during (or in the hours following) the *iftar* meal are an integral element of Ramadan, bringing a celebratory element to what is, otherwise, a somewhat sombre and serious event (see Batmanglij 2005). In the Saadi precinct, *chador*-clad women pull prissily-dressed children along behind them as they hurry in and out of shops. Men carry trays of fruit and halva and boxes of sugary, deep-fried sweets and syrup-laden pastries, tied with green and gold ribbons. Stepping through the gate of the mausoleum garden we enter a space of quietness and peace. Only a handful of visitors wander past the ablution pool, where a treasure horde of silver coins glitter beneath the surface along with the occasional soggy note. The piped music and recordings of poetry that usually play in the background are silent, possibly out of respect for the religious sensibilities of those who are observing

the fast. We make our way, first, towards the mausoleum. The mausoleum is set at the very back of the garden, on a raised platform, in a direct line one hundred and fifty metres from the entrance gate.

The present-day structure was designed by Iranian architects Mohsen Forughi, Keyghobad Zafar and Ali Sadegh and was completed in 1952. Whereas European architects such as Siroux and Godard sought to ‘concretise the nationalist wishes of the government’ through the repetition of architectural elements and motifs of the Achaemenid and Sasanid eras (Shirazi 2015, p. 122), the (European-trained) Iranian architects seized on the political project of modernity, introducing to Iran a style of building that ‘broke all links and continuity with the past’ (Micara 1999, p. 54).

The *Saadieh* is often unfavourably compared to the *Hafezieh*. ‘It may be that this is an important place but it is not beautifully constructed,’ Parisa, a middle-aged Iranian woman informs me, as we stand together in the soaring domed space of Saadi’s mausoleum. Her companion, a younger woman with startlingly pale green eyes, who introduces herself as Katy, puts it more eloquently, ‘As an Iranian, and a child of Shiraz, the *Hafezieh* touches my soul, while this place [the *Saadieh*] speaks first to my head and only later reaches my heart.’ The *Saadieh* is seen as a modern building and (ironically) less ‘Iranian’ than the *Hafezieh*. It is also more closely associated with the last Shah, who visited Shiraz in the spring of 1952 in order to inaugurate the site (Grigor 2009; Manoukian 2012). Rumours that the site was slated to be demolished in the early revolutionary period are unverified but credible. If the mausoleum itself was seen as a threat to the revolution, the poet was similarly cast as ideologically suspect. Up until the mid-1990s, Saadi’s work was largely shunned by the Iranian authorities. Saadi wrote extensively in prose—a less ambiguous art form than poetry and, as such, open to a

narrower range of interpretations. Furthermore, the poet's utility to the state is hampered by the thread of homoeroticism that runs through his work. Manoukian (2012, p. 73) notes that, more recently, the Iranian government has sought to draw Saadi into the 'constellation of the revolution' by emphasising the poet's 'ethics, his refusal to eulogize the powerful of his age and the extensive use of the Qur'an and the *hadiths* in his works.'

At night the structure that forms the poet's mausoleum is illuminated with hidden lights in such a way that the blue-domed roof seems to hover above shadows, held up by slender columns of light. Inside an octagonal room the marble tomb of Saadi lies perpendicular to the doorway through which we have entered. On previous visits I have seen Iranians press up against the tomb, touching the warm-brown marble lightly with fingertips and murmuring prayers, as they would over the grave of a loved one. Tonight, there is only us and a taciturn guard in an ill-fitting grey uniform with red and gold shoulder braids. We linger briefly beside the tomb. The poems of Saadi that decorate the walls are partially shadowed, the calligraphy disappearing into gloom. Another time, a more loquacious guard pointed out to me a calligraphic inscription praising the poet, drawing my attention to the space where a dedication to the shah has been carefully removed. The gap, once it has been pointed out, seems suddenly obvious, but I had not, before that moment, noticed it.

We make our way down a narrow, spiral stone staircase to an underground pool. The stream that runs through the Saadi neighbourhood and under the mausoleum garden has long been considered to have miraculous powers of healing. Manoukian (2012, p. 78) points out that with the construction of the mausoleum 'this water was partly brought under the purview of the state.'

On this evening a group of six or seven young Iranians have squeezed themselves into one of the tea-house booths that surround the pool. The women wear their headscarves pinned up, so that napes and necks are daringly exposed. The men have thick beards, and wear tight jeans and printed t-shirts, their fashionable clothing distinguishing them from the similarly bearded *Basiji* that seem to proliferate on the streets at this time of year. I introduce myself to Maryam and Hana and we talk briefly about the research that has brought me to Iran. Mention of Afghanistan sparks a lively discussion about the trajectory of Iranian society. 'Afghanistan is like Iran was one hundred, two hundred years ago. We can look at Afghanistan and see Iran's past.' Maryam has a gloomier take on this, although one no less mired in a cultural-evolutionary worldview, 'Sometimes I fear we can see Iran's future. At least, if our own Taliban have their way.' Mehdi breaks into the conversation. 'This is why we come here during Ramadan. To remember that the real Iran is not found in these Arab traditions but in Hafez and Saadi.'

The idea of the 'real Iran' brings us, once again, to questions of hospitality. '*Khun garm* (friendly), *mehman navazi* (hospitable), *mehman paziri* (welcoming),' Maryam is making a list of what she perceives as the primary traits of a 'real Iranian.' We have already worked our way through half a dozen, pausing for explanations or to expand on a particular point, when Hana, laughing, interrupts with her own list, '*Ziba* (beautiful), *bachkush* (clever).'

Beyond the garden walls

'You're going *where*?'

Any mention of me visiting the Saadi neighbourhood is greeted with incredulity, swiftly followed by an insistence that it is ‘too dangerous.’ Iranians repeat darkly apocryphal tales of murders and kidnappings on the streets of Saadi. Such dire warnings seem amiss on a bright May morning as I make my way past the buses disgorging tourists at the Saadi mausoleum; past the ice cream shop which, despite the proliferation of glossier, more fashionable places in middle class suburbs across the city, does a roaring trade year round in *ab-havij bastani* (carrot juice with ice cream) and the iced noodle delicacy known as *faloodeh* for which Shiraz is famous across the country; past the metal workshops—detouring around the workmen welding pipes on the pavement, sparks flying; and up a steep narrow side street. I am in Saadi to visit Kimia, a young Afghan woman I met some weeks earlier at the Astane shrine. She has promised to introduce me to a friend of hers who teaches at an underground Afghan school, but first I must pay the obligatory visit to Kimia’s home.

Norms of hospitality dictate that a guest does not come empty handed (Ala Amjadi 2012). On my way, I have stopped at a well-known patisserie, queuing to purchase a half kilo of *ketabi* buns that open up like the books they are named for, the oozing cream interior sprinkled with slivers of green pistachio and dusted with icing sugar. At the door I hand over the white box with its broad gold ribbon and Kimia ushers me in with the usual extravagant declarations that my presence has ‘brought joy to the home’ and apologies for some imagined hardship I have suffered in order to make my way across town. Other members of the household stand to greet me: Kimia’s mother, Masumeh, a short and prematurely aged woman who keeps herself wrapped in a pale-coloured *chador* throughout my visit; her father, Agha-ye Rashedi, who beams and nods but contributes little to the conversation and stares persistently just past my left shoulder,

so that several times I have to stop myself from turning around to check the wall behind me; and her younger sister, nine-year-old Sumayra who slowly warms to me throughout the visit, inching closer until she is sitting right next to me and finally finding the courage to break into the conversation.

Kimia is apologetic about her home, which, although small, is spotlessly clean. A tiled hunting scene of the sort woven into traditional carpets brightens the kitchen walls. The family has recently moved to the Naranjestan area of Saadi. Their previous home was located only half a kilometre away but this represents a move upwards, both physically (from their front door you look down towards the Saadi mausoleum) and socially.

The Saadi area is, in fact, made up of five neighbourhoods: Delgosha, Fohandej, Bare Aftab, Saadi and Naranjestan. Located on the eastern outskirts of District Three, itself located in the east of Shiraz, the Saadi area has a long history. A major subterranean water source has enabled continuous settlement for millennia in the fertile pocket at the base of a precipitous rocky outcrop (Mohammadi Makerani 2010). However, the settlement at Saadi has always remained relatively peripheral to the city of Shiraz. It was only in the early 1970s, as Shiraz underwent rapid expansion, that Saadi village began to be cautiously incorporated into the urban imaginary of the city. At this time a reorganisation of administrative districts formally incorporated the village into the city and a wide, paved road was constructed linking the settlement to Shiraz. However, Saadi retains, to the present day, features of its relatively recent rural past. 'It's basically still a village.' Marjan informs me glumly, intending the comment to comprise an apology for the perceived shortcomings of the area.

Relatively high land prices in more central parts of Shiraz encouraged rural to urban migrants to the area and a flourishing informal housing market emerged. Today, the Saadi area has a total estimated population of 52 000 (Ardeshiri & Kabgani 2003). Over 70 percent of the housing has been constructed without a permit and more than 80 percent of landlords have no formal deed of sale, making Saadi one of the largest informal settlements in Iran (Mohammadi Makerani 2007). With the arrival of significant numbers of Afghan refugees to Shiraz in the 1980s the demographic makeup of Saadi has shifted from predominantly rural migrants from the wider Fars province to a mix of Iranian urban poor and Afghan migrants.

This shift has not occurred without some tension. Afghan refugees are popularly associated with crime, disease and impoverishment. Furthermore, within Iran, Afghanistan and its people are commonly viewed in terms of a cultural void. In the place of Saadi one perspective would have it that 'culture' and 'un-culture' jostle for prominence.

Ramin's in-laws are visiting from Isfahan and, while his wife is working, he is showing her parents and younger brother around Shiraz. 'It's a pity,' he says, waving his hand vaguely in the direction of a group of Afghan children engaged in a game of soccer, 'Saadi is a national poet. But look at this place, it is full of Afghans and criminals. They should bulldoze the lot and make it nice for tourists. But they won't. Our government cares nothing for culture.'

Ramin defines culture in a highly specific and limited way, as something that stands outside of and in opposition to politics and religion. Contrary to Ramin's contention that the 'government cares nothing for culture,' I would argue that culture is an over-riding

preoccupation of the Iranian government and has been since the very earliest post-revolutionary period. The defining and circumscribing of Iranian culture defines many of the activities of the Islamic Republic and spills beyond the political sphere to emerge as an undercurrent of everyday anxiety. As Grigor (2009, p. 215) pertinently noted during her 2004 fieldwork in Iran: 'political grievances...persistently manifested in cultural expressions. Each calm conversation about Iran's culture mutated into a passionate political debate.'

Ramin perceives Saadi as a tourist site and a place of (Iranian) culture in which Afghans are an anomaly. For Afghan refugees, however, Saadi is home. Efforts by Iranian authorities to 'revitalise' the area, expanding outwards from the poet's mausoleum—a process that in other areas of Shiraz has led to increased scrutiny of residence status and the dispersal of urban poor—threaten what tenuous sense of settlement these migrants have achieved over the past three decades.

Kimia's family have come up against these very processes. Their previous home was significantly damaged when the neighbouring property was demolished, ostensibly due to dangerously inadequate construction and failure by the owner to acquire the correct permits. It was rumoured that there was a broader plan to raze the entire area. Indeed, Manoukian (2012) refers to a Shiraz Municipality plan to connect the Saadi mausoleum to Delgosha Gardens a kilometre away. In February 2013 plans posted up inside the *Saadieh* revealed an ambitious vision to create a vast cultural complex in the area. Work on this and/or related plans has begun in a typically haphazard manner. Walking through the Saadi neighbourhood I turn a corner to discover a wide smooth road to nowhere; around another corner, gaping spaces proliferate.

'I have seen the plans,' Ali Reza insists. 'It will be like the *Hafezieh*.' He is referring to work undertaken in the immediate vicinity of the Hafez mausoleum, which, since 2013, has seen Hafezieh Street turned into a pedestrian zone. On a late-winter morning, just before the New Year, I stop to talk to an artist who has been commissioned to paint a two storeys high mural of Hafez on the blank side wall of an apartment block opposite the mausoleum.

Murals are an important (and often overlooked) aspect of urban beautification. While interest in Iran's propaganda street art has focussed on the visual representation of revolutionary themes and the Iran-Iraq war, with an emphasis on martyrdom, less attention has been paid to seemingly innocuous scenes of flowers and birds or the trompe l'oeil style depicting traditional street scenes, that has proliferated more recently. Houchang Chehabi and Fotini Christia (2008, p. 13) point to a new wave of murals that 'draws its inspiration from the mysticism and spirituality found in Persian poetry' and note that whereas artists of the immediate post-revolutionary and war periods called on religious themes, they have, today, 'gone back to poetry for inspiration.'

'This house is smaller [than our previous home],' Masumeh explains, 'but in every other way is superior.' 'There, we were living close to the tannery,' Agha-ye Rashedi adds. The family of four live in a single room, the other room of the lower floor apartment having been turned into a workshop replete with multiple sewing machines and neatly stacked piles of striped cloth that will, over a period of days, be turned into men's pyjamas.

The entire Rashedi family are engaged in the business of sewing. Once or twice a week an Iranian agent delivers bundles of cloth, folded and tied with thin rope. A pattern or,

more often, an image of the finished product is handed over to Kimia's father and the agent returns a few days (or weeks) later to collect the newly sewn items for sale in the bazaar. Afghans in Iran have a reputation as good tailors, at least partly borne of the low wages and piece work that characterises the industry, making it an unappealing prospect to the burgeoning educated-and-increasingly-aspirational Iranian cohort.

On my first visit the curtain strung across the living area, separating out sleeping quarters for Kimia and Sumayra, remains drawn. However, on a later occasion Kimia pulls it back, tying it open with a scrap of cloth looped to a bolt. She shows me the bedding rolled up against the wall, the suitcase of clothing (testifying, it seems, to the sense of impermanence to their life in Iran), the bottles of pale, pearly nail polish (highly coveted but rarely worn) and, most prized of all, the row of books along the windowsill—school books, slim novels and volumes of poetry.

Poetry plays a vitally important role in both Iranian and Afghan societies. Historically, poetry has been the foremost form of literary expression in the Persianate world. Here in the neighbourhood of Saadi, poetry is a felt presence. Michael Mayerfeld Bell (1997, p. 815) talks about 'social ghosts,' a 'felt presence—an anima, *geist*, or genius—that possesses and gives a sense of social aliveness to a place.' Indeed, this description could apply more broadly, if we think of the city of Shiraz as a place animated, in part, by the 'ghosts' of Hafez and Saadi.

There is, however, a widely perceived disjuncture between Saadi the poet and the residential precinct that has arisen in the vicinity of the mausoleum. Roland Brown (2011) describes as intriguing an 'intersection of drugs and high culture' in the Saadi neighbourhood. I would dispute the notion that poetry in the Iranian context can in fact

be categorised as ‘high culture.’ While at times the discourse around poetry in Iran seems to reference this divide between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture, the notion of ‘high culture’ in fact fails to capture the way in which poetry is wielded by all social classes in Iran (Molavi 2002). Indeed, both Hafez and Saadi could be described as poets without class borders. However, they are not, from an Iranian perspective, without some form of national borders. It is this notion of the poets as having a particular, abiding and *exclusive* relationship to the Iranian nation that acts to place Afghans outside this cultural heritage.

Language and identity: from Hafez to Khomeini

The ‘[s]tate appropriation of classical Persian literature as a sign of national culture’ has remained constant between the pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary eras (Manoukian 2012, p. 74). Iranian nationalism has often been discursively linked to language. Shahrokh Meskoob (1992, p. 31) asserts that, ‘We [Iranians] maintained one nationality or, perhaps better put, our national identity, our Iranianness, through the blessing of language, by means of the vitality of Persian as a refuge.’ Other scholars have interpreted the dominance of Persian in a more sinister light, pointing to the presence and stubborn persistence of hierarchies of ethno-linguistic belonging in Iran (see Asgharzadeh 2007; Boroujerdi 1998).

Pahlavi nationalism viewed poets and Persian-language poetry as upholding and reflecting the nation in all its glory. Ferdowsi (2008) traces the emergence of this intersection between poetry and nationalism in the wake of the Constitutional Revolution. He argues that the transformation of Hafez, in particular, from provincial

poet to national icon was initially influenced by Orientalist scholarship and emerged, more fully, out of the works of Iranian Hafez scholars writing in the 1920s. Foremost amongst these scholars was Abd al-Rahim Khalkhali (1873–1942)—who published his translation and critical analysis of the *Divan* in 1927—and Abd al-Hosein Hazhir (1901–1949)—whose *Hafezology* was published a year later in 1928. Both of these men were ‘self-consciously motivated by a nationalist will’ (Ferdowsi 2008, p. 680) and actively sought to create of Hafez an icon around which emerging nationalist sentiment could be consolidated. The time at which this pivotal scholarship was published is significant, coming swiftly on the back of Reza Shah Pahlavi’s 1925 decree that Persian be recognised as the official national language. By mid-century the idea that ‘the great poets of the medieval Persian mystical tradition were expressing national sentiments beneath the guise of Islamicate Sufi poetry’ had gained broad currency (Marashi 2010).

During the Pahlavi era the Persian language, and Persian-language literature and poetry, was promoted as a signifier of Iranian culture and nationhood. Indeed, there were repeated and ongoing efforts to ‘purify’ Persian, developing alternatives to commonly used Arabic loanwords and phrases. In this context, Hafez and Saadi were promoted as exclusively *Persian* poets, the considerable body of work written by Saadi in Arabic being sidelined in the process (Harirchi, al-Kaiss & Hakimzadeh 2012). At the same time, the Persian language came to be seen as the particular purview of the Iranian nation.

Brian Spooner (2012, p. 103) argues that by distinguishing Dari from the dominant form of Persian spoken in Iran (an act that was ratified in Afghanistan’s 1964 Constitution under Mohammad Zahir Shah), the Afghan leadership sought to strengthen nationalism and bolster their ‘major defense against what they identify as Iranian cultural

imperialism.’ However, they consequently (and inadvertently) weakened their claim to the ‘textual tradition of the region’ (ibid.).

Dari is one of two official languages in Afghanistan (the other being Pashto). It is also ‘the lingua franca, the language resorted to when speakers of different languages need to conduct business or otherwise communicate’ (Alikuzai 2013, p. 45). Dari, can be thought of as a ‘force for unification’ amongst a diverse, multi-ethnic population (Mabry 2015, p. 204). While Dari is widely spoken in Afghanistan there is no corresponding robust print culture. The historic prominence of Dari poetry (and Persian-language poetry more broadly) has not translated into a contemporary culture of print capitalism, as exists in Iran where there is a supply and demand driven market of print literature across a broad range of genres.

The term ‘Dari,’ by which the Persian of Afghanistan is known, signifies ‘the language of the court’ as distinct to Farsi, which means ‘the language of the Fars province’ (Spooner 2012). The association between the Fars province and the Persian language of Iran and the fact that the written Persian of today is little changed from the Persian used by Hafez and Saadi, has given rise to the claim that the language of Shiraz comprises ‘the most pure and flowing Persian in Iran’ (Manoukian 2012, p. 182).

Poets and politics

From the mid-twentieth century the tombs of Hafez and Saadi became sites at which the nation was felt and experienced. The newly refashioned ‘spaces of culture’ that were the *Hafezieh* and *Saadieh*, functioned as a kind of Persian miniature, capturing in great detail ideas about the Iranian nation that were, at the time, only just beginning to be

articulated. In the planning, layout and architecture of the mausoleums, notions of the inherent Persian-ness of the nation, its sense of order under the autocratic gaze of the Shah and its modern, forward-looking trajectory, were on display.

Following the revolution new ideas about what the Iranian nation was and should be emerged, along with new articulations of nationalism. However, rather than reject poetry out of hand, the Islamic political leadership sought to embed the figures of Hafez and Saadi within a revolutionary and, indeed, *Islamic* framework.

It is the very ambiguity of poetry that makes it such an ideal tool in the project of nation building. Poetry is the 'central icon' of Iranian culture, and the 'focus of emotion in which every speaker of Persian felt he or she could see something essential of himself or herself' (Mottahedeh 1986, p. 161). As Manoukian (2004) puts it, poetry speaks 'the unspeakable' and while history, which is seen to deal in truths, remains controversial and, ironically, untrustworthy, poetry acts as an articulation of the Iranian self.

Saadi and Hafez have always existed in the space between the religious and the secular. Their writing (perhaps inevitably given the respective social milieux in which they lived) draws on religious themes and imagery, even as it strays outside the boundaries of the conventionally Islamic or, particularly in the case of Hafez, overtly criticises the clergy and formal religious structures of the time. Roy Mottahedeh (1986, p. 162) argues that the Sufi poetry of Saadi and Hafez draws on a Persian literary tradition that while not 'un-Islamic, great quantities of it were not properly Islamic either.' Under the Shah, Hafez and Saadi were presented to the Iranian people as 'national and racial archetypes' (Grigor 2009, p. 33). The rebuilt mausoleums of Saadi and Hafez, newly accessible within a reconfigured urban environment, were 'the architectural expression of the

displacement not only of the ulama as the dominant socio-moral force, but above all, of the Shia collective psyche' (ibid., p. 33–34).

The Pahlavi state sought to encourage a modern mode of public conduct by substituting Shia shrines and popular places of religious pilgrimage with 'secular' tombs that could become tourist sites, drawing both Western travellers and an expanding Iranian middle class. In this pre-revolutionary period religious elements at the mausoleums of Saadi and Hafez can be read as an attempt to supplant Islam as a defining feature of Iranian-ness. However, it is these same elements that, following the revolution, allowed Hafez and Saadi to be integrated into Islamic discourses of identity. Indeed, in post-revolutionary Iran, 'poetry has been the art form most strongly promoted and considered least morally problematic by the state' (Olszewska 2015, p. 9).

On the occasion of the 800th anniversary of Saadi's birth, a conference was held in Shiraz commemorating the life and work of the poet. Bringing together Iranian and foreign academics, along with government officials, the conference was opened with a speech by then president Ali Khamenei praising Saadi as 'one of the pillars of Persian literature' (Manoukian 2012). He went on to draw Saadi into a revolutionary framework by emphasising not only the poet's use of religious texts but, perhaps more importantly, his refusal to eulogise the powerful and his barely hidden criticism of certain figures of authority. In alerting his audience to these particular facets of Saadi's poetry (and, inevitably, ignoring others), Khamenei effectively brought Saadi into the 'revolutionary present.'

Imagining a cosmopolitan hospitality

Khamenei is not alone in having Saadi 'speak' to present day politics. On 20 March 2009, US President Obama made a New Year speech addressing the Iranian people and inviting the government to partake in a 'new beginning' in relations with the United States (Obama 2009). In painting a picture of a future in which 'old divisions are overcome,' Obama quoted a translation of one of the most famous sections of Saadi's *Golestan*, 'The children of Adam are limbs to each other, having been created of one essence.' Both Ramin and Marjan assure me, independently (and inaccurately), that the same section of poetry is 'engraved above the entrance to the United Nations building in New York.' An online search throws up oblique references to this mythical inscription and the same misinformation has crept into published texts (see Axworthy 2010; Holden & Holden 2016). The mythology around this section of the *Golestan* points to the way in which classical Persian poetry is drawn into a narrative of cosmopolitan nationalism.

Nationalism is most often presented as the direct antithesis of cosmopolitanism. Whereas nationalism is perceived as exclusive, parochial and inward (or backward) looking, cosmopolitanism is understood in terms of the universal, the inclusive and the progressive (see Beck, U 2000, Held 1995, Nussbaum 1994). However, as we have seen, nationalist discourses are highly flexible and are used for both exclusive and inclusive purposes. Indeed, Craig Calhoun (2007) argues that the sharp binary opposition of cosmopolitanism and nationalism in scholarship is potentially misleading.

In Iran a literary narrative of national identity comes 'equipped with a "cosmopolitan eye"' (Beck, U 2006, p. 62). Poetry affirms the Iranian nation as not only *connected* but *significant* within a global literary culture. Iranians are, for the most part, prohibited from inhabiting the world in a manner we might think of as truly cosmopolitan. In the

context of barriers (only ever partial and unevenly applied) to the free movement to and from Iran, the circulation of cultural 'artefacts,' such as poetry, assumes heightened significance. Classical Persian poetry is drawn into a cosmopolitan imaginary by virtue of its capacity to move in a global milieu, even as Saadi and Hafez remain figures of intense national significance.

Through poetry, Iranians today locate themselves within a long tradition of cosmopolitanism, identifying with a literary culture that crosses borders, while sharply distinguishing Iran from its Afghan neighbours who are imaginatively constructed as *illiterate*. The notion of cosmopolitanism evokes a 'sophisticated, metropolitan culture versus the non-cosmopolitan hinterlands' (Calhoun 2008, p. 431). Shiraz as a city of culture at once reflects the nation inwards in pursuit of the formation of an 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006) and outwards, to the international community, as an 'affirmation of self' (Knudsen et al. 2014, p. 54).

Orientalist Arthur Upham Pope, in a lecture delivered at the Ministry of Post and Telegraph in Tehran in 1925, assured his Iranian audience that Saadi and Hafez 'survived' and that 'the voices of [Iran's] poets still stir hearts everywhere' (Gluck & Silver 1996). Similarly, when the Belgian royal couple visited the city in November 1964 King Baudouin declared that Saadi and Hafez belong to 'the entire world' and Shiraz is the 'center of poetry, culture and human civilization' (Baudouin in Grigor 2009, p 103). These Orientalist remnants of the previous century have, of course, clear contemporary echoes in, for example, the aforementioned Nowruz addresses by Obama or the statement linking Cyrus and human rights made by Shirin Ebadi. This is a commentary that does not stand alone but forms part of the general framework around which the nation is imaginatively constructed.

Even prior to translation into European languages from the seventeenth century onwards, the poetry of Saadi and Hafez had travelled widely beyond the borders of modern-day Iran. As their work was translated into more languages and gained a following beyond the Persianate world Saadi and Hafez were drawn into a narrative that not only celebrated the Iranian nation but constructed it in particular ways as cultured, sophisticated and, indeed, cosmopolitan.

The encapsulation of poetry within a discourse of national identity means that Iranian-ness becomes tied up with the expressed themes of cosmopolitanism. This cosmopolitan imaginary draws on notions of both the borderless world and of shared rights. In doing so, it comes perhaps closest to Derrida's ideal of hospitality (see Baker 2009). Derrida approaches cosmopolitanism with the intention of using it to 'transform what is going on today in our world' (Derrida 1999b, p. 70). That is to say, he argues for a 'new cosmopolitics' in which the laws of hospitality (comprising the juridical terrain of asylum, for example) are tempered by the Law of hospitality (La Caze, 2004).

Afghan refugees in Iran are, for the most part, excluded from a national imaginary that draws on the global cache of classical Persian poetry to construct the Iranian nation as a cosmopolitan space. Within this cosmopolitan space the notion of rights is explicitly articulated, however it is rarely extended to questions of hospitality and the relationship between Iranian 'hosts' and Afghan 'guests.'

Walking outside the garden

As we step out of the front door of Kimia's home she slips a black *chador* over herself, tucking it up under one arm and gripping it against her body with the other. She sees me

watching and grimaces, 'Just around here.' Further afield Kimia will happily pack the *chador* away, making do, instead, with a conservatively long and shapeless *manteau* and matching *magnaeh*. Close to home, however, the *chador* is a way of maintaining appearances amongst the neighbours and, for a young, single girl, holding gossip at bay. The Afghan community in the Saadi neighbourhood is large, but not so large that Kimia can roam the streets unrecognised.

From Kimia's home we walk down the hill towards the Saadi mausoleum, following a narrow stream of water tracing its way along the gutter. At Neyestan Boulevard we agree to make a dash for it—Kimia leaping out into the street and expertly weaving her way between cars, while I am still steeling my nerve to step off the footpath.

We are on our way to visit Kobra. It is only recently that I have discovered a connection between the two. Kimia was, for a brief time, a student of Kobra's. It is only a short walk from the Naranjestan district to West Saadi where Kobra runs a school from her living room.. Looping around the back of the Saadi mausoleum we pass three young Afghan children, playing on the newly paved area that, within a few metres, runs up against a haphazard jumble of shops and informal housing.

In 2013 efforts were made to bring the Saadi gardens, so evocative of the poetry of Saadi, outside the walls behind which they are contained. Trees were planted, garden beds established and paved walking paths installed around the walled mausoleum. However, there remains a sharp discordance between the carefully planned and ordered tribute to the poet and the literary culture he represents and the disordered and haphazard residential precinct that abuts it. This discordance is mirrored in the attitude towards Afghan refugees, who are perceived as outside of and separate to the

rich Persian poetic heritage, a part of the external chaos against which a refined literary culture is imagined to make a bravely threatened stand.

The children have a duckling, a fuzzy ball of yellow feathers that quacks frantically and runs in dazed circles as the younger two children chase it, laughing. The older boy reprimands them sharply when they skirt too close to a homeless man sleeping beneath multiple winter jackets. A middle-aged Iranian man walks by, tutting disapprovingly, although just who his ire is directed at is not entirely clear. Kimia smiles conspiratorially at the children and, to me, quietly recites a line of Saadi's poetry, 'If a man should die for want of food, what is it to me? I am fed. Is the duck concerned about the rain?'

The children have found one of the few places to play in the Saadi neighbourhood. Indeed, amongst the most starkly obvious physical features of the area is the sheer lack of public green space. The per capita parks and green spaces of Saadi is a mere 1.2 square metres (Maab Consulting Engineers 2005). This contrasts with a city-wide per capita green space of approximately nine square metres (Movahed 2004, p. 3), a figure that conforms to the World Health Organization minimum guidelines (Singh, Pandey & Chaudhry 2010). Walking through Saadi it is not unusual to encounter groups of boys—both Afghan and Iranian—utilising (for bike riding or an informal game of soccer) gravelled car parks or the newly vacant spaces where the municipality has demolished homes.

Refugees began moving into the Saadi area from as early as 1980 and today represent approximately one third of the total population (Mohammadi Makerani 2007, p. 102). Initially Afghans seem to have been painlessly integrated into the fabric of the place. 'When we arrived here [in Shiraz], we felt we had finally found a home.' Kimia's father

explains. However, the same factors that led to a shift in Iranian attitudes towards Afghan refugees at a national level carry weight at the local level. While Afghans report growing hostility, Iranians in Saadi frame the issue in terms of hospitality.

‘Iranians are a people of extraordinary hospitality,’ Dawood assures me. As I am, at that moment, partaking (reluctantly, and only after considerable pressure has been applied) of a feast far more lavish than this household can reasonably afford, I am hardly in a position to argue. ‘Hospitality is in our nature. I have read this very thing in a book by an American professor,’ Dawood continues. ‘This is why we did not turn away our Afghan brothers and sisters when they were in need. And don’t forget, we too were at war.’

Dawood and Jaleh blame sanctions for steadily reduced circumstances that have left them living a precarious existence in the Saadi neighbourhood. Other factors, not mentioned in this context, have also contributed. Dawood is not a native to Shiraz, having migrated from the western border province of Khuzestan during the Iran–Iraq war, thereby lacking the safety net of an extended family on which to fall back on in times of crisis. Jaleh suffered complications during the birth of their son that has left her permanently disabled. She suffers chronic pain, held at bay by alarming levels of opioids, that eat through their meagre income from Dawood’s job with the municipality services. Dawood and Jaleh rented a house in Saadi fourteen years earlier, after a bad investment decision left them homeless. Year-by-year their dream of leaving Saadi for the northern suburbs of Shiraz slips further away.

While the Saadi mausoleum is an orienting feature of the neighbourhood (‘Take the last right turn before the *Saadieh*’ Jaleh directs and, on another occasion ‘If you park at the *Saadieh* and go by foot...’) it is, in all other respects, perceived as separate and distinct

from the neighbourhood that surrounds it. 'This is not a good place to live,' Dawood confesses. Dawood and Jaleh perceive the presence of Afghans as one of a number of issues that cast a shadow of disrepute over the Saadi precinct. 'Too many Afghans' Jaleh puts it indelicately. Jaleh and Dawood's immediate neighbours are a large and rambunctious family from Anar Dara in Afghanistan's Farah province. I ask Jaleh how well they know them. She is still struggling to answer when Dawood speaks up, 'You must understand that Iranians and Afghans don't come and go [to each other's homes]. It is enough that Afghans are the guest of the nation without being a guest in our house.'

Afghan refugees, as guests, are understood to be breaking an unspoken—and vaguely defined—contract, by which the length of stay, the degree of expressed gratitude and the parameters of guest behaviour are determined.

'A good guest must not outstay their welcome. This is the problem we have with Afghans.' Dawood explains, 'Now we have sanctions and unemployment and Afghans are here taking our jobs.' Jaleh breaks into the conversation, 'There are other problems. Afghans have no respect for our laws, our culture and our way of life. They are not a civilised people. They are criminals and drug dealers.'

A survey of Saadi residents undertaken in 2006 found that criminal behaviour ranked highly as an issue affecting the local area (Mohammadi Makerani 2007). A purported high crime rate in the area is generally attributed, by Iranians within Saadi and beyond, to the presence of Afghan migrants. Indeed, a belief in inherent Afghan criminality is so widely held and so little interrogated that in local parlance 'Afghan' has become a kind of shorthand for a whole bundle of legally and morally subversive behaviours. Not surprisingly, Afghans frame this issue of criminality quite differently. 'Everywhere we go

we are watched,’ Kimia complains. ‘There are always a thousand eyes on us and everywhere the mutter of “Afghan, Afghan” and the expectation that we are up to no good.’ The uneasy sense of constant visibility is one that I could sympathise with, having grown familiar (although never entirely comfortable) with the whisper of *khareji* (foreigner) trailing in my wake. For Afghans in Iran this not infrequently spills into overt harassment.

‘We were walking to the mosque when two men rode by on a motorbike yelling obscenities,’ Kimia’s mother, Masumeh, is retelling an incident that happened several years earlier, during what she describes as the worst years of deportations and anti-Afghan sentiment under Ahmadinejad’s belligerent form of nationalism. ‘At the end of the lane they circled back. The man on the back [of the bike] lunged with his baton. It missed Agha-ye Rashedi but caught me on the shoulder and knocked me to the ground. Praise God the girls were not with us.’ Even now, many years later, the incident gives rise to feelings of anger mixed with shame. Kimia tells me, later, that her parents have never shared that story with anyone outside the family before. ‘Not the police?’ I ask ‘*Epecially* not the police.’ Kimia goes on to tell me about an Afghan man in the neighbourhood who was deported, leaving behind his wife and three young children, when he went to the police to report a similar incident. ‘And Sadegh [a local Afghan youth]. He ended up in prison. The police did nothing, so he took matters into his own hands.’

In 2007 a massive deportation campaign was launched, resulting in the expulsion of almost half a million Afghans from Iran in the space of a year. Although it was supposed to target undocumented migrants, the broad powers afforded the police by Interior

Minister Mostafa Pur-Mohammadi, resulted in multiple (and largely undocumented) abuses (Olszewska 2015).

Several Afghans I spoke with made bitter reference to an incident in which the murder of a local Iranian woman, within the context of a domestic dispute, was initially blamed on a largely fictional 'Afghan mafia,' sparking violent retributive attacks against the Afghan community of the Saadi neighbourhood. Similar situations flare up in various cities and towns across Iran on a semi-regular basis (see Mehregan 2010).

Poetics of hospitality

Half a dozen pairs of shoes—worn-down sneakers and plastic sandals—line the roughly carpeted space between the front door and the heavy brown curtain that shields the inside of the home from unwelcome gaze. It is the afternoon session of school and the high buzz of voices reciting a Farsi lesson drifts through from the interior courtyard. In the shade of a spreading sour orange tree five young Afghan girls are seated on blankets. Copies of the familiar third-year school text book, mandated for use in schools nationwide, are open before them. The girls, ranging in age from eight to thirteen, wear a mix of various school uniforms, lending a degree of formality to the situation.

'An act of hospitality' claims Derrida (2000b, p. 2), 'can only be poetic.' Dufourmantelle (in Derrida 2000b) begins with this notion of poetic hospitality in order to explore the absences and silences that not so much hover at the edges of hospitality as lie at its very core. In this courtyard of a rented home in the Saadi neighbourhood, where a group of young Afghan girls gather in pursuit of the education denied them by the Iranian state, hospitality (and hostility) flits in and out of vision.

As Kimia and I enter the girls rise from the ground, greeting us and—on their teacher’s instruction—introducing themselves. Kobra began teaching almost ten years earlier and, barring a short period after the birth of her first child, has taught continuously ever since. By her estimate several hundred Afghan children—including, for a time, Kimia—have passed through her makeshift classroom.

We started off in my living room. Back then we lived in Fohandej. It was just me and my husband and mother. My sister had just left [to Turkey] and we had marked the first year anniversary of my father’s death. I had not long completed my high school diploma and I thought ‘Why should I sit here at home waiting for money that never makes its way to my hand?’

For years it has been the small stipend paid by the students to their teacher that has kept food on the table and a roof over the heads of Kobra’s family. It has also allowed Kobra to squirrel away a small pool of savings that she thinks of as an escape fund for herself and her two children—a way to dream of leaving Iran and an unhappy marriage.

At first I had eight students but within a matter of months I had forty, ranging in age from six to sixteen and of every ability, meeting in my living room. Their parents were desperate for them to go to school. How could I turn them away?

In the early days Kobra was learning as she went along, finding ways to beg and borrow copies of textbooks that are tightly restricted and kept from resale; drawing on (recent) memories of her own schooling in order to appear confident and in control of an occasionally unruly classroom; and managing parental concerns around the potential and actual interaction of male and female students. It soon became evident that this was a task that couldn’t be managed alone and Kobra joined her fledgling school with another underground Afghan school that was operating in the area.

We rented out a space and ran lessons on a schedule: boys in the morning and girls in the afternoon. There were three teachers and we divided the grades between us. I felt like I was working in a real job and there was

nothing he [Kobra's husband] could do but complain and grumble [as he was unemployed at the time].

In late 2010, amidst a crackdown on underground schools, the presence of an Afghan school in the area was uncovered, and raided, by the authorities. Three families who had students attending the school were deported to Afghanistan and a number of other families were forced to pay hefty bribes in order to avoid detainment and deportation. Less than six months later the house in which the school had been operating was demolished, ostensibly on the grounds that the Iranian landlord, like many of the homeowners in the Saadi area, lacked a construction permit.

Kobra returned to running classes from her living room, restricting access to a much smaller and less noticeable group of students, from among those families that had not been permanently scared off by the events that had befallen the school.

Kobra's house is far smaller even than Kimia's. The dark, cramped interior is hardly conducive to learning and on all but the coldest days of winter the students take their books out to the courtyard. Here they must keep their voices down to avoid complaints from the neighbours—with the ever present threat of being reported to the authorities. But at least there is sufficient light and, if today the sickly sweet smell of opium wafts over the wall from some neighbouring property, it is better than the musty smell of damp carpets and cooking that assaults the senses inside the house.

As the lesson draws to an end Kobra invites one of the girls, a star pupil, to recite a short selection of her choice. Shima stands up and launches confidently into a poem. 'Hafez,' Kimia whispers to me, evidently familiar with the words. I catch references to spring and the east wind but listen more to the dramatic cadence, the shifting volume and sudden drawn out pauses that mark an accomplished orator in this part of the world.

Poetry and the Afghan Other

Afghans in Iran are constructed as the literary and linguistic Other. The Persian poetic heritage, has 'become identified as a quintessentially "Iranian" art form' (Olszewska 2015, p. 10). At the same time, the Persian literature of Afghanistan has been relegated to a peripheral position—indeed, to the point of invisibility. While Afghans have a high degree of awareness of Iranian cultural production the same cannot be said in reverse (Ahmadi, W 2004). Afghanistan is perceived as a cultural wasteland, a place where poetry has been silenced by the Taliban and their successors.

By way of contrast, Afghan poet Reza Mohammadi (2012) describes Afghanistan as a 'society of poets' and Afghans as living and breathing poetry. He cites Saadi amongst the Persian language poets that are known to all Afghans and instrumental in the formation of a culture of poetry that infiltrates all levels of Afghan society. In this formulation there is no sense that contemporary borders might in some way mark out the sphere of the poet's influence or, indeed, determine who has a greater or lesser claim over Saadi's poetic heritage.

Magnus Marsden (2008: 220) points to the significance of Persian language poetry in the formation of a transnational 'Persianate realm.' Afghan refugees—as 'doers of Farsi'—have, in Marsden's account (ibid.), contributed in no small measure to the cultural life of Rowshan, a village in the Chitral district of north-west Pakistan. Persian-language poetry, including that of Hafez and Saadi, came to be enthusiastically embraced by many of the Khowar-speaking Chitrali locals. It was classical Persian poetry, in this context, that linked this part of Pakistan to the broader Persianate world and,

moreover, bridged the gap between insider and outsider (or host and guest) for Afghan refugees.

Afghans, like Iranians, hold both Hafez and Saadi in high regard and claim a special relationship with the poets on the basis of shared Persian language. However, this has not transformed into any kind of nationalist claim. While poetry has tentatively and sporadically been incorporated into Afghan myths of nationhood, linguistic diversity in Afghanistan, along with high rates of illiteracy, has made language and literature less obviously a source of national cohesion (see Ahmadi, W 2004; Dupree 2002; Olszewska 2007).

Where is Saadi?

The 1987 film 'The Cyclist,' by Iranian director Mohsen Makhmalbaf, foregrounds the plight of Afghan migrants in Iran. The main protagonist—a former cycling champion from Afghanistan—has vowed to remain on his bicycle pedalling without pause for seven days in order to raise much needed funds for his wife's surgery. As Adelkhah and Olszewska (2007, p. 138) point out, the film 'can be seen as a parable of the vicious cycle in which Afghan migrants have found themselves, confronted by an exploitative situation but unable to back out of it.'

In an essay published in *Monthly Review* in 2001, Makhmalbaf—reflecting on his own creative legacy and engagement with Afghanistan and lamenting the global paucity of images of Afghans and Afghanistan—takes Saadi's famous declaration that 'all people are limbs of one body' and turns it on its head, suggesting that Afghanistan—suffering

under the weight of the world's indifference—has been metaphorically dismembered from the body of humanity.

'But where,' asks Makhmalbaf, 'is Sa'di [Saadi] to see this tragedy' (Makhmalbaf 2001, n.pag). Afghan refugees living in Saadi and, indeed, in thousands of similar neighbourhoods across Iran, could be forgiven for asking the same question. Afghans in Iran are well aware of the way in which classical Persian poetry is laid claim to within narratives of Iranian national identity. Manoukian (2012, p. 5) argues that the revolution 'reversed' the Pahlavi discourse of *farhang* but 'did not alter it substantially,' such that decades later the cultural concerns of the monarchy have been appropriated by the Islamic Republic. In this context, 'Hafez's tomb garden remains the perfect mediator between the regime's orthodoxy and the liberal demands of the vast majority,' while the tomb of Saadi expresses the 'uneasy relationship between teachings of Shiism and Iran's literary tradition' (Grigor 2009, p. 219).

The poet Saadi, in particular, is associated with notions of human rights and ideals of hospitality that give rise to a cosmopolitan imaginary within the city of Shiraz (see Zarrintan, S, Ranjbar, Aslanabadi, & Zarrintan, MH, 2015). However, the association between poetry and hospitality is challenged at the very place at which the poetic nation is physically represented in the mausoleum of Saadi. Indeed, the Saadi mausoleum can be thought of as a site of hostile-hospitality, at once welcoming and rejecting.

In mid-October I make my last visit to the Saadi neighbourhood. I decide, on this occasion, to forgo a visit to the *Saadieh*, hoping for one last fortuitous meeting with some unknown resident—Iranian or Afghan—of the Saadi neighbourhood. Kimia is in Mashhad with her father, ostensibly making a rare (and, lacking the necessary papers to

travel, somewhat risky) pilgrimage the shrine of Imam Reza. Before she left, Kimia let slip mention of delicate marriage negotiations that are now some years in progress, necessitating the long journey to the north-east of the country, for which pilgrimage provides a useful cover. Kobra is keeping a low profile. Her husband, having become concerned about my research and its possible implications for his family, has effectively barred her from meeting with me and a shadow of uncertainty lies over the classes she runs.

As I walk past the *Saadieh* I spot an Afghan boy of ten or eleven scaling the wall. He is caught awkwardly part way up. 'Would you like a hand?' I ask. He turns around, momentarily alarmed. Seeing there's no threat at hand, he lowers himself down, hanging on from the top of the wall by his fingertips and then dropping lightly to the ground. He turns to face me, 'No. It's nothing out of the ordinary anyway.'

In this chapter I have proposed that the mausoleum of Saadi is, in fact, a space 'out of the ordinary,' in so far as it functions as a microcosm of the national whole. At both the local and national levels, Afghans remain part of the culturally threatening disorder beyond the boundary walls. As the poet Saadi has come to be claimed as an icon of Iranian nationhood—a process that began in the early twentieth century and continues to be refined to the present day—Afghan refugees in Iran have been denied a claim over the legacy of Persian-language poetry.

Themes of hospitality and human rights flit in and out of vision in the poetry of Saadi and Hafez. It is these themes, in part, that give rise to the notion of Shiraz as a cosmopolitan city—linked to other desired cosmopolitan spaces, through a shared appreciation of literature and an attention to 'culture.' However, within the

cosmopolitan imaginary there is no space for Afghan refugees who remain the unwelcome shadow of an Iran that once was or may yet be.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Oases of hospitality

I am sitting in the front room, mentally rehearsing my lines for the afternoon and watching the movement of the minute hand on the ornate marquetry wall-clock. It is my last Friday in Iran and I have invited Marjan and Adham over—a chance to say goodbye and a small down payment against the debt of hospitality that is owed. Having so often been a guest, this is my opportunity to reverse the roles, drawing on my knowledge (however partial and incomplete) of Iranian practices of hospitality to become, for a brief time, a host of the hosts.

I have spent most of the morning preparing and plates of food line the bench—a platter of fruit, bowls of mixed nuts and seeds, sugar coated pastries and foil-wrapped chocolates. There is a moment of minor panic when the jar of tea leaves can't be located, but eventually it is found at the very back of the cupboard and a flask (the good one, not the one used at breakfast time) is filled, ready for piping hot tea to be poured into delicate, thimble-sized glasses.

The guests are late, it is already ten minutes past five and having counted out the right number of plates, searched out slippers in the correct sizes and straightened and restraightened the tablecloth, there is nothing left to do but wait.

'Nervous?' Abbas asks.

I grimace in response.

'Don't worry,' he tries to reassure me, 'You're a foreigner, nobody expects anything from you.'

The doorbell rings and I go to answer, swiftly adjusting my headscarf as I pass the hallway mirror.

‘Welcome.’ I say, smiling and leaning forward to kiss Marjan on the cheek, ‘You have troubled your steps.’

‘There is no culture that is not also a culture of hospitality,’ declares Derrida, ‘All cultures compete in this regard and present themselves as more hospitable than the others. Hospitality—this is culture itself’ (Derrida & Anidjar 2002, p. 361).

Hospitality cuts across diverse narratives of Iranian identity. Through this thesis I have traced hospitality as it emerges and re-emerges, in various guises, across Islamic, historical and literary constructions of national selfhood. Within these discursive constructions there can be found, oases of hospitality (see Westmoreland 2008): spaces in which we might pause, in order to reflect on larger philosophical questions around the place of the Other within the national imaginary.

I have proposed that Afghan refugees in the city of Shiraz are Other to the Iranian citizen Self. The histories of Iran and Afghanistan are deeply intertwined and, as such, the Otherness of Afghans cannot be automatically assumed. Indeed, in Iran there are other Others that have historically been more prominent and have comprised a similar (although never identical) source of communal anxiety.

The Othering of Afghans in Iran has a specific temporal context, which I have traced through the creation and enforcement of borders and boundaries. Sigmund Freud’s (1946 [1929]) narcissism of small differences is usefully deployed in theorising hospitality as it pertains to Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees. Indeed, there must always be ‘an edge of difference in history or language or tradition for hospitality to be an issue’ (Casey 2011, p. 43). I have highlighted just how these differences have been made more (or less) significant at different historical junctures. Furthermore, I consider

the 'making different' of Afghans to be an ongoing process and one which Afghan refugees in Iran creatively resist.

The 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan precipitated a refugee crisis that was without precedent. In the immediate aftermath as many as three million Afghans fled across the border into Iran. The initial response of the Iranian government, to a situation that had all the hallmarks of a major crisis, has been popularly characterised as an 'open door' policy (Bhatnagar 2012; Barr & Sanei 2013). Indeed, a language of hospitality served the political and ideological requirements of the newly established Islamic Republic under the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini. In this thesis I have traced the shift from an open to a closed door at the Iran–Afghanistan border and shown how this has been broadly linked to a shifting discourse of Iranian national identity. This shifting discourse has seen the idea of the 'Islamic' nation variously promoted and demoted *vis-à-vis* the 'Perso-Iranian' nation. With this shift in discourse the grounds of hospitality have been reconfigured.

The door is a recurring metaphor within a hospitality literature that slips easily—some have argued too easily (see Rosello 2001)—between the homely domestic space and the nation space (see Ben Jelloun 1990, Derrida 2000a, Friese 2004). Ghassan Hage (1993, p. 79) notes that, 'Home, nation and family operate within the same mythic metaphorical field' in as much as they are perceived to provide virtually the same experience of comfort, familiarity and security. 'There is no house without doors and windows' writes Derrida (2000a, p. 4), before going on to point to the fundamental paradox of hospitality: 'but as soon as there are a door and windows, it means that someone has the key to them and consequently controls the conditions of hospitality.' One of the aims of my thesis has been to look beyond the 'conditions of hospitality' imposed by the state to consider the practice and experience of hospitality at the local

level. I have explored the vagaries of hostility and hospitality in the everyday interactions between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees living in and around the city of Shiraz. In order to reach an understanding of such everyday hospitalities I have asked how the idea of 'being Iranian' is configured as either inclusive or exclusive.

Thinking through the intersection of hospitality and identity in Iran I have drawn attention to three narratives of Iranian-ness. While extant narratives of Islam, history and poetry are called on by Iranians at different times and for different purposes they might best be thought of as distinct strands—rather than competing discourses—of identity. I have shown hospitality to be a recurring motif of national selfhood that threads through these distinct strands, tying them together and revealing commonalities between them. Idioms of hospitality.

Iranians are keen to assert a claim over hospitality as a key cultural characteristic ('Hospitality is in our nature' is how Dawood puts it) even as the precise source and shape of that hospitality remains amorphous and uncertain. In Iran the desirability of hospitality is taken for granted. It is this taken-for-granted quality that demands critical investigation and to which Derrida's theorising around the concept of hospitality is productively applied.

The presence of Afghan refugees in Iran serves to affirm notions of Iranian hospitality that surface in Islamic, historic and literary modes of being. However, the ethnographic evidence of this thesis points to a disjuncture between the imaginary of the nation as a hospitable space and the reality of the treatment of refugees within that space.

I suggest that using a hospitality framework to explore questions of identity exposes hidden tensions and unseen contradictions within the construction of Iranian national selfhood. Ideals of hospitality that resonate strongly with Derridean notions of a 'just hospitality' are deeply implicated in ideas about what it means to be Iranian and practice

Iranian-ness. At the same time, we have seen, encapsulated in nation-making policies and practices towards the Afghan Other, a highly conditional hospitality, a *hostipitality* of sorts.

Central to the Derridean thesis is the claim that hospitality is not unremittingly 'liberating and emancipatory' but, in fact, conceals 'an oppressive aspect beneath its welcoming surface' (Dikeç 2002, p. 228). Through my research I have endeavoured to reveal what hospitality conceals and, in doing so, suggest the possibility of thinking and practicing new forms of hospitality in place.

All hospitality occurs in place. It is the places in which hospitality occur that anchor the concept, allowing us to move from dizzy philosophical heights to 'ethnographic empathy' (Miller 2005, p. 15). I have highlighted the nexus of hospitality and identity at various scales: from the nation, through the city, to sites of national significance in and around Shiraz.

Afghan life in Iran is circumscribed by ongoing insecurity underpinned by an emphasis on repatriation (voluntary or otherwise) as the 'solution' to what is widely held to be the 'problem' of Afghan refugees. Hospitality begins at the border, with a recognition of Iran-space into which Afghans, as Other, pass. Vitally, however, it does not stop at the international boundary but is affirmed and reaffirmed in everyday interactions between Iranian citizens and Afghan refugees. I trace these everyday interactions in and around the city of Shiraz, exploring the way in which ideas around identity are complicit in the formation of hospitable space.

Derrida argues that hospitality involves 'appropriating for oneself a place to welcome [*accueillir*] the other, or, worse, welcoming the other to appropriate for oneself a place and then speak the language of hospitality' (Derrida, 1999a: 15–16). I have shown that

place in Iran is the pre-condition of hospitality and that, moreover, hospitality is implicated in the ongoing appropriation of places as 'exclusively Iranian.'

In this thesis I have looked to three sites (or clusters of sites) which speak to ideas around Iranian identity. The shrine precinct in the centre of Shiraz, the Achaemenid ruins forty kilometres to the north of the city and the mausoleums of Hafez and Saadi in the northeast are all places that are deeply enmeshed in narratives of national selfhood. As such they function as border sites, giving rise to the notion of the city as a cultural microcosm of the Persian whole and, simultaneously, being made to discursively distinguish Self from Other. Anna Triandafyllidou (1998: 609) notes that the nation is constantly 're-defined in ways that make it relevant under a new set of circumstances and which respond better to the material, symbolic or affective needs of its members.' At that same time, it can be argued that 'each age and society recreates its Others' (Said 1995: 332). Subsequently, it is necessary to understand the nation and the Other as existing in a living, dynamic relationship. I have interpreted this as a relationship of hospitality, thereby bringing hospitality to bear on the discussion around place and identity. I have called on metaphors of Iranian hospitality that occur in place and are associated with the particular narratives of identity that speak through place. By shifting my thinking from Iranian identity to Afghan refugees and back, I have highlighted the way in which hospitality 'troubles identity' disrupting the order within (Honig 1996, p. 258).

Afghan refugees visit, move through and live in the immediate vicinity of the sites that I have discussed in my thesis. As such, they come up against the narratives of identity that adhere to these sites. Moving through different spaces I have shown that Iranian identity is not static but is constantly formed and reformed. As notions of identity take new shape, Iranian hospitality come to be articulated and practised in new ways. The

research I have undertaken, reveals how Afghan refugees and Iranian citizens living in and around the southern Iranian city of Shiraz experience being in—and out—of place. It shows how a hospitable political rhetoric waxes and wanes, forming the landscape across which minutely experienced hostilities and hospitalities are played out in the everyday.

On the threshold

In April 2016 the ‘hospitable political rhetoric’ by which Afghans had been nominated ‘guests’ of the Iranian nation, having been muted at an official level, was briefly resurrected (Bjerre Christensen 2016, p. 36). The catalyst was the rape and murder of Setayesh Ghoreishi—the six-year-old daughter of Afghan migrants living in the city of Varamin—by her seventeen-year-old Iranian neighbour. The crime, shocking in its barbarity, shone a rare light on more mundane forms of brutality and discrimination suffered by Afghans across Iran, and provoked an outpouring of support from ordinary Iranians. While the conservative media was quick to blame ‘pornography websites and Internet freedom’ (see Bezhan 2016), prominent reformists rallied in an unprecedented defence of Afghan rights. ‘[W]e feel ashamed as hosts that such a thing happened to our guest’ declared Seyed Hassan Khomeini (in Dagres 2016).

The ‘guesting’ of Afghans has always been a double-edged sword. To be a guest is to be perpetually dependent on the hospitalities (and vulnerable to the hostilities) of the host. The inequality of power between host and guest translates all too easily into ‘domination and discrimination’ (Dikeç 2002, p. 237).

Afghans are increasingly impatient with their status as temporary and peripheral in Iran, and resent a discourse that posits them as 'bad guests,' who have, amongst a host of other sins, overstayed their welcome (see Shryock 2012).

'They say, "Go home, Afghan" but what home do I have to go to?' laments Shakufeh. Her father, Agha-ye Sharifi, articulates the hopes the family has in leaving Iran, 'There [in Europe] we can become citizens and one day our children [and grandchildren] will say "This is our home", but here we are always guests and must tread carefully.' As Treanor (2011, p. 50) puts it, '[W]hen the guest ceases to be a guest (as when she becomes a naturalized citizen or member of the family), we can no longer speak of hospitality.' By continuing to speak the language of hospitality a state of permanent guestness is maintained around Afghan refugees.

The most recent UNHCR statistics show that 2016 was the year in which just 657 refugees of a total of 979 410 registered with the Iranian Government's Bureau for Aliens and Foreign Immigrants' Affairs, were repatriated to Afghanistan. In addition, a mere 375 left Iran under a UNHCR scheme that sees refugees resettled in a small number of resettlement countries (UNHCR 2016). Whatever the future holds it seems almost certain that Afghan refugees, including an ever-increasing number born in exile, will remain in Iran. Indeed, Khamenei seems to have acknowledged this reality when he eased the restrictions on refugee children attending school (see Fars News Agency 2015). In this context, hospitality is likely to continue to govern the relationship between Afghans and Iranians in Iran for some time to come. The shape and form of this hospitality, the relative weighting of hostility to hospitality, and the way in which this hostile-hospitality converges with (or diverges from) narratives and counter-narratives of Iranian identity are ongoing questions that are likely to yield new answers if and when

they are revisited. Furthermore, the circumstances endured by Afghans in Iran remain a rich vein to mine. Laying aside, for a moment, the 'lens' of hospitality, there are other ways we might productively consider the relationship between Iranians and Afghans: in terms of its economic dimensions for example or in the context of the broader foreign policy objectives of Iran and Afghanistan respectively.

Globally, narratives of hospitality that dominated in the post-World War Two era are increasingly being abandoned for a naked and unabashed hostility. Nations that once presented as hospitable spaces are throwing up walls, reinforcing borders and turning their backs on an ethos of hospitality. Afghans find themselves amongst the swelling ranks of refugees turned away at the threshold, their numbers dwarfed only by those fleeing the chaos of Syria (Refugee Council 2016). The particular tensions—between the French nation and its African immigrant Other—that gave rise to Derrida's engagement with hospitality in the 1990s have been produced and reproduced in multiple spaces and contexts. Iran remains a place in which Afghans, metaphorically, have a foot in the door and are able, with some success, to call on tropes of hospitality in order to lay claim to a space within the nation. However, by utilising this discourse of hospitality, Afghan refugees become complicit in maintaining the structures of hostility that see them pushed outside the boundaries of the national imaginary.

Chocolate wrappers and crumbs lie scattered over the table-top. The last of the tea has been poured and drunk. The three children, having long since tired of the conversation, are playing on the balcony. We have talked about Adham's new job and their plans to travel in the coming year, about how we feel about returning to Australia and whether we will miss Iran, now discussion turns, again, to the findings of my research.

Marjan is worried that by highlighting the treatment of Afghans in Iran over the past thirty-five years I might cast her country and her fellow Iranians in a poor light.

‘What will you say about us?’ she asks it idly enough, but I know there is a real anxiety around this question.

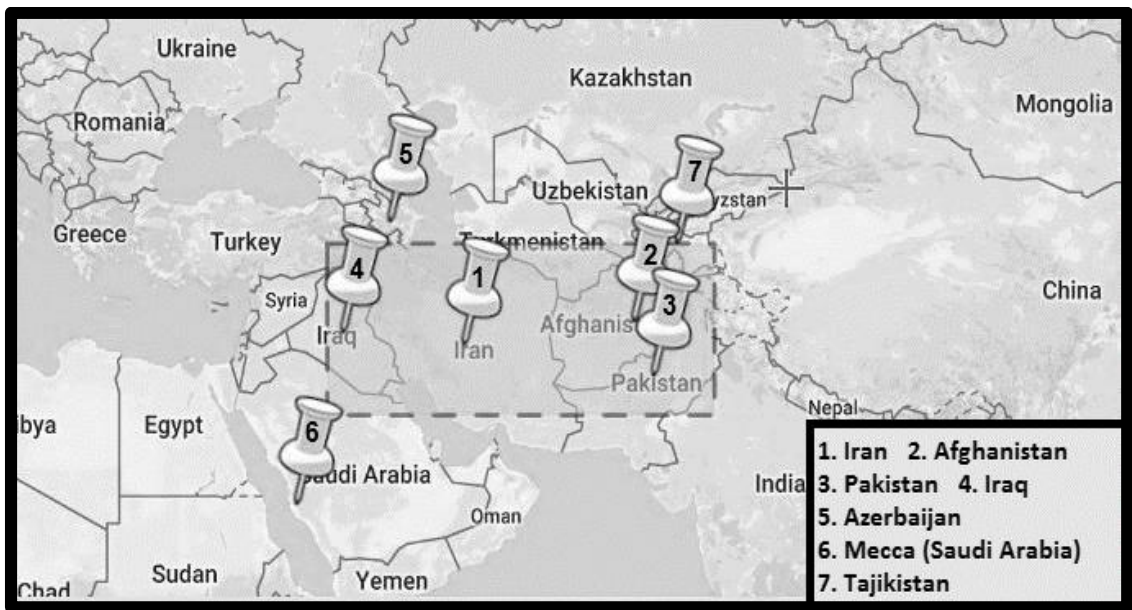
‘You must tell them we are not bad people,’ Adham says. ‘Tell them to come and see for themselves, we are not bad people. Tell them they are welcome here. They are all welcome here.’

Appendix One

Abdul Golhi	[male, Afghan, ≈ 35 years old]	55, 66–67
Adham	[male, Iranian, 46 years old]	74–76, 163, 177, 181, 205–206, 218, 230, 263, 271–272
Afsaneh	[female, Australian-Iranian, 55 years old]	199
Agha-ye Rashedi	[male, Afghan, ≈ 50 years old]	113, 162, 235, 239–40, 250–51, 253
Agha-ye Sharifi	[male, Afghan, ≈ 45 years old]	63, 210–212, 270
Ahmed	[male, Iranian, ≈ 50 years old]	64
Ali Hashemzadeh	[male, Afghan, 16 years old]	180, 189–90
Ali Reza	[male, Iranian, ≈ 40 years old]	65, 104, 239
Anoosh	[female, Afghan, 22 years old]	15–16
Bahram	[male, Iranian, 38 years old]	179–80, 186–91, 199
Behrouz	[male, Iranian, 19 years old]	193
Dariush	[male, Iranian, ≈ 30 years old]	224
Dawood	[male, Iranian, ≈ 40 years old]	251–52, 266
Dordaneh	[female, Iranian, ≈ 58 years]	110, 162, 180
Elham	[female, Iranian, 42 years old]	142, 169
Fahima	[female, Afghan, 49 years old]	62, 142–48, 158, 164–65, 167
Farahnaz	[female, Afghan, 26 years old]	56–57, 62
Faraz	[male, Afghan, 18 years old]	18
Hamdiya	[female, Afghan, ≈ 30 years old]	156–57
Hana	[female, Iranian, 24 years old]	64, 234
Ibrahim	[male, Afghan, ≈ 60 years old]	118
Jaleh	[female, Iranian, ≈ 35 years old]	251–52
Kamran	[male, Iranian, 23 years old]	194, 195
Katayoun	[female, Iranian, ≈ 60 years old]	151–52, 156
Katy	[female, Iranian, ≈ 20 years old]	232
Khodadad	[male, Afghan, ≈ 55 years old]	52, 142–46, 148, 164–66
Kian	[male, Iranian, 20 years old]	193
Kimia	[female, Afghan, 19 years old]	159–62, 235–36, 238, 240, 248–50, 253, 255–56, 259–60
Marjan	[female, Iranian, 39 years old]	61–65, 86, 91, 99, 101, 168, 73–77, 98, 104, 112, 181, 189, 201, 205–6, 217, 221, 229, 236, 246, 263–64, 272
Maryam	[female, Iranian, 23 years old]	64–234
Masumeh	[female, Afghan, ≈ 40 years old]	235, 29, 253
Mehdi	[male, Iranian, 26 years old]	234
Mohammad	[male, Afghan, 17 years old]	63
Mullah Azami	[male, Afghan, ≈ 38 years old]	67, 91, 203
Nazanin	[female, Afghan, 27 years old]	43, 146–48, 170–71
Parisa	[female, Iranian, ≈ 45 years old]	232
Ramin	[male, Iranian, ≈ 45 years old]	131, 237–38, 246
Razieh	[female, Afghan, 37 years old]	58–59, 67, 114
Reza	[male, Iranian, 58 years old]	992, 143, 148, 173–74
Shakufeh	[female, Afghan, 21 years old]	91, 181, 209–14, 270
Shima	[female, Afghan, 13 years old]	256
Sumayra	[female, Afghan, 9 years old]	112–13, 236, 240
Yaghoub	[male, Afghan, 68 years old]	115
Zahra	[female, Iranian, 49 years old]	92, 142–43, 148, 155–57, 172–73
Zakiya	[female, Afghan, ≈ 40 years old]	204–5
Zarifeh	[female, Afghan, 23 years old]	209–10
Zeynab	[female, Afghan, ≈ 30 years old]	158

Appendix Two

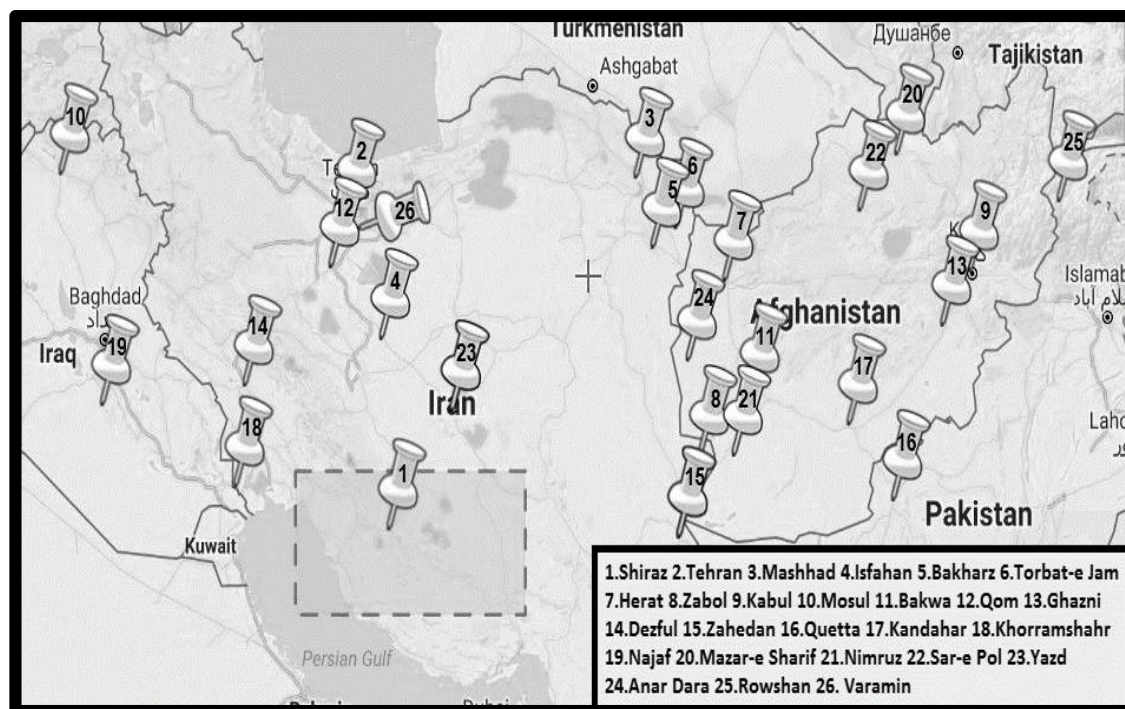
Map 1: Iran, Afghanistan and the region



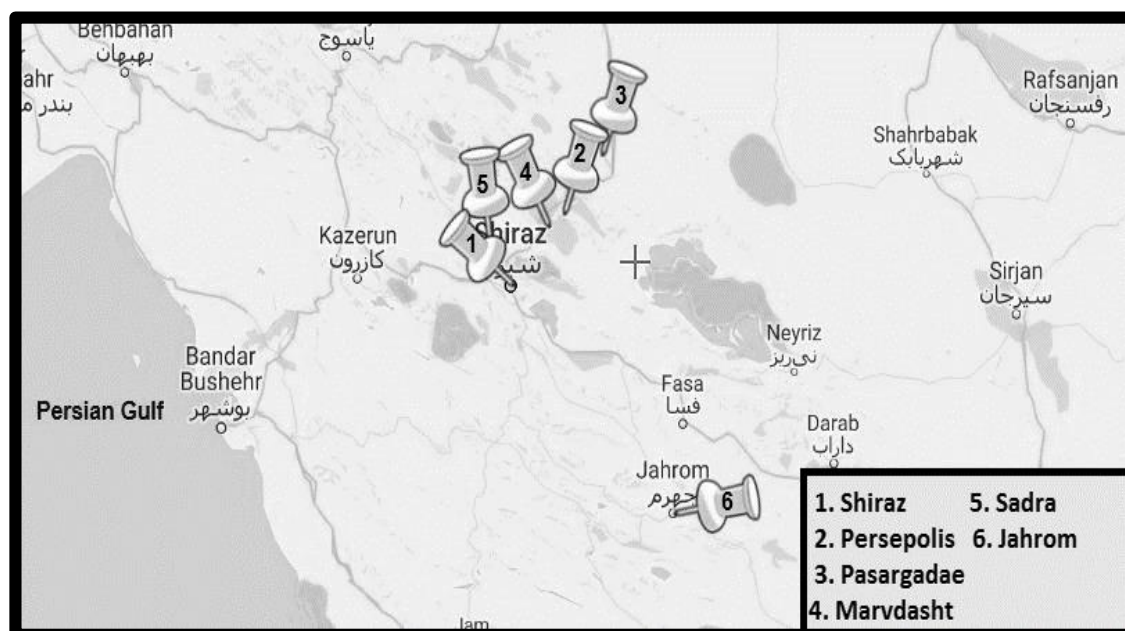
Map 2: Iran's provinces



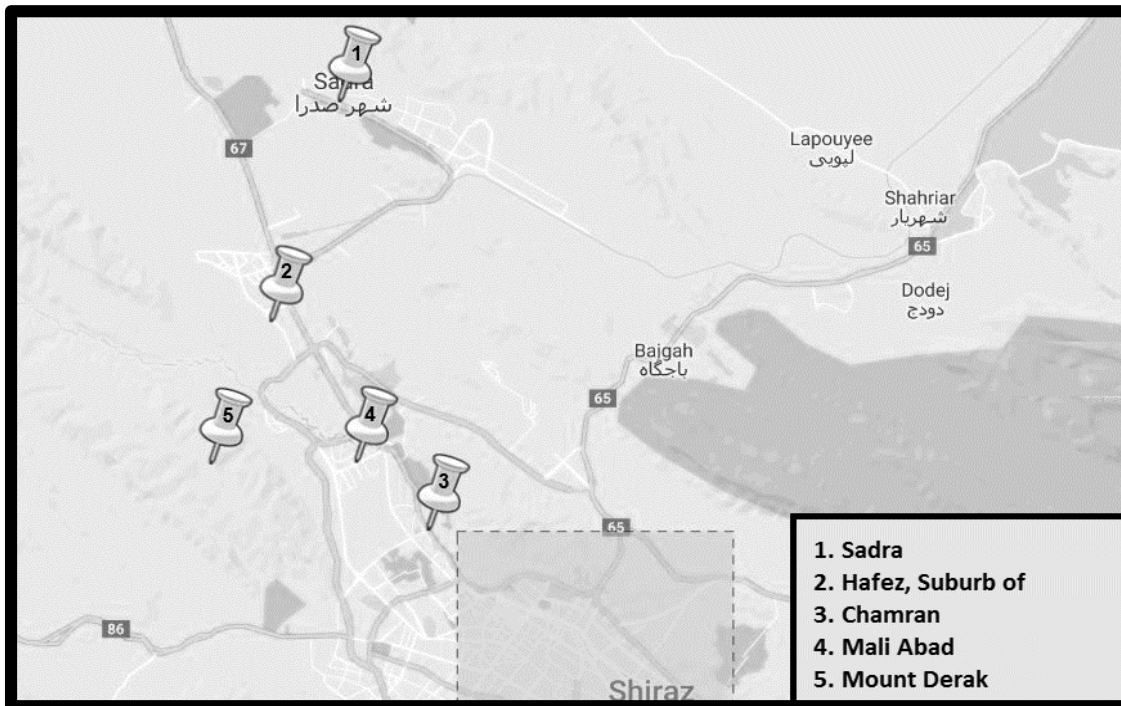
Map 3: Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan



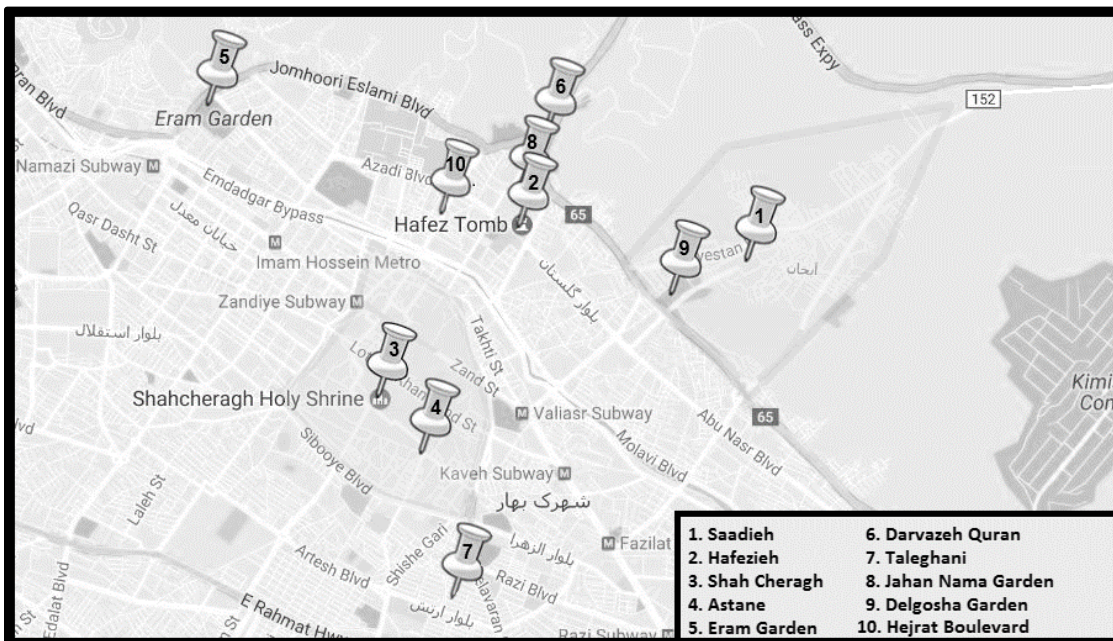
Map 4: Fars province



Map 5: Shiraz region



Map 6: Shiraz, old city



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