

# In Search of Existential Self in Foreignness: A Case Study of Persian Diasporic Bloggers

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## Abstract

*This paper investigates the discourse of existential migration in a virtual community of Iranian immigrants residing in Australia. It illustrates how Iranian diasporic bloggers use weblogs to express and document the negotiation and co-construction of self and identity through interaction with the physical and virtual environments in the diaspora. By examining the writing of a blogger, the study delineates how diasporic virtual communities are used to express and negotiate self and identity, and the platform they provide as a source of naturally occurring data in migration studies. Using a Grounded Theory approach and the subsequent emergence of themes around existential migration, the analysis will specifically deal with the issues of belonging, self and identity, and family relations in the writing of the blogger. The discussion concludes with the importance of considering the existential aspect of migration as opposed to materialistic or political reasons with regard to the new generation of Iranian migrants, and the way diasporic virtual communities are used to manifest the search for existential self in foreignness.*

**Keywords:** Persian culture; Iranian identity; Persian weblogs; Iranians in Australia; Iranian diaspora; Existential migration

## Introduction

International migration is an undeniable reality of the world and it has been a subject of debate globally (Gheasi & Nijkamp, 2017). The current literature on migration is inundated with different reasons for international migration applying different theoretical frameworks in order to bring to the fore a better understanding of nations on the move. While the majority of migration studies have focused on Micro, Meso, and Macro levels (Hagen-Zanker, 2008) discussing different reasons such as economic and political motives, there is an emerging body of research (see e.g. Madison, 2006; Madison, 2009) that focuses on existential aspect of migration. Madison (2006) postulates that some migrants choose to live in a foreign culture voluntarily in search of self and identity and self-actualisation rather than seeking materialistic needs. It is within this framework that this paper intends to shed lights on a group of Iranian immigrants living in Australia and their existential reasons for voluntary migration as published on their personal weblogs.

### The Iranian Diaspora

Since the Iranian diaspora is relatively new, there are few studies on Iranians who have left the country to live in other parts of the world (Spellman, 2004). The bulk of the research on Iranian communities is based on those in the United States, especially Los Angeles which has accommodated almost half of the Iranian diasporic population. In fact, Los Angeles has become such a cultural and political centre for the Iranian diaspora (Naficy, 1993) that Iranians in the diaspora and in Iran call it "Tehrangeles", a portmanteau which is a combination of Tehran the capital of Iran and Los Angeles. Following the studies in the United States, there has been a growing research trend on different aspects of the Iranian diaspora in Canada, Europe, and Australia. The available studies provide a background to the variety of orientations and patterns of diasporic life of Iranians that have been found by different scholars.

Chaichian (1997) studied the cultural identity of first generation Iranians in the United States based on the typology of four elements of cultural identity proposed by Banuazizi (1992):

1. Iran's pre-Islamic legacy [especially Zoroastrianism and all its traditions and festivals] from the Achaemenian dynasty until the time that the country was invaded by Arabs in the 7<sup>th</sup> century and Islam was introduced to Iran;
2. Shi'ism as the dominant religion for over 90% of Iranians;
3. Bonds between various ethnic groups living in the same country with the same history; and
4. The Persian language.

He explored the question of cultural identity for Iranian immigrants in the United States within this theoretical context which is believed to construct Iranian national identity. By focusing on a group of Iranians living in Iowa, he made some conclusions about the way Iranians view their cultural identity. The results showed that Iranians who left Iran for the United States after the 1979 revolution and Iran-Iraq war were not particularly willing to become naturalised citizens of the United States while those who went to the United States earlier had a stronger tendency to become citizens. The respondents mentioned adjustment to American society, and social isolation as two serious social problems that Iranians face in the United States. Chaichian (1997) points out that one of the challenges for Iranians in America is their belief in Iranian cultural values and the desire to bring up their children according to these values. As a result, Iranians cannot blend fully into American society and this social isolation may cause some form of discrimination against them in the United States.

Bozorgmehr (1997) focused on the issue of Iranian ethnicity within the Iranian immigrant community in the United States. His study is based on the argument that the majority of research on immigrant communities has focused on the immigrant groups as homogeneous resulting in a neglect of the ethnic ties that exist within a special immigrant group. Based on the idea that diverse immigrant groups may contain ethnic subgroups, he focused on the Iranian religious ethnicities in the United States. By comparing the Iranian Muslim majority with that of Armenian, Baha'i, and Jewish ethno-religious minorities he concluded that Iranian minorities who had a well-defined pre-migration ethnicity before going to America keep their ethnicity in the United States more than the majority (Muslim) group.

Behrouzan (2005) investigated the challenges that Iranians face in the diaspora. She analysed Iranian identity from the perspective of history discussing the major elements that establish the Iranian cultural identity using Banuazizi's (1992) typology of Iranian identity. She argues that Iranian identity is not an easy concept to explore as it depends on factors such as history, social and political environment, and ethnicity. In terms of immigration, she reviews Iranian history and the reasons why Iranians have moved out of the country throughout different centuries. She, like other Iranian scholars, believes that the Iranian 1979 revolution and Iran-Iraq war were the major factors for the immigration of Iranians in the past, whereas economic, political, religious and social struggles are among the factors of recent immigration.

Although there is a large number of Iranians living in Europe, there are few studies on this corner of the Iranian diaspora. Graham and Khosravi (1997; 2002) studied Iranians in Sweden from a sociological perspective. In their first study (1997) they focused on the challenges that Iranian refugees and immigrants face in Sweden especially regarding home and the homeland. Their findings indicate that the question of home is a complex concept for Iranians in the diaspora. They state that there is no country that can fulfil the different social and cultural needs of Iranians in the sense of home and this has therefore created the concept of multiple homes for Iranians. In a second study, Graham and Khosravi (2002) examined the role of cyberspace in the public and private life of Iranians in Iran and in the diaspora, and the way the border between the private and public life of Iranians is redefined in cyberspace. They analysed Iranian cyberspace from different angles such as cyber-politics, cyber-etiquette, and cyber-capital and concluded that the diversity and proliferation of ideas and opinions in Iranian cyberspace may cause the undermining of the belief that there is only one Iranian diaspora in cyberspace.

With respect to research on Iranians in Australia and New Zealand, which are new hubs that have already accommodated a large number of the new wave of Iranians, there are few studies which address the Iranian diaspora in Australia. Adibi (1998) illustrated the history of Iranian immigration by focusing on Iranians in Australia. This study provides some demographic information about Iranians and their lifestyles in Australia. In a later study, Adibi (2003) examined the situation, expectations and concerns of Iranian youth and young adults in the process of forming and retaining their Iranian identity in Australia. The findings of this study show that while Iranian youth have many similarities with their

Australian peers, they also have many differences. He argues that this is most likely due to family background, emigration as a prominent feature of the family, and having a different language to use in the family.

Aidani (2007) explored Iranian migrants and refugees in Melbourne, Australia in order to illustrate how they negotiate and manifest their identity in the diaspora. His study highlights some of the problems that Iranian migrants and refugees are facing because of their displacement and the attitudes of the host culture.

In a recent study, Asghari-Fard and Hossain (2017) examined identity construction of second generation Iranians living in Australia. Using participants aged 18-40, they concluded that contextual factors such as birthplace, degree of acculturation, and attitudes towards the host society were influential in determining their hyphenated identity in Australia.

Regardless of the fact that the literature on Iranians in the diaspora is somehow limited in scope, the issues addressed in the available studies about Iranian migrants are of great value and help in understanding the challenges of the diaspora. These studies also provide a good background in understanding the structure of Iranian identities and the factors that cause the creation and negotiation of identity in the diaspora.

### **Iranian Migration**

One of the issues that needs to be addressed before examining existential aspect of Iranian migrants is different periods of Iranian migration as it helps the reader to understand the current trend of migration among some Iranians better.

The history of Iranian migration to other countries dates back to the late nineteenth century (Adibi, 1998) but the formation of the Iranian diaspora around the world is believed to be relatively young (Graham & Khosravi, 2002; Spellman, 2004; Behrouzan, 2005). Some scholars (see e.g. Graham & Khosravi, 2002; Spellman, 2004) maintain that the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the Iran-Iraq war that shortly followed were the major events in forming the Iranian diaspora. Iranians mainly emigrated to the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. This trend of migration depended, and still depends, on several factors including specific immigration policies of the host countries and different historical, political, and socio-economic relations between Iran and other countries. These factors are highly important in determining which countries to emigrate to as some are liberating while others are constraining the movement for Iranians. For example, currently it is very difficult for Iranians to enter the United States due to the current political climate while the Australian/New Zealand policy of welcoming skilled migrants makes it easier for Iranians to apply for immigration.

The Iranian diaspora, like many others, is extremely heterogeneous with regard to ethnicity, religion, political affiliation, social and educational status, gender, language, and motivation for migration. In terms of ethnicity, although the majority of Iranian transnationals are originally Persian<sup>1</sup>, there are communities of Turks (Azeri), Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, Turkmens, and Assyrians. The variety of ethnicities also brings linguistic diversity to the Iranian diaspora. At the same time, there is a religious divide between the Shi'ia Muslim majority and minorities such as Sunni Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Baha'is.

The contemporary history of emigration from Iran can be divided into three major periods based on the reasons and motivation of individuals. The first wave of Iranian migration to Western countries is mainly marked by the Shah's modernisation of Iran (Aidani, 2007) where many wealthy elites went to Europe, especially England and France, and the United States for education. This Iranian elite class comprised young Iranians who were sent abroad to pursue a Western education due to the close relationship that the Pahlavi regime had with the Western world. They were mostly government-sponsored individuals who returned back with a Western education and lifestyle. The by-product of this period was a general negative attitude toward the West and saw the coinage of the word Westoxication (*gharbzadegi*), which is still in widespread use in present Iran.

The second phase of migration starts with the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the resultant Iran-Iraq war. This period is the climax of Iranian migration history where many Iranians who were either supporters of the Pahlavi regime or who had different political views from the new regime left the country. This is the time when the concept of voluntary migration almost lost its meaning for many Iranians and

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<sup>1</sup> The use of Persian here refers to people in Iran who speak only Persian and do not have another language as an ethnic group.

was replaced by the notion of forced migration and movement. Thousands of Iranians left the country as asylum seekers and political refugees during this period.

The third and most recent period of Iranian migration which has been called the “new wave” includes mostly the voluntary departure of educated individuals. Aidani (2007) describes the migration of this group as “the departure of thousands of young professionals, academics, and highly skilled people who have sought to find better salaries and more comfortable and stable lives abroad” (p. 69). This period is the height of the Iranian brain drain as many highly-skilled individuals have left, and are still leaving, the country at a constant and unprecedented rate.

## Methods

The data collected for the purpose of depicting existential migration were part of a longitudinal study on the Iranian immigrants living in Australia. The source of data was a network of Persian weblogs publishing their experiences of life in the Australian diaspora. The researcher started collecting data by creating a personal weblog. The weblog was used as a venue to start interactions with other Iranian bloggers in Australia and to enter an online community where different aspects of migration were written about or discussed. The weblog allowed to communicate with the community members via posts and comments. The biggest advantage of being a member of the online community was that the researcher’s presence was virtual and did not impose any threat to the interaction among the bloggers in the virtual community. This provided the opportunity to read the content of the weblogs, participate in online asynchronous discussions regarding migration, and simultaneously collect the text production of the bloggers and their audience as data without any intervention. Since the research focused only on the text production of the bloggers and their audience in a public domain, there was no need to seek ethical approval, and the texts were collected covertly as naturally occurring data (O’reilly, Lester, & Kiyimba, 2019). The diasporic weblogs were full of rich and natural writings which were published online in a public domain for the consumption of the reader. The contents of the weblogs were authentic experiences of the bloggers that illustrated their daily life in the diaspora through interaction with each other without any external factor affecting their occurrence.

The original data were all in the Persian language, and they were translated into English by the researcher as a bilingual speaker of Persian and English. The translation went through rigorous revisions consulting dictionaries such as Aryanpour dictionary and Oxford English dictionary, and native speakers of both languages. Attempts were made to translate the exact words and sentences of the bloggers without any manipulation in order to transfer to the reader what the bloggers had expressed on their weblogs. In terms of punctuation, all the original punctuations were also used in the English translation.

Due to the large volume of data a Grounded Theory approach was used. The data were revisited and analysed through open, axial, selective codings, and memos. Several themes and subcategories emerged which were put through socio-cultural analysis in order to reveal socio-psychological characteristics of the bloggers through the process of migration. With the emergence of different themes, this paper focuses on the theme of existential migration with regard to ‘belonging’, ‘self and identity’, and ‘family relations and home issues’ in the process of migration. It will specifically deal with data from one weblog whose writer documents her existential journey in search of “self”. The data from this specific weblog may represent the issues around identity negotiation of some new generation of Iranian migrants who leave Iran for anything but materialistic fulfilment (Madison, 2006).

## Results

### A new move in the latest wave of Iranian migration

The information presented in this paper will demonstrate that there is a new and recent move in the latest wave of Iranian migration that may add new dimensions to the history of Iranian migration. The discussion is based on the available data in the bloggers’ writing and the way they express their reasons to choose to live in foreignness. In the above introduction of Iranian diaspora, it was proposed that the reason for the new form of migration for Iranians, as Aidani (2007) observes, is the fulfilment of materialistic needs. While this line of reasoning may match with the majority of the new Iranian mi-

grants, there seems to be some other reasons that may ignite migration for some Iranians. There appears to be a new migration movement among the new Iranian migrants that goes beyond seeking better salaries and lifestyle. The data show that none of these Iranian bloggers in Australia are refugees and their choice to leave Iran is initially voluntary. Based on their writing, they can go back to Iran or travel between the two countries anytime and as often as they wish. Thus, the analysis of their texts does not put them in the category of refugee studies. Furthermore, it seems that the majority of the bloggers come from financially secure backgrounds and their choice of leaving the country is not necessarily motivated by the desire to earn more money for a better life or sending money back as remittance to support their families in Iran. There are even cases where some bloggers transferred their furniture or other household items to Australia spending a fortune on the shipment. In essence, this group of Iranian bloggers are people who left Iran for other reasons including more freedom and independence, self-actualisation, and the opportunity to meet and explore other cultures so that they can re-evaluate their existence and negotiate their 'self' and "identity".

This is in line with Madison's (2006) concept of 'existential migration' as there are numerous posts and discussions that explicitly uncover the bloggers' feelings of restlessness in search of self-actualisation and belonging. Madison (2006) illustrates a group of voluntary migrants who were motivated by a different need than materialistic fulfilment to move from their homelands. A case in point is an Iranian female blogger, among others, in Australia. Her weblog is full of posts which illustrate her existential journey and how she finally reaches internal peace and tranquillity by finding answers to her questions in the diaspora and in virtual space. In essence, most of her weblog is a written narrative of this journey, and she stops publishing on her weblog after she feels at peace with her 'self'. She thinks she has found what she has been looking for in her life.

In what follows, some of her posts will be analysed in the chronological order that they were published in order to show the psychological challenges she went through during the process of migration and identity negotiation in the diaspora.

*Who is homeland? What is homeland?*

*Australia has everything, even radio with sweet Persian language, FM wave 107.3 frequency. It's broadcast on Sundays from seven to nine. Radio Fardaa (an Iranian radio station) is also on the Internet. But I don't know why the more I listen to Persian language the more depressed I become. This got worse especially yesterday when radio Fardaa was broadcasting a song by Farhaad (an Iranian Singer) about Nowruz (Iranian New Year festival) .... I felt sad. I felt sorry for myself. Indeed, we Iranians never lived a happy life. I don't know anything about what happened before my birth, but in my 32 years of life there has been revolution, war, rocket strikes, famine, earthquakes, and fear of another war. I'm done. I wasn't patient any more to challenge myself with routines of daily life. That's why I forgot the homeland. But what should I say about this place? Well it's not bad!!! It's difficult here....*

The idea of belonging is a confusing and painful question for the blogger. In the post she shows reluctance towards her homeland due to the sad incidents she has experienced during her years of life. The experience of homeland is a period of misery and unhappiness due to all the internal problems that almost all Iranians of her age have been through. While she shows reluctance regarding the homeland, she does not feel satisfied with life in Australia. She notes that because of the Internet Australia has some Iranian culture, but this is not enough for her and does not make her happy. This has turned into a state of uneasiness which has made her question staying or leaving when the situation is not favourable:

*Question of the week*

*In an unpleasant situation should you stay and tolerate and try to change the situation or should you leave everything behind and go?*

*Is your life more important or the society in which you're living?*

The questions in the above post sound like they come from a guilty conscience and one that is struggling with self and identity. These questions, although they may sound simple to other people outside the Persian culture, are representative of the new generation of Iranians. The struggle is due to *fadākāri* or *isār* (sacrifice) that is advocated in the Persian culture and has been inculcated and reinforced after the Iranian revolution. As the country experienced a revolution and a war that damaged almost everything from the infrastructure to the economy, the motto of *fadākāri* has proliferated in the country. This means that people should feel responsible toward the country and use their knowledge

and expertise to help build what has been damaged. This is where the struggle with self and identity starts for her and the like as individuals face a dilemma as to whether to sacrifice their life and tolerate the current situation or mind their own lives and leave the country. This type of Iranian mentality has created a guilty conscience for the blogger as reflected in her post for she has left the country and now she feels guilty. In search of self and identity, she challenges herself, and maybe the audience, with another post questioning happiness:

*Happiness means?*

*Is going more important than reaching?*

*Travelling more important than destination?*

*Is the dream that you're trying to reach more important than the things that you have in the wardrobe?*

*Is the answer clear? Is it not?*

*Why do we sometimes destroy everything to define an unreachable goal for ourselves? What do we want from life? Peace? Endeavour? Struggle? Running like a dog? Some people go back to their predefined happiness regardless of anything bad that happens to them. Some others, which may include me, are those who start to panic when they reach peace and tranquillity.... Life means what? What is life for? For yourself? For your parents? For your life partner? For your child? For your neighbours? For saving face? For the boss? For money? For the future?...*

This feeling can be a reflection of self which, as Madison (2006) states, is shaped in the interaction of the individual with the environment. Since she has lost contact with the familiar environment of home in the process of migration, she is emotionally challenging her 'self' which seems a constant co-construction of identity (Heidegger, 1996) through interaction with the physical and virtual environments. The post is an implicit document of her feeling of loneliness which has created in her an unsettled and restless self, one that is seeking relief. She continues her state of restlessness in search of self by trying to justify her confused feelings about life as part of the human life cycle. What this post may imply is that migration for her is an unavoidable part of that cycle, and it is essential in the negotiation and co-construction of self and identity. Not surprisingly, many of her questions and sources of unhappiness are directed to or caused by family relationships:

*Why should I have stayed?*

*In the neighbouring blogs everybody is reviewing their personal reasons for why they got out of Iran.... Instead of this question, these days I'm thinking of the question "why I should have stayed in Iran?" Well, it's around eleven months that I'm here but, honestly speaking, I still don't miss anything about Iran except for my family. When I was making the decision at that time, I knew what I was doing. Now I don't sit here in foreign land and cry that I'm dying. You can label me a woman without feelings, without emotion and even a traitor, but I think the world is bigger than the fact that you feel dependent on a small piece of land in a continent which is not even one third of the world's land. Love of homeland is something that should be talked about with more caution. I have my own opinion. All human beings have a life cycle in which they should be completed. They should find their weaknesses and try to correct them.... We don't come to this world to fool around or maybe being fooled around in that piece of land and don't understand why we were born especially in the Iranian type of homeland.*

*I was losing myself in Iran. Instead of improving, I was getting worse. I was regressing backward day by day.... Then, why should I feel homesick? I should be homesick of what? Why should I have stayed in Iran?...*

Her posts appear to show a deep emotional dependency on her familial circles, and this seems to be the major source of homesickness and loneliness for her in the diaspora. In addition to emotional dependency, her post shows that she was not satisfied with her life in Iran as she felt she was lost in the cycle of life. Hence, she displays the search of 'self' in foreignness. Implicit in her post is the assumption that living outside Iran and exploring other cultures will culminate in a better understanding of who she really is and what she expects in her life. Migration for her is like a spiritual journey that brings her more awareness of her surroundings and prevents her from living in vain and routines of life without recognising the philosophy of life.

*“Nel” or maybe “Hāch” the honey bee*

*Sometimes I can go through the eye of a needle, but sometimes when I want to go through the front door I have a thousand excuses for why I can't pass through.... Is there any book written about a 33-year old woman?... I wish I could think like the average person. Those who see everything in going to university, working and bringing home the bacon, marriage and starting a family, and passing their time till they get old; those who see being healthy as the ultimate sign of pleasure. I'm not ungrateful. Everything is good and I have everything. But something has been lost among the waves of migration to this Island and I don't know what it is. Sometimes I think that maybe because I have reached this level of peace from that level of stress, I have reached an emotional vacuum. Maybe I haven't got used to the peace and quiet here. Maybe I feel homesick for myself....*

Her challenge of self and identity continues by questioning different aspects of life and how she is far from what she sees as the average layperson who runs a routine life and is happy with it. She uses “Nel” and “Hāch zanbur-e asal” (literally Hāch the honey bee) as the title of her post to show the reader her search of self. Nel (a girl) and Hāch (a bee) were characters in two famous cartoon series on Iranian national TV a long time ago and well-known to any Iranian of her age. In these two cartoons the characters are looking for their mothers and their place of origin by going from one place to another. During their long journey, they face and discover many things. She is using a piece of popular Iranian culture to explain her search for self and identity like the characters in these two stories. However, the contrast in her writing is that she is not looking for her mother or place of origin but rather leaving everything behind to find her ‘self’ somewhere else. She thinks that there is something hidden in the migration that needs to be discovered in order to bring meaning to her life. That is why migration is a confusing experience for her as she uses ‘Island’ instead of Australia in order to describe the host society as a confining environment. Ultimately, she reaches a point of self-direction and self-awareness as a result of migration when she publishes her last post showing how content she is with her life:

*Reaching final destination*

*Living in the weblog has had several big advantages for me. Firstly, I have seen my personality change from the first day of migration till now. I think it's interesting that you can keep the days of your past alive for a better feeling. You can see your strengths and weaknesses better and you can judge yourself better and be better than before....*

*Now I feel that there is no reason for me to continue writing.... Instead of opening this white page and filling it with words that are heavy on my heart, I can do other things. I can live and enjoy myself in the new place [Australia].*

*Anyway, I have come home; the place I have chosen to live. You also try to be happy and enjoy your life whether real or virtual. I'm really happy to have had your company, and I hope to see you in the real world. Good bye.*

The post summarises her existential journey and shows how blogging and her experience of living in the diaspora has turned her into a person who knows what she is after and how to reach it. The interesting point about her post is her use of “living in the weblog” which implies living in a virtual space. Her weblog in the diaspora has been a space for her to live virtually and record the details of her physical experience of migration in order to build a better self. Her use of “living” shows that the weblog has been a major component of her diasporic life which ultimately allowed her to understand her ‘self’ better.

## Conclusion

The above discussion is just one example, among others, of the current trend of migration for some Iranians who leave the country in search of self and identity. The weblog community which has been used as data source is a place where some bloggers question or discuss their reasons for migration, and what they are looking for in the process of migration. The available information on the Persian diasporic weblogs acknowledges the existential aspect of migration (Madison, 2006) among this group of Iranian immigrants and illustrates the existential-ontological reasons for some Iranian voluntary migrants who are in search of existential “self” and self-actualisation outside the homeland. The emergent themes of ‘belonging’, ‘self and identity’, and ‘family relations and home issues’ are also in line

with some of the common themes in existential migration discussion of Madison (2006). This may also confirm the existence of a general trend among certain voluntary migrants who leave behind the homeland in search of self-fulfillment and self-actualisation rather than “obsession with foreign riches” (Madison, 2006, P. 3). In closing the discussion, it is necessary to emphasise that it is important to consider this aspect of migration for the new generation of Iranians living outside Iran as it brings meaning to the identity negotiation and identity construction of the latest wave of Iranian migrants.

Although this study is a first attempt in highlighting another aspect of migration for a group of Iranian migrants, there are some caveats that need to be addressed. Firstly, using information from a female blogger, does not imply, nor indicates, that gender had any impact upon the emergent themes. In the same way, this paper does not have any psychological or counselling orientation and the aim is not to offer any kind of psychotherapeutic advice or solution to any aspect of migration. The main aim of this paper is to highlight the importance of weblogs in the context of existential migration and how they can be used as a source of data collection for studies on different aspects of migration. The female blogger was considered in this paper because of rich writings available on her weblog. Future studies can take this into account and investigate what impact and to what extent gender can play role in defining existential migration and use of virtual spaces.

The second point to consider is the demography of the blogger in this study. Based on the information available, the blogger comes from Tehran, the Iranian capital. It is generally agreed that people in the capital have a different lifestyle which may bring different life expectations. This can also affect the worldwide view of the blogger and negotiation of self and identity. For this reason, the views expressed here are limited and cannot be generalised. In the same vein, diversity of the bloggers, educational background, class, lifestyle, age, etc. can be taken into account in order to have a better understanding of existential migration among different individuals.

Finally, diasporic virtual communities and their impact on existential migration can be explored. This can be an intriguing area of research since virtual communities can affect integration into or isolation from the host society, and hence the impact on the negotiation of self and identity. Zare (2018) points out that weblog technology may bring certain degree of isolation to migrants where they may spend more time online communicating with each other on their virtual networks. To what extent this can affect the negotiation and co-construction of self and identity in either physical or virtual diasporas may produce some interesting results.

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