

## Analyzing Iran's Policies towards Afghan Asylum Seekers through the Lenses of Public Choice Theory



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**ABSTRACT:** This over fifty years, Afghans have sought refuge in various countries due to the lack of security in their homeland. The recent Taliban takeover in August 2021 led to a significant influx of asylum seekers. Afghanistan's persistent instability and conflicts have transformed it into a major source of asylum seekers worldwide. This essay delves into Iran's policies towards Afghan refugees, with a specific focus on the shifts that have occurred since 1989. The analysis employs the framework of public choice theory, highlighting policymakers' prioritization of interest maximization.

The essay's first section studies geostrategic importance of Afghanistan and its impact on neighbors. The proximity of Afghanistan to Iran makes regional stability a crucial national interest for Iran. Moreover, Iran has had to recalibrate its asylum seeker policies to address potential challenges posed by the influx of Afghan refugees. The second section, examines the evolution of Iranian policies towards Afghan asylum seekers over the past few decades. It analyzes the distinct approaches taken by five Iranian presidents: Hashemi Rafsanjani, Mohammad Khatami, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hassan Rouhani, and Ebrahim Raisi. The analysis takes into consideration economic, political, social, and cultural factors that influenced these policy shifts. In conclusion, this essay evaluates the shifts in Iranian policies towards Afghan asylum seekers and their ramifications for both Iran and the Afghan refugees. Public choice theory's lens illuminates the motivations behind policy changes, highlighting the delicate balance between national interests and humanitarian considerations.

**KEYWORDS:** Policy Formulation, National Interest, Open door policies

### I. PRIORITY OF NATIONAL INTEREST IN POLICY FORMULATION

Policy making can be considered as a strategy for reshaping social problems. Policies as output of political process pass through different complex stages like agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adaption, implementation, and evaluation. The problem is large flow of people who escape from war and chaotic situation. According to Universal declaration of Human rights all human being Human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings - they are not granted by any state. These universal rights are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. They range from the most fundamental - the right to life - to those that make life worth living, such as the rights to food, education, work, health, and liberty (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). But how much countries like Iran are able to provide these services for Afghan asylum seekers? Moreover, policy making for accepting mass of Afghan asylum seekers who have escaped war and chaotic situation can be recognized as a complex process. Many actors, formal and informal ones, participate in the selection of suitable items to solve social problems (Jale Tosun, 2008).

Moreover, Immigration Policies are result of interaction between different facets of international interest, national states and international political power. It is more than fifty years that Afghans escape from war and insecurity of their own country to a neighbor country, Iran. Administering these mass of Afghan immigrants is one of the problems that Iranian government has attempted to resolve.

### II. CHAOS IN AFGHANISTAN THROUGH HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The modern state of Afghanistan emerged in the mid-19th century as a result of various tribal conflicts, orchestrated by imperial Britain and tsarist Russia, to serve as a buffer between their respective empires and Persia. Positioned at the crossroads of British India, Russia, and Persia, Afghanistan became a focal point in the "Great Game," a strategic rivalry between these two major powers of the time. Throughout history, Afghanistan's geostrategic location, diverse ethnic makeup, and political complexities have subjected it to the consequences of great power conflicts. From being a buffer state in the 18th and 19th centuries, Afghanistan transformed into a front-line battleground during the Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union. Following the Cold War, it descended into a failed state, facing internal turmoil and instability. Subsequently, in the 21st

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century, Afghanistan became a breeding ground for international terrorism, attracting more than 40 nations and numerous organizations in a global fight against extremism (S.M.A. Shah, October 2008).

Unfortunately, Afghanistan's internal security forces have struggled with issues of inadequate funding, limited equipment, and poor organization, rendering them unable to secure the country effectively in both the short and long term. This vulnerability has turned Afghanistan into a proxy battleground, where conflicts involving Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and even broader regional powers like the Soviet Union and the United States have played out (A. Tarock, 1999).

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, marked a turning point in the global order, leading to the occupation of Afghanistan by foreign forces. With the recent withdrawal of US troops in 2021, the country faced further uncertainty, creating an opportunity for the Taliban to reclaim power. Consequently, Afghanistan's future once again hangs in the balance, serving as a potential buffer zone for shaping the emerging world order. However, Afghanistan's challenges extend beyond its geopolitical significance. It has also earned the dubious distinction of being the world's largest producer of illegal drugs, especially opium, since the 19th century. This illicit drug trade has fueled corruption and created an international black-market benefiting criminal organizations with a global reach. In conclusion, Afghanistan's journey through history has been marked by constant struggles for power, stability, and control. Its geopolitical significance has made it a battleground for major world powers throughout the centuries. Furthermore, the country's association with drug production has exacerbated its challenges and contributed to its complex state of affairs. As the world evolves, Afghanistan continues to be a pivotal player in shaping the global landscape, facing a myriad of internal and external pressures that will determine its trajectory in the emerging world order (S.M.A. Shah, October 2008).

### III. "SPHERES OF INFLUENCE" BETWEEN IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN

Iran's 'assets', such as its historical links, cultural, ethnic and religious (Shi'a) ties to a large section of the population, enable Iran to play an important role in the political developments in Afghanistan. Although most of Afghanistan's neighbors welcomed the US-led regime change in Afghanistan, some believe that due to growing turmoil there, some neighboring governments are attempting to manipulate Afghanistan's instability to their advantage, despite the fact that six of Afghanistan's neighbors signed a non-interference pledge (Kabul Declaration) on 23 December 2002. Iran has consistently sought to see a stable and independent Afghanistan. Moreover, Iran has created "spheres of influence" inside Afghanistan in order to satisfy the interests of Iran as needed. For example, an "ideological sphere of influence" political sphere of influence" by unifying the Dari/Persian-speaking minorities, who ascended to power, "economic sphere of influence" by engaging in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. In other words, Iran attempts to its own interests in neighboring country by formulation of different influencing groups (M. Milani, 2006).

Sometimes Iranian government uses Afghan's card in political bargains in order to play the political chess in Middle East with threatening western powers that the road for transition of opium will be opened. In brief, Iran has a long list of interests in Afghanistan. In addition to ensuring that Shia particularly, Hazara interests are accommodated, another short-term Iranian goal is for Afghanistan to be stable enough to permit the 1.5 to 2 million refugees now in Iran to return home. A longer-term goal is to prevent Russia, Pakistan or Turkey from dominating the region and its resources. Iran's perspective is complicated by the fact that Central Asian energy competes with its own resources (M. Milani, 2006).

### IV. POLICIES TOWARD AFGHANS

Policy making can be considered as a strategy for reshaping social problems. Policies are not formulated in Vacuum. Many different actors, features and mechanisms affect this policy making process toward Afghans. Moreover, policy making cannot be studied apart from the environment or context in which it occurred. Every country considers its own interests of national unity and social stability during policy making procedures. Iranian government doesn't have had long term policies towards Afghans. And Policies towards Afghans are associated with economic, social, cultural conditions of Iran. The changes in these conditions can cause shifts in policies. As priorities of policy makers have changed in Iran. Their attitudes and policies towards Afghans have changed. Formulating and implementing different policies towards Afghans could be associated with different economic, social, and cultural conditions of Iranian society. In formulating and implementing immigration policies toward Afghans, needs and interests of Iranian societies are considered (K. U. Bareach, 2021).

Since the 1979 revolution, the Islamic Republic of Iran has hosted the largest refugee population in the world. Due to Iran's unique geopolitical environment, it has been repeatedly forced to cope with large-scale refugee inflows. Iran has long-term strategic and direct interests in Afghan affairs. These range from Afghanistan's historical and cultural ties with Iran. Iran in the early 1980, the Afghans were generally allowed to integrate into Iranian society. On the whole, no more than 10 percent of the Afghan refugees lived in the camps (H. Mohammadian, 2005). Iranian government's policies toward Afghans has direct impact on the daily life and living conditions of Afghans.

The first documented Movement of Afghans to Iran was in the 1850s when up to 5,000 Hazara households migrated to Iran and settled at Jam. It was recorded that some 15,000 families (approximately 168,000 people) settled in Torbat-e Jam in the east of Mashhad during the centralist rule of Amir Abdul Rahman (1880–1903), constituting up to 90% of the local population. After the seizure of power by Reza Khan after the last Qajar king in about 1937, Hazaras from Afghanistan were officially categorized as a

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tribal group called Khavari and represented at ceremonies and Iranian national celebrations. Iran's majority population includes Shia which are similar to Hazaras and massacre of these Hazare minorities in Afghanistan ignites hatred among Iranians which may affect policy making process.

### A. "Open Door" Policies toward Afghans

Iran's early refugee policy towards Afghans was "open door", and refugee status was granted to incoming Afghans on a *prima facie* basis. From 1979–92, most Afghans entering Iran were issued with "blue cards" which indicated their status as involuntary migrants or *mohajerin*. Blue card holders were granted indefinite permission to stay in Iran legally. Until 1995, blue card holders had access to subsidized health care and food, and free primary and secondary education, but were barred from owning their own businesses, and their employment was limited to low-wage, manual labor. As mentioned earlier, Iran is one of the most concentrated areas of Afghan migrants and refugees. Its early refugee policy towards Afghans has been described as "open door", and refugee status was granted to incoming Afghans on a *prima facie* basis. It has been estimated that Iranian state expenditure subsidizing education, health services, transport, fuel and basic goods for approximately two million Afghans in Iran peaked at US\$10 million per day (B. Rajai, 2009).

In 1979 both Iranians and Afghans experienced political shifts in Administration of their country. In 1979, USSR invaded Afghanistan and mass of Afghans left their country toward Iran. Moreover, Revolution happened in Iran. Afghanistan became a Cold War battleground when Soviet troops entered the country in December 1979 to keep the newly established communist government in power. Human rights violations and abuses by the government and the armed opposition escalated in the following years. Domestic civil structures were unable to combat these (Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-Shavazi, Diana Glazebrook, Gholamreza Jamshidian, Hosseyn Mohammadian, Rasoul Sadeghi, 2005).

The second major movement of Afghans to Iran occurred as a result of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan from 1979–1989. Relative stability and peace had been sustained until 1973. Disorder, insecurity and ongoing disputes between left-wing parties led to two coups in 1978 and 1979 in which President Daoud was killed by Taraki and Amin, then Taraki was killed by Amin who was killed by Soviet troops. A *jihad* was proclaimed against the Soviets and many Sunnis and Shia clergy encouraged migration.

From 1980 to 1993, open door policies were implemented. There was no restriction for Afghan refugees to enter Iran. Blue Identification Card were given to Afghans. Those Afghans who had Blue identification cards had access to medical services, education and subsidized food. And Afghans had access to restricted forms of employment. Throughout the 1980s until the early 1990s, Iran's government stressed the importance of education for all, including for girls. Iran's Supreme Leader at the time said that it is a religious obligation to educate oneself and one's children. In Iran, the refugees of the 1980s were exposed to public awareness raising campaigns on education and a society that values education as a right and an obligation. Quickly, Afghan refugees – initially hostile towards modern education and girls' education - began to change their attitudes. The Iranian government's approach to handling the Afghan question was considerably different from the approach the Pakistani government adopted towards its Afghan refugees; the latter employed a much higher degree of control and concentration into camps. But in Iran less than 3 % settled in Camps. where they are provided by the Iranian Government with schools free of charge to this date. The majority moved to (peri-)urban areas where almost all Afghan refugee children attended government schools alongside their Iranian peers. Until 2004, registered Afghan refugees had access to the Iranian education system at primary, secondary and university levels free of charge (A. I. Report, 1995).

The withdrawal of Soviet troops - completed in February 1989 - did not end the civil war. The former USSR continued to supply arms to the government side while the USA, Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia supplied arms to the Mujahideen. In 1989, as USSR left Afghanistan, civil war increased insecurity in Afghanistan. In that time Iran-Iraq war had finished and Afghan immigrants helped in reconstruction procedures. From 1990, civil war in Afghanistan caused increase in the number of Afghans who had left Afghanistan.

### B. Policy Shift Starts with President Hashemi Rفسanjani

Iran's policies toward Afghans have changed during different periods of history. After 1989 five presidents were responsible for administration of Iranian government. The first one was Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, his presidency started with the end of Iran-Iraq war. Iranian started rebuilding the country and Afghans played important role in eight years of reconstruction of country. Cheap labor of Afghans provided great opportunity for reconstruction of country.

The Iranian Government began to restrict access to facilities for registered Afghan refugees. Regulation since the mid-1990s allowed Afghan refugees to register only in primary and secondary schools in the city for which their refugee documentation was issued. This was a problem for Afghans who had moved to different parts of the country since their arrival in Iran. During the 1980s, Afghans were said to fill a significant gap in the workforce during the war against Iraq.

Beginning in the early 1990s, the policies of the Iranian Government shifted towards incentivizing repatriation and preventing Afghan entry. The issuance of documents allowing indefinite legal residence was stopped and temporary residence cards were only given to a small number of Afghans. This policy was enforced in spite of a continued influx of Afghans seeking protection from the Afghan civil war and the arrival of the Taliban in the mid-1990s. A large number of Afghans seeking protection in Iran

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remain undocumented to date. Undocumented Afghan refugees were unable to legally access public services, such as education. However, in practice many Iranian schools allowed undocumented Afghan refugees to register until the late 1990s when the government started to enforce its policy on school enrolment more strictly. Since 1992, Iran banned illegal entrance of Afghans to Iran. Moreover, Iranian government started identifying illegal Afghans and deporting these Afghans to their country. Facilities and services for Afghans get restricted. Also, legal restriction for employment of Afghans were applied. Iran controlled borders and banned illegal entrance of Afghans to Iran. In 1994, according to statistics released by the Iranian government, expenditure on two million Afghans was said to be as high as US\$10 million per day for subsidized education, health services, transport, fuel and basic goods.) As the UNHCR had limited its assistance to refugees in settlements since 1985, 95% of Afghans living throughout Iran in rural and urban areas were largely ineligible for any kind of assistance (N. Herve, 2018).

Lack of access to international assistance, Iran has shouldered the vast majority of the burden of hosting, maintaining, and absorbing these refugees. Negligible amount of international aid and assistance Iran received to help cope with the refugees, prompted a reevaluation of Iran's refugee policy. Iran's overall policy shifted in the mid-and late 1990s to emphasizing "care and maintenance assistance to programs which foster self-reliance. Moreover, as Iranian government recognized its very real economic limitations has served to narrow the horizons of Iran's refugee policy from what was effectively an open-door policy to one whose defining characteristic is an essentially closed border (with much stricter criteria for the granting of admission to refugee groups).

### C. Policies Towards Afghans During Presidency of Khatemi

After eight years that reconstruction was top priority of country reformists were selected for administration of the country. And they intended not only economic growth of country but also, political development of country. Reformists attempted to increase tolerance of others and respect others who don't have the same political attitude.

Khatami as a reformist president was selected for administration of country. During presidency of Khatami, there were hot debates on whether Afghans should be deported to their own country. The problem of unemployment increased in these periods. And Afghans were showed as the reason for lack of employment. There were debates in the parliament that Afghans should be deported to their home. Hot debates and discussions continued to be between opposite groups who wanted Afghans in Iran and those who opposed that Afghans remain and reside in Iran. There were elitist groups and artists who supported Afghans and films were made by elite directors and writers who protected Afghans and they became their voice and showed Afghan's innocent view at the time that nationalist populists who wanted Afghans leave Iran ( A. Amnesty International Report, 1995).

In 1997, the government introduced a regulation that imposed high fees on university education for all foreign students. This regulation stipulated that foreigners were only allowed to study in six cities in Iran. The cities of Zahedan and Kerman, where large numbers of Afghans reside, were not among them (Mohammad Javad Abbasi & Shavazi Diana Glazebrook, 2005). As a result of domestic economic and social concerns, refugee policy shifted to emphasize prevention of illegal entry and repatriation of Afghan refugees. Iran has made repeated efforts (often in collaboration with UNHCR) to document and register Afghans in Iran in preparation for repatriation; implemented several deportation campaigns; incrementally reduced services to Afghans (particularly education and medical); and legislated employment restrictions (most notably Article 48 in 2000). However, these policies did not have a significant impact on the number of Afghans in Iran, which in 2001 remained at 2.1 million. In late 2001, Tripartite Repatriation Agreements between Afghanistan, Iran and the UNHCR have facilitated the voluntary repatriation of around 770,000 Afghans from Iran. The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran has legislated to further accelerate repatriation by raising the cost of living for Afghans in Iran. In 2005, approximately one million documented Afghans remained in Iran (H. Mohammadiyan, 2005).

In 2003, under Article 138 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, eleven articles were approved by Member Ministers of the Executive Co-ordination Council for Foreign Nationals. These eleven articles were titled "Regulations on accelerating repatriation of Afghan nationals". Article 3, concerned the prevention of unauthorized employment of Afghan nationals by taking legal action against Iranian employers who employed Afghan nationals without work permits. Article 4 prohibited Afghan nationals, except for those who entered the country holding a valid passport and visa and were issued with a residence permit, from the following facilities: all administrative services; activities in all parties and political, social and cultural groups of Afghan displaced persons; opening of new accounts in banks and interest-free loan associations and financial and credit institutions; and issuance and extension of any kind of insurance policy and provision of insurance services. Article 5 stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Organization (IRIB) would promote and encourage Afghan nationals to return to Afghanistan, and would warn Iranian citizens about illegally employing or settling Afghan nationals. Article 8 stated that renting accommodation to Afghan nationals, except for those who have entered the country with a valid passport and visa and who have been issued with a residence permit, was prohibited except with the permission of the provincial BAFIA offices (N. Herve, 2018).

In 2002, the government of Iran signed a Tripartite Agreement with the government of Afghanistan and UNHCR facilitating the voluntary return of Afghans to Afghanistan. In 2003 this Agreement was revised and extended for two years. Between 2002 and 2004, over 750,000 Afghans returned from Iran with the voluntary repatriation operation. In late 2004, it was estimated that a little

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over one million documented Afghans remained in Iran. <sup>1</sup>The signed treaty between Iran and Afghanistan and UNHCR in 2002 was revised in 2003 and 2004. And between 2004 and 2006 1491317 immigrants left Iran. In brief, it can be declared that the focus of policy which administrated Afghan refugees in Iran since 2001 has been on encouraging and facilitating the repatriation of Afghan refugees. This has led to significant return migration although up to 2.5 million Afghans remain in Iran (Sadeghi, 2005).

### **D. Policies towards Afghans during Presidency of Ahmadinejad**

After eight years of president Khatami, Ahmadinejad was selected as a president. Ahmadinejad promised to bring petrol's money to the people. And distribute petrol money among different sections of nations. Distributive policies of Ahmadinejad continued in this period. Ahmadinejad's priority was improving justice in Iranian society. But propagandas did not fill the hungry people. There was indirect subsidy system that caused less payment for the consumer in water, gas, electricity receipts. Subsidies are provided indirectly for Consumers who live in Iran. Everybody who lives in Iran can benefit these subsidies. But As Ahmadinejad became president these indirect subsidies converted to direct subsidies. Iranian citizens would get certain amount of petrol money as a direct subsidy. But Afghans who live in Iran don't have access to these direct subsidies that provided for Iranians. The most severe restrictions were introduced in 2005 when a new Iranian Government directive stated a total ban on the enrolment of undocumented Afghan children and allowed the Ministry of Education to receive fees from Afghan refugee children, and a small number of prestigious schools to receive full tuition fees. Furthermore, the directive banned Afghan students from enrolling in pre-university centers, vocational schools and boarding schools. The ban on pre-university centers meant that Afghans could no longer apply for the nation-wide university entrance examination. The completion of pre-university courses was, at the time, a prerequisite for application to the university examination, blocking Afghan access to higher education in Iran (Mohammad Jalal Abbasi-shavazi, Diana Glazebrook, Golamreza Jamshidiha, Hossein Mahmoudian and Resoul Sadeghi, 2005).

More legal restriction for Afghans caused more voluntary repatriation of Afghans to their own country. The signed treaty between Iran and Afghanistan and UNHCR in 2002 was revised in 2003 and 2004. And between 2004 and 2006 1491317 immigrants left Iran. The Solutions Strategy for Afghan Refugees to Support Voluntary Repatriation, Sustainable Reintegration and Assistance to Host Countries (SSAR) remains the main regional framework for joint interventions aimed at identification and implementation of lasting solutions and providing support to host countries. Developed by the Islamic Republics of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, with the support of UNHCR, the SSAR was endorsed by the international community in May 2012. It is structured around the following five key outcomes: Support to voluntary repatriation, access to shelter and essential social services for refugees, returnees and host communities, improved and diversified livelihood opportunities and enhanced food security, Social and environmental protection of refugees and returnees, as well as assistance and support to host communities, Capacity development of national authorities, associations, organizations and communities concerned with refugees, returnees and host communities.

### **E. Policies towards Afghans during Presidency of Rouhani**

During presidency of Rouhani, Iran had a pragmatic strategy towards supporting democratic and multi-ethnic Afghanistan. Iran perceived its engagement in Afghanistan as an 'opportunity towards increasing its regional role geared to promoting national interests which were at different levels and areas. During presidency of President Rouhani, Iran, was under the heaviest sanctions. Despite of heavy sanctions that are imposed on Iran. Iran continued to be an influential player in Afghanistan (Grameo Hugo, Mohammad Jalal Abbasi- Shavazi, Rasoul Sadeghi, 2012).

Also, it should be declared that the sanctions intensified the social tensions and negative perception of Afghans among Iranians, who deemed them a security risk and accused them of stealing Iranian jobs. As the pressure of sanctions increased on Iran by maximum pressure policies of US state, Iranian policy makers added to the domestic pressure to cut state benefits to the Afghans, and pushed the agenda that the Afghans were draining the system. They highlighted nationalistic ideas and distribution of hate speech toward Afghans increased in media. Policy makers discuss the idea that Iran had to care for its own population. As an official in Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs told me in February 2015: counting the 3 million Afghans residing in Iran, 'in the current situation of sanctions, they are a big burden for country'. In a July 2014 declaration, Rouhani's administration declared that all ministries, organizations and public companies should only hire Iranian workers, except in extraordinary cases. On May Day 2015 Iranian workers held a demonstration in Tehran protesting against the employment of foreign citizens. While shouting 'Iranian workers are jobless' and 'Social security is our right', Iranian workers carried placards stating 'Foreign workers should be expelled'. In brief, rights of Afghan refugees are decreased and restrictions over Afghans increased (N. Herve, 2018).

During presidency of President Rouhani, Iranian policymakers continuously complain about the lack of international support they receive to deal with the transnational problems stemming from Afghanistan (mainly related to refugees and drug trafficking). During presidency of Rouhani deportations of Afghans from Iran has been increased. The deportation centers have been criticized for using torture and treating Afghans in all sorts of dehumanizing ways. Many deportees are beaten when arrested and held under

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appalling conditions in detention centers before being sent to the border. Even those Afghans who were born in Iran from Iranian mothers faced problem to continue their residence in Iran because Iranian rules and regulation doesn't consider Afghans who are born from Iranian mothers and negative discrimination towards Afghan were highlighted and increased.

### F. Lack of Any Services During Presidency of Raisi

Being a refugee and asylum seeker doesn't have the same in different parts of the world. In some countries like Iran, these meaningful words are emptied from meaning and they don't associate with rights and obligations. According to Universal declaration of Human rights, everybody has rights because of being human being. But in a world that power relations and global world order play more prominent roles in determining the humanitarian norms and rights. The case of Afghan asylum seekers is not apart from power relations and shift in global order. In a world that power relations and conflicts have role.

Rights of Afghan asylums seekers has been affected by flexibility of Iranian policy makers with prioritizing their national interest over considering rights of asylum seekers. During the presidency of Raisi provision of preliminary services wasn't the top agenda of the government in which Iranians were themselves under sanctions and couldn't provide necessary and preliminary services during covid 19 pandemic and post pandemic era in which economic crisis was globally widespread. Lack of provision of preliminary and necessary services have caused mass migration of Afghan asylum seekers to neighboring countries like Turkey, Greece, and other EU countries.

### V. CONCLUSION

To sum up, refugee policies of Iran has converted from open door policies to more conservative policies to protect the interests of its nation and decrease the threats that imposed towards national security of Iran. These conservative policies which aim to satisfy the interests and needs of Iranians.

Moreover, it can be concluded that policies towards Afghans are associated with economic, social, cultural conditions of Iran. The changes in these conditions have caused shifts in policies. As priorities of policy makers have changed in Iran. Then, their attitudes and policies towards Afghans have changed. In formulating and implementing immigration policies toward Afghans, needs and interests of Iranian societies are considered. These policies are interest based and arranged with needs of Iranians.

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