

Persian as a diaspora language in times of glocalization in Frankfurt am main

Homayun Alam¹

Institut für Migration Frankfurt, Technical University of Darmstadt, Germany
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Abstract

Persian is one of the five languages in history, which produced about 5500 years of content without interruption along with Sanskrit, Mandarin, Greek and Latin. It is an Asian language, which was before the nation-state in a polycentric state and shares diverse varieties. Among these varieties one can identify the major three types of Khorasan-i, Hind-i and Iraq-i. The idea of nation-state is a totally Western one, which came up after the peace treaty of Westphalia of 1648 in contemporary Germany. In the case of Asia we had the three so-called gunpowder empires (16th-18th century), being the Ottoman-Empire, the Safavid-Empire and the Mughal-Empire. However, Persian was at the time of these three Empires its noble court language, lingua franca of science, poetry and literature, and the communication tool for traders. In times of migration, which should be called correctly Glocalization (global and local), languages or certain norms and values migrate as well with the people's choice to leave their home. The Glocalization aims to approach important lifeworld topics like language or just religion grounded in its philosophy, which shapes everyone's identity in a reciprocal way. Therefore, it is of importance to talk about Persian as an everyday diaspora language in times of Glocalization: West-Asia (Tehran) in connection with Western-Europe (Frankfurt am Main).

Keywords: *Diaspora, Frankfurt Am Main, Persian, Transculturality, Urban, Iran*

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Correspondence:

Homayun Alam

Email: alamhomayun1980@hotmail.com

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Introduction

The notion of diaspora signifies us that people from one geography are dispersed in another one. Therefore, it is of importance to know about their origin, which is a measure to be opened up: everyday-life, customs, sociocultural patterns or other diversified orientations.

Migration is in our contemporary time and age in the 21st century one of the trendiest topics due to wars, armed conflicts, climate changes or just economic reasons. Many times, especially people from the West-Asian countries flee due to wars in the post 9/11 world order regarding the last two decades of the closest neighboring countries. When migration is becoming an imminent topic in the European subcontinent, one should make his or her mind ready of reflecting about the major facts, which are at stake.

In this case the metaphor of the “luggage” makes sense. Why? In the last decades many migrants brought abundant luggage with themselves, coming for instance from West-Asia. Thus, the physical luggage is really obvious, it is the body, the oneself as an individual, but sometimes also as a collective or just a couple with some children. That said, the psychological luggage is less obvious, and its weight cannot be measured even for the passenger, who is going to carry it with his- or herself. However, the distinction between the physical and psychological luggage exists in everyday-life, used language and social behaviors. Here is one of the key questions: Which kind of measures should be applied to understand the core being of the so-called migrant or in the case of Frankfurt post-migrant?

Methodology

The paper is developed based on the systematic review of the secondary data and research publications of credibility. A checklist of the possible key words and basic questions was developed which guided the process of this study.

Frankfurt as the Most International City of Germany

Generally, nowadays the city of Frankfurt and its surrounding regions are way more prosperous than a nation-state. Whilst Frankfurt has a long track of history in economics, politics, capital statuses, arts and culture. Nevertheless, common sense suggests through media and even via scientific research the outsider and insider another view: Berlin is the place to be. This euphemistic viewpoint is challenged by many authors, who do comparative researches on German cities (Toprak, 2016). To reiterate it in the evaluated words of a contemporary Frankfurt professor of pedagogy, society and politics at the Goethe-University, therefore he singled out why the reasons of contemporary events of post-WWII as well as their historical value that why Frankfurt is so much apart, this is really unique from other German cities: “Frankfurt is a lens of German remembrance culture,” he says, listing: “Auschwitz trials, Börneplatz occupation, theater controversy, Wehrmacht exhibition, Walser speech.” (Grodensky, 2021)

Historically, Frankfurt was the seat of the German National Parliament in the 19th Century (1815-1866). In this city at the river Main and the renowned Rhine-Main-Region, the first ever German National Assembly took place (1848/49). Being one of the principal states of the Holy Roman Empire, where kings were crowned for centuries (Imperial Immediacy from 14th-19th century A.D.), then it was annexed by the Prussians (1866). Consequently, the old Free Imperial City of Frankfurt (1815-1866) due to its belonging to the Holy Roman Empire, it was again the center for European unification, shortly after the occupation in 1871 as Otto von Bismarck made it to the city of Frankfurt to sign the peace treaty between France and Germany. At that time Bismarck (1815-1898) apologized in front of the native inhabitants of Frankfurt for the military siege six years before (1866). With the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in the year of 1806 Frankfurt recovered itself, even after being occupied by Napoleon. From the year of 1815 Frankfurt as a glocal (global and local) place for fair and trade could retain its city-state’s status toward a short self-liberation process.

Today, Frankfurt is the capital of world business, one of the three most valued places for finance, the headquarters for the European Central Bank, the first Internet Exchange point of the world, and many other global and glocal institutions. By far, Frankfurt is the most international city of Germany (Fenzel, 2013). Institutions? A Berlin based professor of art history juxtaposed beyond Germany's political borders in the German speaking-world that Frankfurt has the most museums, which are concentrated at the Main-river-side. So according to him, it should be enhanced to the German capital of culture (Trinks 2021). These fifteen Frankfurt museums outnumber every German speaking city, as aforementioned, so it is not only the case that Frankfurt is devalued and thus reduced by many observers as the city of banks, finance or just capital.

Persian as a Diaspora Language in Times Of Glocalization

Generally, Persian is seen by insiders (emic) as well as outsiders (etic) as a language, culture and civilization bond to Iran and contemporary Iranians. So, here is the question: is this view totally or partly true, or should it be put under a critical scrutiny? Is this not a glorification while a reductionist approach with an uncritical historiography?

Historically, we have an unbalanced understanding of two principal facts to be underlined: firstly, historical events produced by uncritical historiography in textbooks and volumes, and secondly, their common day readership consumers. These two factors are reproducing a constant unscientific atmosphere in the education systems especially in West-Asia, but also in other countries around these vast regions. What happened and how? After the fall of the Abbasid Empire in 1258 A.D. Turkic tribes from East Asia invaded, landed and collaborated with the new territories and people they had occupied. The outcome was the three major empires: Ottoman (1299-1922), Safavid (1501-1736) and Mughal (1526-1857). In turn, it is of necessary passing mention that no empire, not even the first ever recorded and largest in humankind history being the Persian Achaemenid Empire (550 B.C. - 330 B.C.) lasted as an eternal entity. However, when we speak through the lens of evidence based on research, one should keep in mind they are not only Indo-European languages, but also in between that immense geography the Indo-Iranian ones. After knowing about the division of languages between the European subcontinent vis-à-vis Asia, which was included but not limited to western universities, one has to denominate after destruction of the Safavid empire in the Iranian case about the "Iranian World": The Iranian world is a notion, which is brought up sometimes, when for instance Iran, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kurdish regions, Caucasus, or Central Asia are taking for the better reason into account for giving a deeper sense to ethnicities, languages, cultures, kinship, music, and natural resources (Alam 2021). The connected pre-nation-state grounds are here playing a pivotal role. What was disconnected by the creation of the nation-state based after the Peace Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 becomes by these counted oftentimes ancient and historical assessments from now on more important than believed.

Today, Persian as a diaspora language in times of Glocalization is the connected version of the intellectual, parenting, sociolinguistic and identical luggage (Gharibi, Mirvahedi 2021). An Iranian migrant or Persian from Afghanistan, those ones, who are visible and by number the most hearable as persophones in Frankfurt for example, are extending the nature of the Persian language. By statistics, these persophones are by number together 2.79 per cent of the entire migration society of Frankfurt, while the number of Iranians is about 1.04 per cent and that of Afghans about 1.75 per cent (Schupp, 2017). By historical as well as contemporary migration, the historical multiple varieties of the Persian language (i.e. Khorasan-i, Hind-i and Iraq-i) are brought to the west, as well. Persian as a language with a transcontinental poly-centric evolvement, stretching from the subcontinent of India all the way long to the subcontinent of Europe, the Mediterranean and eastern Africa is getting as of today thus a post-modern transnational one (Fragner, 2015). It is again a bottom-up dynamic, or better to state from east to the west, which one can observe, if someone from the neighbor regions of the two twin cities of Mashhad (Eastern Iran) or Herat

(Western Afghanistan) are migrating to Frankfurt and taking their Persian language to their new home community (Alam, 2016). Glocalization is by a very specific definition of its base, being the migration act nothing else than taking the background (origin) as much as seriously, then the foreground (target destination) for a balanced identity, without much caused invisible psychological luggage of unforgettable memories and undeniable traumas (Robertson, 2006). Lastly, English is the contemporary global language of the communication, which time and again competes with other languages (Arabic, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish) at a local level in times of Glocalization (d'Angelo, 2019).

From Self-Aspiration to a Transcultural Reality

Generally, the term diversity is nowadays in western countries one of the principal policies for each and every company to hire its staff. Therefore, the term Glocalization is employed or better to state in many ways to the market and the commerce sector. But, it is important to make a crucial turning point by extending the term of Glocalization to the subjects of humans. In this particular case, the two German authors penned a book about the new German identity: *The New Germans: A Country Facing Its Future* (Münkler, 2017). In this book the two authors, an intellectual couple, who stems from the close outskirts of Frankfurt, the husband a professor of political science and his wife a professor of literary criticism, argued in a nutshell why the migration discourse of the yesteryear is obsolete (Münkler, 2017).

Historically, countries of the east like Iran, Afghanistan or just India have always had a diverse society by language, ethnicity, or religion. If one looks up in history books about empires, realms and the so-called middle Persian term of "Divan", one will always detect that in the European Subcontinent dynasties, for example Poland argued stemming from the Persian Sarmatians. In the age of Enlightenment, brilliant minds like Friedrich Nietzsche wrote *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (1883) to showcase through the lens of Persians the miseries of his own time and age. One century before that, Montesquieu exemplified in his magnificent literary piece of the *Persian Letters* (1721), how two Persian nobleman figures spent time in France under the reign of Louis XIV. Furthermore, the world-famous fresco of the Italian Raphael, revisited the *School of Athens* (1509-1511) for the cause of the Italian Renaissance by the ancient Greek Philosophy: To those many Greek masterminds vis-à-vis their Italian counterparts was the Persian or Iranian Philosopher and Prophet Zoroaster as well (Yousefi, 2021). Or, when we pay attention to the slogan of the United States Postal Service "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds" it leads us to one crucial question: Where does this mission statement come from? The answer to this leads the questioner to the wars between the Greeks and Persians (500 B.C. - 449 B.C.). However, at the time Persians developed a system of mounted postal couriers (Vasseghi, 2017). These are a few examples of how much Glocalization was inclusive and thus exerted in the last centuries and even millenaries.

Today, the situation changed fully. While the view from the West was oriented towards the East in the past centuries and millennia as displayed, this relationship has developed in the opposite direction. Briefly, the Phoenix has another flying orientation. The three aforementioned empires - Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal (16th-18th century) - were called by their underdevelopment belligerence in the historiography by the scholarship of Marshall Hodgson (1922-1968) as the "gunpowder empires". As in the 20th century, new designed critical research in the 21st century explains to us the same that the rise of the Ulema-State Alliance began even at an early stage at the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258) that eventually led to the scratched structural fabricated backwardness of prospective empires (Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal), which are then much visible by ideological, economic or political factors (Kuru 2019). According to Kuru this all culminated in the result of marginalization of independent scholars and merchants. In West-Asian countries like Iran the notion and value of modernity never could be institutionalized in a sustainable way for the single reason of a "modernization without modernity" (Mirsepassi, 2000). The question which arises is either, why migration became in the last decades such a debatable topic or the cornerstone for

politics in almost all countries on planet earth? Hence, it is facile to assume that old centers, connectivity and relations disappear and relocate to another place, which diverts steadily from a normal place to a volitional space (Alam, 2018). Through this heuristic approach, but also holistic claim, the reader should figure out that today in glocal cities like Frankfurt, it is an integral part of the cityscape by only one slight glimpse to capture in public spaces, the term the world is home in Frankfurt and Frankfurt is at home in the whole world.

Global Learning Leads to Local Awareness: Glocalization

Generally, we face and do live in times of domestic and international crises, which are indeed of those as global health emergencies, transformative climate change and the revolution of Artificial Intelligence (Bremmer, 2022). What are the impediments? Which solutions should be taken into in order to an amelioration? In this particular case the concept of “global learning” will help us to grasp the Zeitgeist in which we do live:

“Global Learning in the sense of the concepts, connects the global perspective with the personal close-up area of the learners; it is about personality development or ‘consciousness raising’, about changing attitudes and personal lifestyles within the framework of holistic learning processes. For this reason, Global Learning encompasses the *global and local* dimension and combines environmental, Third World, peace, human rights and intercultural pedagogy in one pedagogical concept. The goal of Global Learning is responsible action of the learners in the sense of the guiding principle of sustainability. It is about learning to adopt perspectives and empathy, to form one’s own identity and ability to judge, to gain the ability to act and make decisions.” (Hanebeck, 2019)

Historically, or let us argue in the wake of the WWII Germany had its own domestic affairs. It was a time of reconstruction, being geographically at the center of the European subcontinent, but having after the war a peripheral role. With the passage of time Germany (West) in the 1950s passed a tremendous time of reconstruction and development. The most leading institution of its kind was the Frankfurt based and state-owned “Reconstruction Loan Corporation” (German: Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, KfW). The KfW was part of the Marshall Plan (1948). The man of the hour was Ludwig Erhard, who received his PhD degree (1925) with the title “Essence and Content of the Value Unit” (German: “Wesen und Inhalt der Werteinheit”) at the Goethe-University Frankfurt under the supervision of the renowned political economist as well as sociologist Franz Oppenheimer. Erhard was the one who both for the first time led and consequently implemented the “German Miracle” (German: Deutsches Wirtschaftswunder). Thereafter, the so-called “recruitment agreement” (German: Anwerbeabkommen) was founded between the Federal Republic of West-Germany and Turkey to recruit enough “migrant or foreign workers” (German: Gastarbeiter) in 1961 in Bonn. Prior to this history, the first foreign workers were Italians (1955), Greeks (1960), and Spanish (1960). Afterwards, because of the need of foreign workers, others like Moroccans (1963), South-Koreans (1963), Portuguese (1964), Tunisians (1965) and Yugoslavs (1968) were recruited. Most of them initially received the right of residence for not more than one year. Primarily, they worked in agriculture, construction, the iron and metal industry and mining.

Today, the entire landscape of migration and labor has changed, when one looks back to the era of post-war Germany. Many migrants who were so-called guest workers are today still in the third or fourth generation ingrained in, for instance, Frankfurt and its Rhine-Main-Region. Hence, there is a continuity ascertainable. Considering that, the term post-migrant is employed in the sense of what happened after the multitude of especially legal, sociopolitical or economical procedures (Foroutan 2019). But, it should not get into oblivion that migration is always taking place, thus it is not a never lasting process (El-Mafaalani 2021). Obviously, there is a paradigm shift observable.

Conclusion

Upon exploring the situation from multiple perspectives in diaspora, migration and the “luggage” it was the overall aim to showcase in what kind of manners and scope in our time and age of Glocalization other luggage then, that of culture, language or identity are brought from one part of the world to the other one.

When faced with the question of Frankfurt as the most international city of Germany, the approach was to begin with a hypothesis in general terms. Therefore, it is always of importance to make clear that Frankfurt is less represented, thus evaluated, as city of art, culture, and history or just alike. As a city, Frankfurt is more devalued with a reductionist approach as only being the hub of banks, their skyscrapers, not more than that.

With all that in mind, Persian as a diaspora language in times of Glocalization challenges its speakers from Iran and Afghanistan, when it comes to the glocal city of Frankfurt. In this case, Persian extended its political borders in Asia through migration toward the western hemisphere till the European subcontinent, i.e. Frankfurt.

What else can we conclude but that from self-aspiration to a transcultural reality there are worlds of individual evolvement, economic prosperity, the multifaceted diversity or just a cosmopolitan everyday life in-between. Once, the Iranian world was a huge and influential entity, which influenced to this point great parts of the world civilizations. But today, the entire notion of civilization in times and age of Glocalization changed by the shift to new centers of which Frankfurt since decades as well as centuries is one of them.

Lastly, global learning should lead to local awareness, which is one of the proofs of concept of Glocalization. This approach of the global learning should lead to a sustainable world in which norms and values are going to be taken together and not apart into consideration by politics and especially economics. Contemporary and prospective crises have to be evaluated as a serious holistic task embedded within basic natural resources, which means beyond the single reality of the only political border regimes and one-sided economic benefits for any minority.

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