

# **Iranians in Canada: A Statistical Analysis**

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## **Abstract**

This paper presents a statistical analysis on the demographic, social educational and occupational issues of the Iranian-Canadian community. The main sources of data for the paper are the Government of Canada's 2001 census statistics and an online web-based survey conducted by the author from the Iranian-Canadian community. Other sources were the author's personal experiences and findings during his study and life in Canada during the last four years and also information provided by his friends and colleagues. Demographic features of the Iranian-Canadians such as population, gender, immigration status and period, age groups, marital status and marriage are investigated and compared to other typical Canadians. Other topics such as education, employment factors, income levels, ties with the home country (Iran), interest in and preservation of the home culture, identity in Canada, following issues related to Iran are also addressed. We also give a short discussion on the intra-social relations in the Iranian community in Canada. A brief overview on some of the related works, done specifically on the Iranians living in Canada, is also presented. The author hopes this analysis dispels the illusion held by Iranians prior to their immigration to foreign countries and Canada in particular. He further hopes that the analysis helps the decision makers and also Iranians associations, groups and societies both in Iran and in Canada to better analyze and solve the social, cultural, and psychological issues of the Iranian-Canadian community.

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<sup>1</sup> The author's biography can be found in the last page of the paper.

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## 1 Introduction

The term “immigration” is defined<sup>1</sup> as: “entrance of a person (an alien) into a new country for the purpose of establishing permanent residence. Motives for immigration, like those for migration generally, are often economic, although religious or political factors may also be very important. Recently there has been a large number of Iranians leaving Iran and immigrating to other countries, mostly the western world. By considering the number of Iranian students, scholars and professors in American and Canadian universities<sup>2</sup>, and also high-tech companies in North America for example, one can easily find that there are enormous numbers of Iranian educated professionals.

A paper [1] was published by the author about the aforementioned topic on Dec. 2003. The paper was entitled: *A Survey on the Immigration of Iranian Experts and the Elite: Reasons, Losses and Possible Solutions*. It was presented at the Scientific Seminar on the Discourse of Overseas Iranian Youth, Tehran, Iran, held by the department of Social Affairs and Overseas Iranians at the Iranian Organization of Culture and Islamic Relations in January 2004. That study provided discussions, originating from personal experiences, on the subject of the immigration of Iranian experts and the elite. We particularly aimed to identify and present the general reasons Iranian youth decide to immigrate from their homeland, what the costs and losses of this outflow to the country are, and also the potential solutions, the government, Iranian educational institutions, and the society might undertake to reduce the immigration rate of experts. Furthermore, we also investigated Iranians immigration rate in the recent years and some of the required preparations needed by the Iranian government and the society, to attract and host Iranians who have left Iran.

The current work can be considered as one of the possible continuations of the previous one by the author [1]. It can be regarded as the next step in the journey of immigration, in a way that, we are studying the Iranian-Canadian community in this paper. We are going to analyze, from a statistical point of view, what happens to most Iranians after they decide to immigrate from Iran and come to Canada. We discuss what the demographic features of the Iranian-Canadian community are. The demographic features, we are going to address in this work, include population, immigration status, period and

age at immigration, age groups, marital status and marriages, family conditions, languages and ethnic backgrounds of Iranian-Canadians who live in Canada. We study some of those statistics for Iranian-Canadians per Canadian provinces, territories, and cities. There are also some interesting discussions and findings when comparing some of the social/cultural aspects of the Iranian-Canadian community versus typical Canadians or those with other Middle Eastern backgrounds such as: Pakistanis, Turks, Iraqis, and Azerbaijanis. We will see for example in Section 4.2.1 that the number of Canadians with Iranian origin is more than the Canadians with aforementioned backgrounds. In the contrary, we will also find out in Section 4.2.4 that the percentage of interracial marriages<sup>3</sup> in Iranian-Canadians is lower than the Canadians with aforementioned backgrounds.

### 1.1 Related Works

There have been many studies on the different issues related to the immigrants in Canada, for instance [3-7]. However, there are fewer works focusing especially on the Iranian-Canadian community. The work by Kazemi [30] in 1986 appears to be among the first studies done on the topic, focusing only on the Iranians in Ontario. Ontario is the most populated province in Canada. The biggest city of Canada (Toronto) is also located in this province.

After more than a decade, in 1999, Dilmaghani [23] did a good study about the Iranians living in Toronto. In her paper [23], Dilmaghani studied the profile, contributions and issues of the Iranian-Canadian community in Toronto. Some of the objectives of the Dilmaghani’s work were:

- To identify the demographics of the Iranian community in Toronto, including age, education, employment, family, and immigration status.
- To identify the needs/barriers which limit Iranians from accessing services and integrating into the Canadian community.
- To find the major strengths and skills such as problem solving, leadership, and creativity.
- To prioritize community needs/barriers by analyzing the number of people who identify the need/barriers and the impact of the identified issues.

A rather recent work [31] was published by Dr. Safdar<sup>4</sup> entitled: *The Process of Acculturation and Basic Goals: Testing a Multidimensional Individual Difference Acculturation Model with Iranian Immigrants in Canada*

<sup>1</sup> In <http://www.encyclopedia.com>

<sup>2</sup> This can be easily done, for example, by browsing the North American universities’ web sites. For instance, see: [http://www.ece.uwaterloo.ca/www\\_info/people/gradlist.html](http://www.ece.uwaterloo.ca/www_info/people/gradlist.html) (List of graduate students at Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Waterloo).

<sup>3</sup> Interracial marriage is a marriage between a man and a woman with different ethnic backgrounds.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Saba Safdar is an Assistant Professor in the Psychology Department at the University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario. Her homepage is located at: <http://www.psychology.uoguelph.ca/faculty/safdar/>

in 2003. She examined three of the basic goals of Iranian immigrants in Canada as a multicultural society: (1) maintenance of heritage culture, (2) participation in the host society, and (3) maintenance of psychological and physical health. The roles of separation and assimilation modes of acculturation were also examined in the study. The three composite predictor variables in the model were: (1) psychosocial adjustment, consisting of psychological well-being, bicultural competence, and perceived outgroup social support; (2) connectedness to family and culture, consisting of family allocentrism, ethnic identity, and perceived ingroup support; and (3) the experience of acculturation-specific and non-specific daily hassles. The study found that psychosocial adjustment was directly related to outgroup behavior (reflecting contact with the host culture) and to psychophysical distress. Connectedness to family and culture was directly related to ingroup behavior, and daily hassles were directly related to psychophysical distress [31].

## 1.2 Structure of the Paper

This paper is structured as follows. In Section 2, we give a brief statement on our analysis methodology and identify the main sources of information and statistics used for this study. Section 3 provides a short introduction to Canada as an immigrant-hosting country. Some notes on Canada's political system and immigration policies will be given. The concept of chain migration<sup>1</sup> as well as the current immigration rates to Canada will be addressed. Then, we will move on to the main focus of this paper, i.e. the Iranian-Canadian community, in Section 4. First, a brief history on Iranians immigration to Canada will be given. Then in order, demographic features, education, employment and income-related issues, ties with the home country and intra-social relations in the Iranian community will be presented. In Section 5, we briefly present some experience-based notes discussing the problems related to the Iranian-Canadians, the causes of the problems, and some of the strengths/capacities of the Iranian-Canadians that should be better utilized by the Canadian society.

Finally, Section 6 concludes this paper. It should be mentioned that this study is just a small step towards studies on the Iranian-Canadian community. It is primarily based on statistical data and augmented by personal experiences. Further works on the different issues, identified in this paper, should be done in other related disciplines, focusing on different social/cultural and psychological aspects of the Iranian-Canadian community.

<sup>1</sup> In chain migration, one immigrant sponsors several other immigrants for admission, who then sponsor several others themselves, and so on. Naturally, chain migration drives immigration numbers up.

## 2 Analysis Methodology

The current study is utilizing statistical data by the Government of Canada's 2001 census [2], an online web-based survey conducted by the author to present some detailed statistical charts and comparisons on demographic features, educational, employment and income factors and conditions of the Iranian-Canadian community. We, then, use the author's personal experiences and findings during his study and life in Canada during the last four years. Furthermore information provided by the author's friends and colleagues were also used in the analysis to derive discussions and conclusions pertaining to the Iranian-Canadians.

### 2.1 Sources of Information

Statistics Canada's 2001 census [2] was the main source of statistical information during the course of this research. To get some first-hand data and also to investigate issues, which were not covered by the Statistics Canada's 2001 census [2], the author decided to also conduct an online survey<sup>2</sup> within the Iranian-Canadian community.

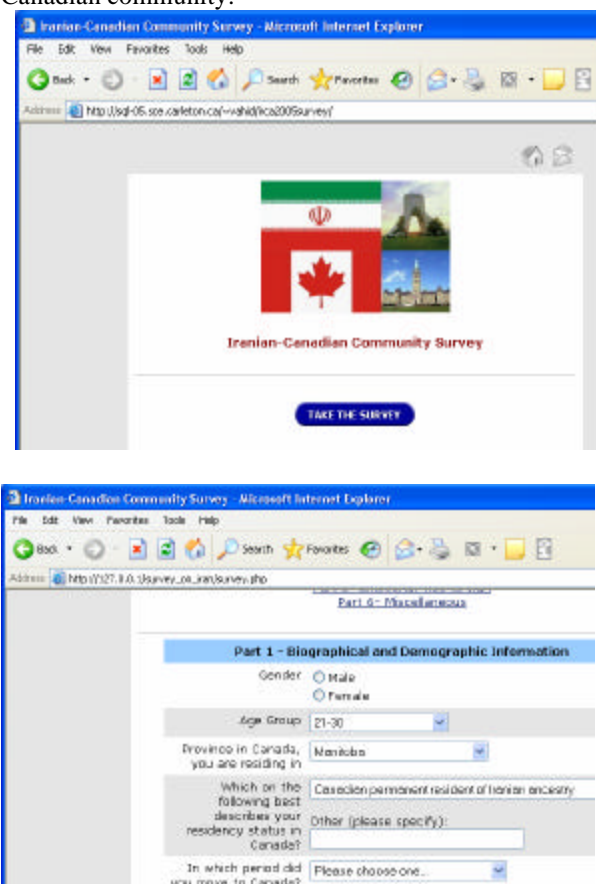


Figure 1. Two screenshots from the online survey system conducted by the author

<sup>2</sup> <http://sql-05.sce.carleton.ca/~vahid/irca2005survey>

Efforts were made to invite as many Iranian-Canadians as possible to take part in the survey. In the period of about 60 days, the survey received 427 replies from Iranian-Canadians across the country. This seems to be a quite good number considering the time constraint the author was facing to meet the submission deadline for the conference. The publicity of the survey was done through mailing lists and friends.

A general note about the population data, used in our analyses is that many of the Iranian-Canadian respondents doubt the numbers given by Statistics Canada [2] about the size of the Iranian population in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) and entire Canada. According to official statistics, there are 40,000 Iranians in the GTA, but the estimates from the respondents range up to 100,000 (including illegal immigrants and asylum seekers). This issue is discussed in further detail in Section 4.2.1. Despite the aforementioned fact, the author decided to use the Statistics Canada's 2001 Census data as they are currently the best source of statistics available.

## 3 Canada

### 3.1 General Introduction

Canada is the second largest country (after Russia) in the world with a surface of 9.9 million square km and is inhabited by an estimated 31.4 million people (Statistics Canada, 2001 Census [2]). The land was not colonized until Samuel de Champlain founded Quebec as capital of New France in 1608. Over a hundred years prior, the English had set foot on Newfoundland (1497) but did not build a permanent settlement.

In 1759 the English won the battle over Quebec and four years later New-France became an English colony thus creating the 'French fact', the basis for the country's bilingualism. The Quebec Act of 1774 tried to incorporate French practice into law. The French were allowed to retain their language, religion, symbols and for some time French and British law co-existed in different domains [3]. The province of Quebec was divided in Upper Canada (now Quebec) and Lower Canada (now Ontario) in 1791 and French immigration came to a virtual halt [4].

Almost a century after the United States fought for and gained its independence in 1776, the British North America Act federated Canada in July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1867. This day is celebrated every year by Canadians as the "Canada Day". At that time, the Dominion of Canada consisted of Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and had a population of 3.5 million [5]. It was not until the 1931 Westminster Agreement, that Canada finally became an independent country. However it remained within the British Commonwealth. Even though it was officially independent, it would take several more decades before Canada got its own flag (1965), anthem (1980) and constitution (1982). In 1982 the constitution

was transferred from Great Britain to Canada and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into effect. Quebec does not recognize this Constitution, but has nevertheless lived up to it [6].



Figure 2. Canada's Provinces and Territories

### 3.2 Organization

Canada is a constitutional monarchy under the British crown, with Queen Elizabeth as its head of state, represented by a governor-general (Adrienne Clarkson at this moment - [www.gg.ca](http://www.gg.ca)). Canada is a federal state consisting of ten provinces and three territories. The territories are ruled by the federal government, but the provinces have a high degree of legislative control. Quebec especially has always had a special position and has been allowed to make its own policies to a greater extent than the other provinces so it could maintain its own culture and language. Several times Quebec has had referenda about independence; the latest was in 1995 when a slim majority voted to stay within Canada.

### 3.3 Canada as an Immigrant-Hosting Country

In 2001, 18.4% of the Canadian population was foreign born (see Figure 3), the highest proportion in 70 years. Canada is a country of immigration in at least two ways; its history is one of immigrants and the population is made up of (the descendants of) immigrants [7]. Since the colonization (by British and French), many immigrants have come to Canada, especially from the colonizer countries.

The first Germans came in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards immigrants from the Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland and Jews have been settling on the vast Canadian lands. After the free land proclamation of 1792 thousands of settlers came to Canada, mainly from Christian sects, like the Mennonites and Quakers. Most immigrants came from the US. After the Napoleonic wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century, more immigrants from Europe, mainly the British Isles, started to arrive [4]. Later people from other continents also migrated to the new land. The first



Chinese settled in British Columbia in 1858 [8], [9]. At the time of confederation (1867) only 8% of the population was of non-British or non-French origin. Since then, many immigrants from all parts of the world have entered Canada.

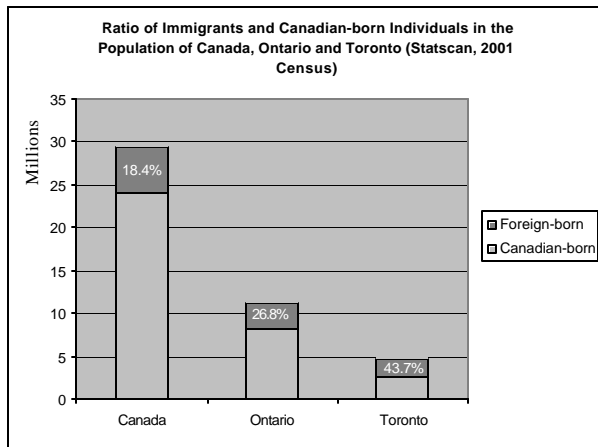


Figure 3

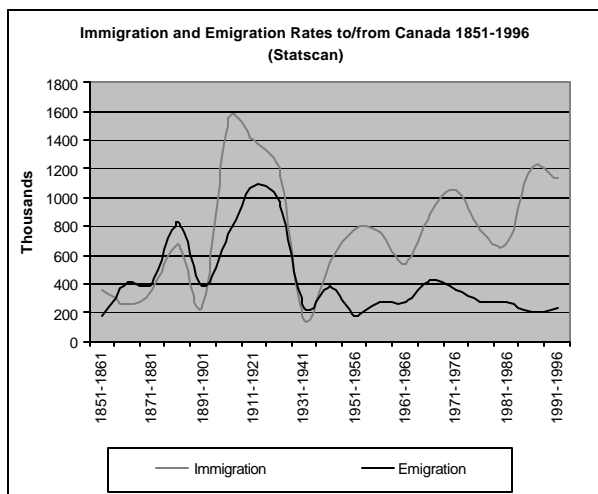


Figure 4

### 3.3.1 Immigration Policies

Although there have been (heavy) recruitment campaigns, immigration policies have been a policy more about keeping the 'wrong kind' of people out than getting the 'right kind' of people in [10]. In order to control the entry of groups of immigrants into the country, that are/were considered 'undesirable' for reasons of race, skills and education, Canada has passed various Immigration Acts and regulations over the years.

The first immigration Act dates back to 1869 (two years after confederation) and mentions nothing about which categories of immigrations should or should not be allowed to enter [4]. This Act was amended in 1872 to prohibit the entry of criminals and other 'vicious classes' [4]. Immigration policy was pretty much 'laissez faire' - let (people) do (as they please) - except for the

introduction of the Chinese Immigration Act in 1885. Since then many regulations and Acts have been passed. In 1906, a new act was introduced banning all sorts of undesirables (e.g. criminals and prostitutes) and allowing immigrants to be deported. In 1910 this was followed by another act excluding 'immigrants belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada' and allowing deportation for moral or political instability [4].

In 1976 the new Immigration Act formally recognized the points system. Three categories of immigrants were created:

- *Family class*: Canadian citizens and permanent residents older than 18 can sponsor certain relatives who wish to immigrate to Canada.
- *Independent immigrants*: these include assisted relatives, retirees, entrepreneurs, and self-employed persons.
- *Refugees*: those people who, according to the United Nation's definition, have a well-founded fear of persecution in their homelands.

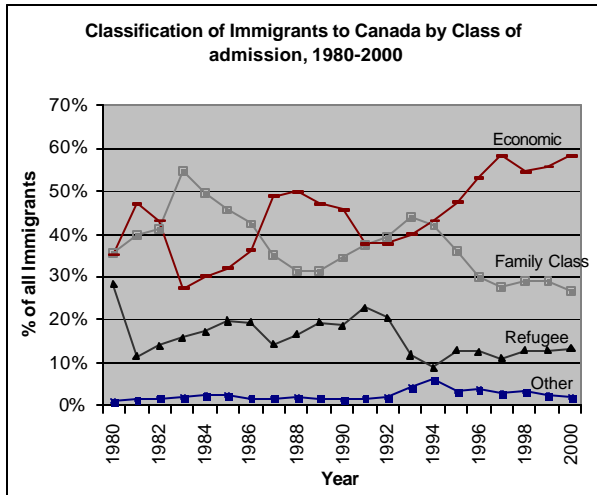
The points system was later reformed to place more weight on job experience and official language knowledge. CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada - [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)) is the responsible Canadian ministry for the immigration acts.

### 3.3.2 Chain Migration

The Canadian government has always tried to control immigrant influx, but never fully succeeded. Despite the shift from a source country oriented to an education oriented immigration policy, the level of the human capital of immigrants dropped, because the portion of non-selected immigrants increased [7]. The reason is that new immigrants not only arrived through recruitment of skilled workers but also as part of a chain migration. For instance, it was calculated that in the 1950's every Italian male laborer that was recruited, was responsible for forty-nine other immigrants [12]. By the time this trend was identified, the Italian group was so large that it had become a political force, and politicians did not dare to announce strong measures to halt Italian immigration.

Chain migration (family reunification in particular) continues to have a strong influence on the composition of the immigrant inflow. Many believe the largest class of immigrants is the family class. Li's calculations (see Figure 5) show this is not entirely true if business and investor class immigrants are scored in the economic class. Reitz has calculated that every independent immigrant brings on average three dependents, which are not assessed through the points system (1998). If dependants of people in the independent class are added to the family class, the majority of people are not assessed on the basis of the points system and therefore do not have to satisfy all the high demands that are placed on immigrants in the independent class [4]. This large family component diminishes the effect of

immigration policies and worries many Canadians. They feel that these people are less likely to succeed and more likely to become a burden on Canadian society.



**Figure 5. Immigrants by Class of admission, 1980-2000 (Numbers copied from [7])**

Social networks often play an important role in the immigration process, both in the choice of settlement location as with later immigration. Sometimes having a family member is the only way of gaining entry; it is easier to qualify in the family class and for people in the independent class, five additional points can be awarded for the presence of family in Canada. The reasoning behind this is that it is easier for immigrants to find their way in a new society if family members are there to help them. According to data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, family and friends play an important role in new immigrants' initial settlement in this country, whether it is to assist in finding jobs or to help in determining where to live in Canada [2].

Chain migration also stimulates community building [13]. Contact with these family members and friends, who are likely of the same ethnic or cultural background, may help those in the first generation maintain stronger ties to their ethnic group once in Canada [2]. This in turn generates social capital which can improve the position of the immigrants.

**3.3.3 Present Day Immigration**

In 2002 more than 200,000 immigrants and 25,000 refugees were admitted, little under the planned amount [33]. The majority of the new immigrants went to Ontario (mainly to Toronto), Montreal or Vancouver. These three cities hold almost three-quarters of the immigrants of the last decade [2].

Immigrants from the former colonizing countries (Britain and France) are just a small percentage these days. In 2001, fully 44% of new immigrants did not speak either of the official languages upon arrival [14].

**3.4 Summary and Conclusion**

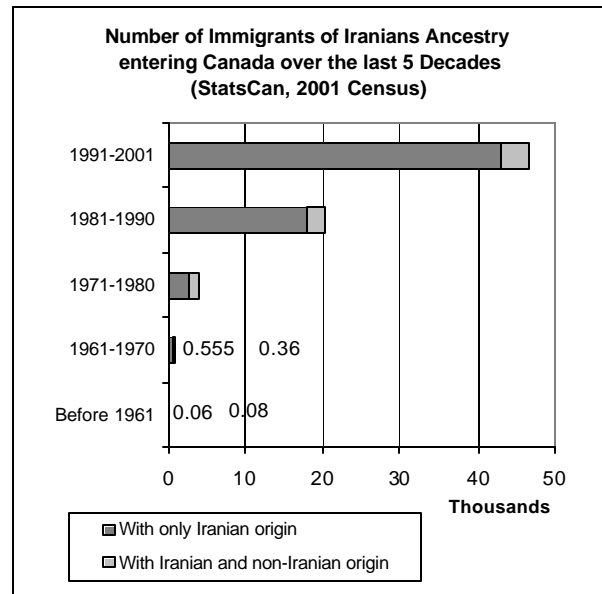
Canada has always welcomed immigrants, although some groups more than others. Immigration is mainly seen as an economic good [14], making the commitment skin-deep. Self-interest and economic preservation mostly outweigh social tolerance [14]. However, most immigrants seem to make their way. After initial hardship and struggle, comes eventual success although they very rarely get through to the top most ranks.

Canada will continue to be transformed by immigration [15] and "Canada's future depends on how well we [Canadians] learn to redirect the potential of ethnic forces into socially productive challenges". Overtly racist policies have been abolished over the years and Canada has gone from an immigration policy with strong racial preferences, to one that focuses on skills and education. Consequently Canada has become a more multicultural and multiracial country. This is not to deny the presence of racism in present day society - some even claim that the economic focus of the immigration debate only serves as a cover up of more racist views - or other problems that multicultural Canada faces.

**4 Iranians in Canada**

**4.1 A History of Iranians Immigration to Canada**

Compared to other immigrant groups, the Iranians are relative newcomers to Canada. As late as the end of World War II, there were only a dozen Iranians living in Canada. The large influx of immigrant groups following World War II did not include Iranians. Throughout the 1950's and 60's, the numbers ranged from ten to one hundred annually [20].



**Figure 6**



The first real wave of Iranian immigrants to Canada arrived in the 1970's, when the number increased from 100/year to 600/year by 1978. Following the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1978, the rate of immigration accelerated to several thousand per year. This level was sustained throughout the Iran/Iraq war and throughout the 1990's [20]. Over the period of 1978-1990, some came as immigrants for economic reasons. The majority, however, came to Canada for political reasons - they were fleeing the horror of the Iran/Iraq War. The Iranians who came to Canada were aided by the change in immigration rules, which judged immigrants on a specific point system based upon education and occupation. Country of origin, which had been stressed in previous immigration guidelines, was no longer a factor. Canada had officially become a multicultural country, encouraging, not only a non-traditional immigrant base, but facilitating this by encouraging programs to ensure that these groups maintain their culture and traditions in Canada [20].

In the period after 1990, the Iranian immigration to Canada has mostly got the economic factor in it [21]. In 2002, more than 200,000 educated Iranian professionals immigrated mainly to Canada, Australia, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Eastern Europe [22]. To see this increasing rate, refer to Figure 6.

## 4.2 Demographic Features

This section will discuss the demographic features of Iranians in Canada. Among the features, different factors such as population, marriage, age groups and ethnic backgrounds will be covered.

### 4.2.1 Population

According to Statistic Canada's 2001 Census [2], there were some 89,000 Iranian-Canadians living in Canada in the year 2001. Iranian immigration to Canada started to surge around the time of the Islamic revolution and has since increased continuously (Figure 6). The main destination of Iranian immigrants is Ontario and more specifically the GTA (Greater Toronto Area). There is also a large community in Vancouver, British Columbia. The population of Iranian-Canadian community in Canadian cities and provinces are shown in Figure 7 and Figure 8, respectively.

To better visualize the distribution of Iranian-Canadians all across the country, a thematic map of Canada depicting the Iranian-Canadian population in each province and territory is shown in Figure 9. The province of Ontario has the largest percentage of Iranian-Canadians population with 58.6%. After Ontario, in order, British Columbia, Quebec, Alberta and then other provinces and territories host the majority of Iranian-Canadians. Interestingly, there were 45 individuals living in the Yukon Territory, which is neighboring to Alaska, a state belonging to the USA.

It seems that in Canada, the proportion of the economy-class immigrants is still rising, as shown in Figure 5. Most Iranians came to Canada in the recent years through the skilled worker or business immigrant program, sometimes also as students and then becoming landed immigrants.

### Canadian numbers

Many of the Canadian respondents doubt the numbers given by Statistics Canada about the size of the Iranian population in the GTA. There are only good quality figures on the first generation in the figures on immigrants by country of birth. The figures for the size of the total Iranian population have to be distilled from the ethnic origin question, however these data are based on self reported ethnic origins and Azeris, Kurds and Armenians might identify themselves as such and not as Iranian, lowering the total number [23]. According to official statistics there are 40,000 Iranians in the GTA, but the estimates from the respondents range up to 100,000 (including illegal immigrants and asylum seekers).

If the immigration figures are compared to the ethnic origin question of the census, it seems that the number of Iranian born immigrants and the number of people reporting Iranian as sole ethnic origin is roughly equal. This does however not mean that these are the same people, nor that the second generation does not report Iranian as sole origin. Multiple answers could come from Iranian-Canadians but also from Armenian-Iranians or Azeri-Iranian-Canadians all of which can be reported by immigrants themselves or their (mixed marriage) children or grandchildren.

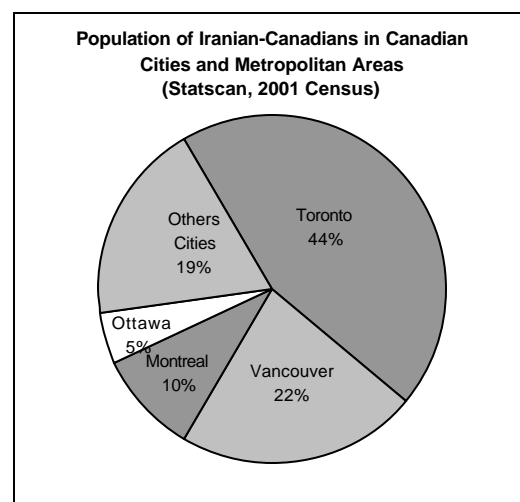
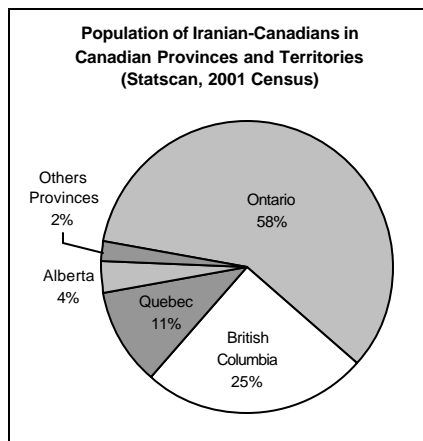
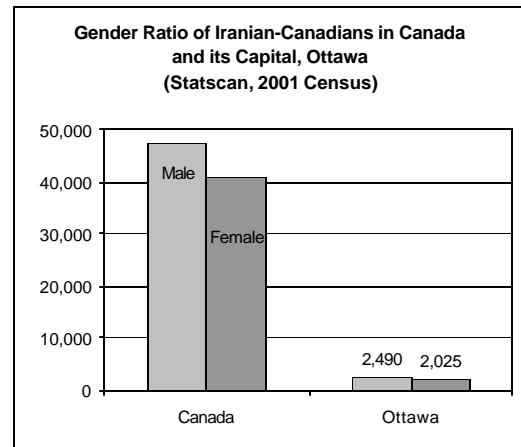


Figure 7



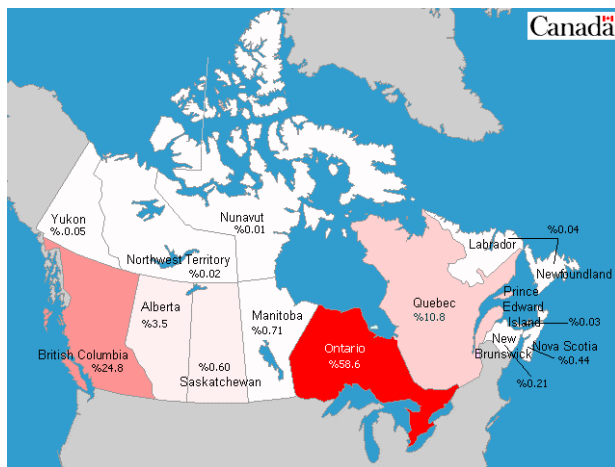
**Figure 8**



**Figure 10**

A different indicator is the number of copies of community newspapers. There are several Iranian community papers in the GTA. The best read one, *Shahrvand* ([www.shahrvand.com](http://www.shahrvand.com)) has a circulation of approximately 70,000 copies. This would indicate the number of Iranians is indeed well over 40,000.

In the capital city, Ottawa, 4,515 Iranians lived during 2001, 55% of them males and the rest females. Comparing these ratios to the overall Canadian gender ratio in 2001 (49.1% males and 50.9% females), it is noticeable that the percentage of Iranian males was marginally higher than that of females. This might be an indication of the fact that among Iranians, culturally and socially, males have higher tendency to leave their home country.



**Figure 9. Thematic map of Canada depicting the Iranian-Canadian population in each province and territory**

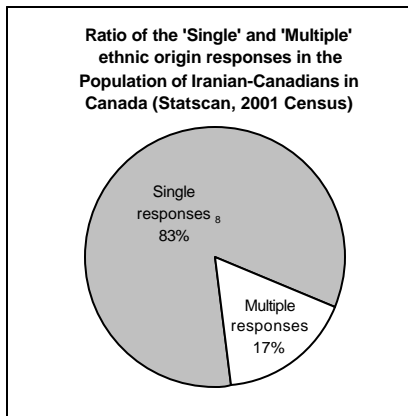
*Comparison of Single- and Multiple-Ethnic s*

According to Statistics Canada (2001 Census), single-ethnic response occurs “when a respondent provides one ethnic origin only”. For example, in 2001 in Canada, 73,455 people stated that their only ethnic origin was Iranian. Since 1981, when respondents were first permitted to report more than one ethnic origin in the census, a distinction has been made in Statistics Canada between single and multiple responses. Multiple-ethnic response occurs “when a respondent provides two or more ethnic origins”. For example, 14,775 people in 2001 gave a response which included Iranian and one or more other ethnic origins. This ratio is depicted in Figure 11.

*Gender Ratio*

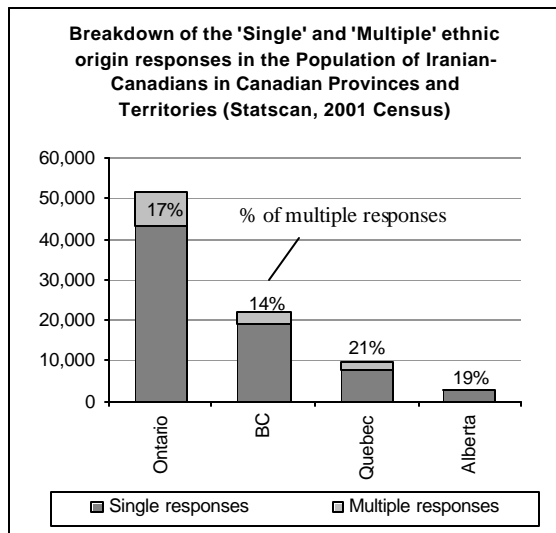
The gender ratio of Iranian-Canadians in Canada and its capital city, Ottawa is shown in Figure 10. According to Statistics Canada (2001 Census), out of 88,225 Iranians living in Canada during 2001, 47,350 (53%) were males and the rest 40,875 (47%) were females.

As a result of increasing intermarriages between persons of different ethnic backgrounds, an increasing proportion of the population of Canada report two or more ethnic origins.



**Figure 11**

An interesting remark can be made by analyzing the breakdown of the single- and multiple-ethnic origin responses in the population of Iranian-Canadians in selected Canadian provinces and territories, as shown in Figure 12. Only four provinces (Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Alberta) which host the majority of Iranian-Canadians are shown in the figure. As seen, the percentage of multiple responses' is smallest (14%) in the province of British Columbia (BC) and largest in the province of Quebec. However, it seems that the variation in this percentage value is not too high across the Canadian provinces and territories. An immediate remark from this comparison would be that the number of interracial marriages between Iranian-Canadians and other ethnic groups in the province of Quebec was higher than the other provinces as of 2001.

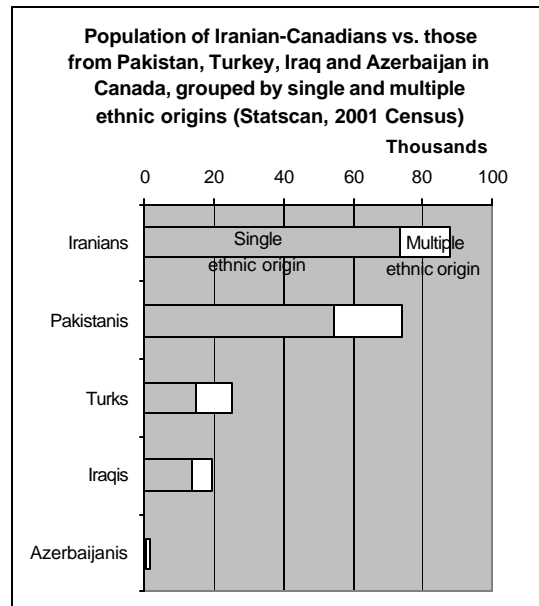


**Figure 12**

*Population vs. other Middle Eastern-Canadians*

Again according to Statistics Canada's 2001 Census [2], the population of Iranian-Canadians is higher than those Canadians originally native to one of Iran's neighboring countries, including Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq

and Azerbaijan. The Iranian-Canadian population is comparable in size to Pakistani-Canadians. This is also the case for Turk-Canadian and Iraqi-Canadian population. The population of Azerbaijani-Canadians is quite low, with the total of 1,445 in all over Canada in 2001 (Figure 13).

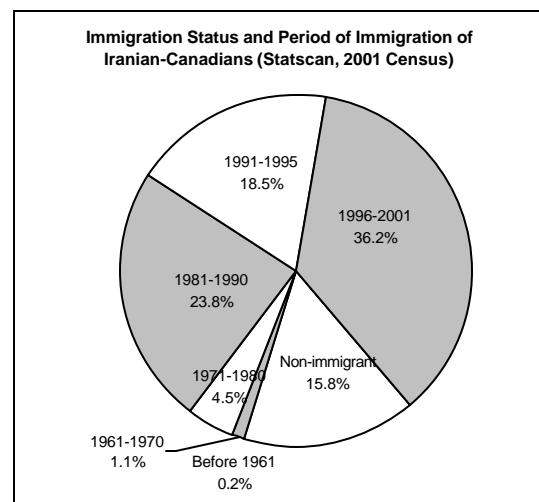


**Figure 13**

**4.2.2 Immigration**

*Immigration Status and Period*

As of the year 2001, a big part of the Iranian-Canadians (35%) had immigrated to Canada in the period of 1996-2001 (Figure 14). Non-immigrants are a substantial part of the population (16%), who are either studying in universities and colleges or working in Canada by work permits (visas).



**Figure 14**

### Age at Immigration to Canada

The highest ratio of Iranian immigrants was in the age group 20-29 when they moved to Canada (Figure 15). Only 3% of Iranian immigrants came to Canada when they were over 60 years old. This group is most probably those who immigrate to Canada because their children live here.

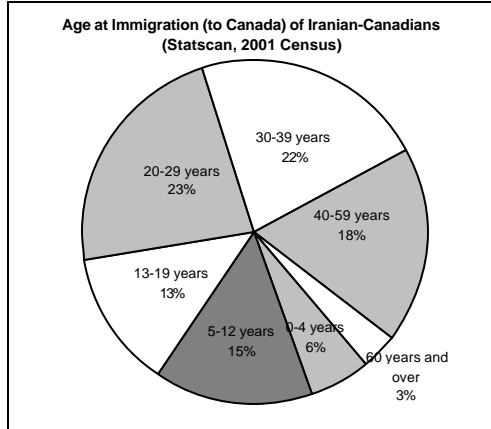


Figure 15

### Net and Relative Immigration Rate

According to CIA's statistics [25], Iran had a modest net migration rate of -0.86 migrants/1,000 population in 2003. Comparison of net migration rate among G8 (Group of the eight major industrial nations), Iran and its neighbors, 2003 data (CIA World Factbook) is shown in Figure 16.

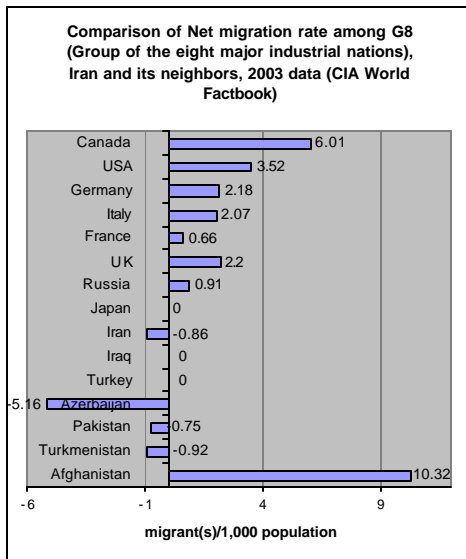


Figure 16

As shown in Figure 16, interestingly Iraq and Turkey had the net migration rate of zero in 2003. Certainly there have been some natives of these two countries migrating from their homelands in 2003, so for sure, there should be some immigrants from other

nations migrating into Iraq and Turkey to bring the net migration rate to the value of zero in 2003.

The case for Afghanistan is somewhat indescribable. Afghanistan has the net migration rate of 10.32 migrants/1,000 population in 2003. In other words, this means that relatively about 10 migrants, for every 1,000 nation population, with foreign citizenships have migrated to Afghanistan in 2003. This is not easily describable with the current crisis and tough situations over there, e.g. Taliban regime, and US attacks. The Republic of Azerbaijan has the highest rate of immigrants among countries shown in Figure 16. The author had a discussion with some of his Azerbaijani friends in Canada and it seems that in the Post-Soviet era (after the Soviet collapse in 1992), many Azerbaijanis have left their home country, heading mostly to Russia. Unofficial numbers indicate that in Russia alone, some two million Azerbaijanis live these days.

Considering G8 (Group of the eight major industrial nations), it is evident that all the G8 countries have positive net migration rates, meaning that more immigrants have settled down in those nations than those that have migrated from them.

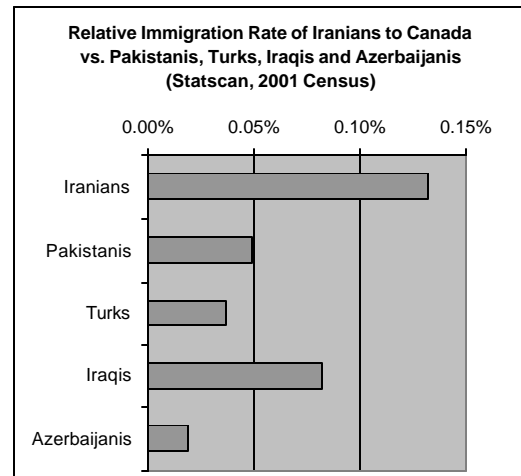


Figure 17

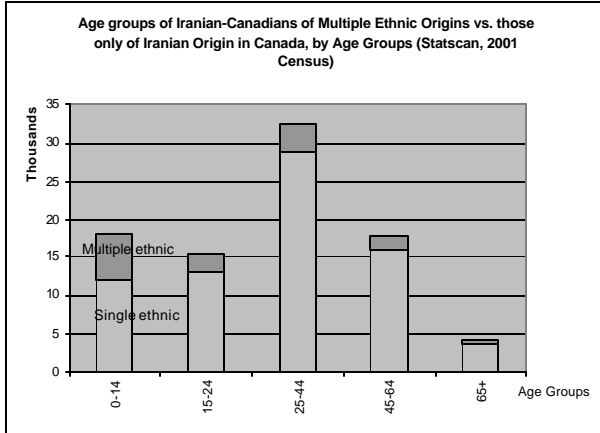
Relative to the country of origin, Iranians show higher interest in immigrating to Canada accumulatively until year 2001 compared to Pakistanis, Turks, Iraqis and Azerbaijanis. If we show the relative immigration rate or interest of a nationality in Canada by the following variable:

$$\text{Relative immigration rate to Canada} = \frac{\text{(Total number of immigrants to Canada)}}{\text{(Total population of the source country)}}$$

, then out of estimated 67,702,000, population of Iran in 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the Census [24]), 88,220 (or 1.3 out of every 1,000) lived in Canada as immigrants in 2001. At the same time, only 1,445 Azerbaijanis, out of 7,734,000 (Azerbaijan's population in 2000) lived in Canada. This comparison is shown in Figure 17.

### 4.2.3 Age Groups

According to the age distribution in Figure 18, the Iranian-Canadian community is a young population. A big part of the population (37%) ages between 25 and 44. This is due to the massive wave of immigration from Iran in the recent years, when mostly Iranian educated youth came to Canada.

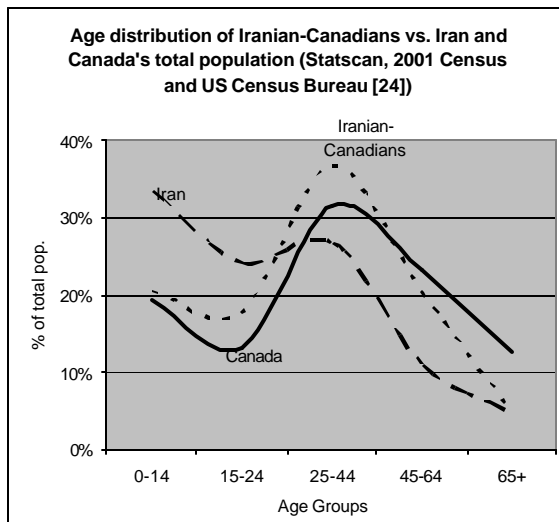


**Figure 18**

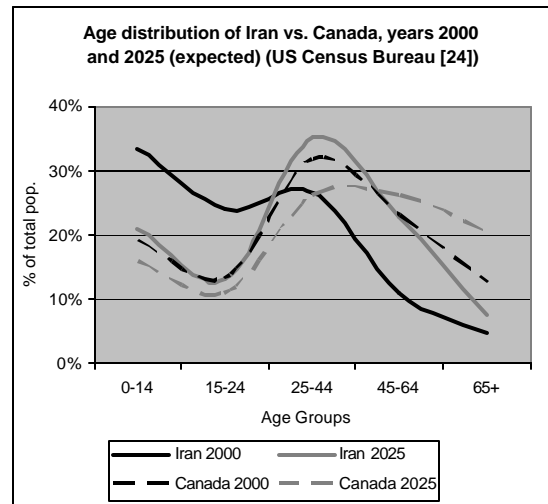
Complying with common sense, most of the individuals with mixed Iranian and non-Iranian origin are in the age group of 0-14. These are the young children that are born after the recent marriages between Iranians and other ethnic groups.

#### Age distribution

The comparison between age distribution of Iranian-Canadians versus that of the total populations of Iran and Canada is shown in Figure 19. It is evident that the Iranian-Canadian population has a similar age distribution to the Canadian population, the former being a little bit younger. However, Iran’s distribution is much “younger” than the two aforementioned ones.



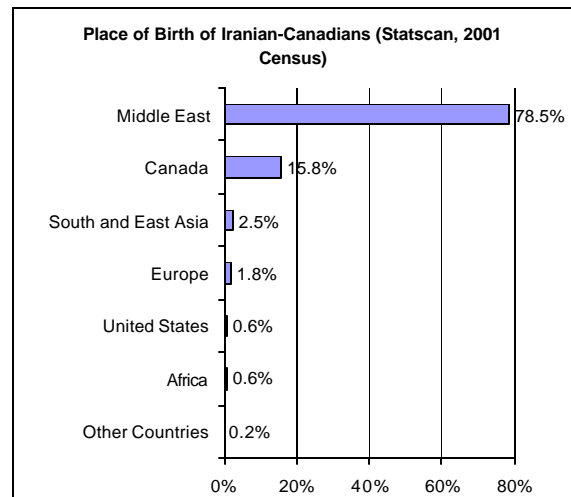
**Figure 19**



**Figure 20**

#### Place of Birth

Most of the Iranian-Canadians are born in the Middle East, which most probably should be Iran (Middle East countries are not distinguished in the Statistics Canada’s 2001 census [2]). After the born-in-Iran group comes the Canadian-born individuals (15.8%). Other places of birth were also reported such as South and East Asia and Africa, which are shown in Figure 21.



**Figure 21**

### 4.2.4 Marital Status and Marriage

Little over half (54%) of Iranian-Canadians were legally married as of 2001 (Figure 22). A considerable percentage (36%) of individuals over 15 years of age was single. Iranian-Canadians male singles (41%) are 12% more than female singles (29%). This might be because of the social/cultural Iranian norms that result in more male migrants from Iran. Another cause for this 12% difference would be the fact that some of Iranian-Canadians male singles in Canada would prefer to stay

single until older ages, but the majority of female singles are culturally and socially willing to get married in their mid-twenties or early thirties. In the other categories, i.e. legally married, separated, divorced and widowed, the ratios are almost equal between males and females.

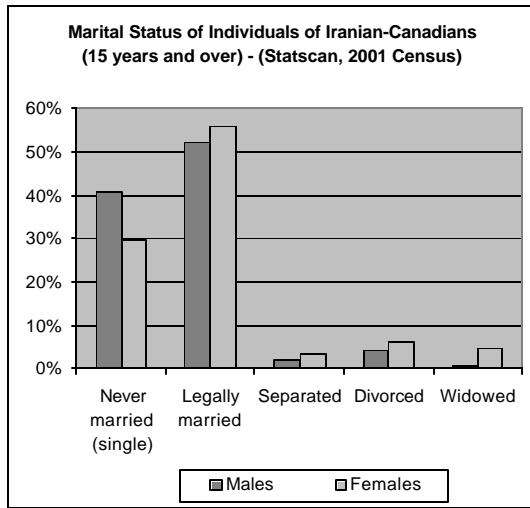


Figure 22

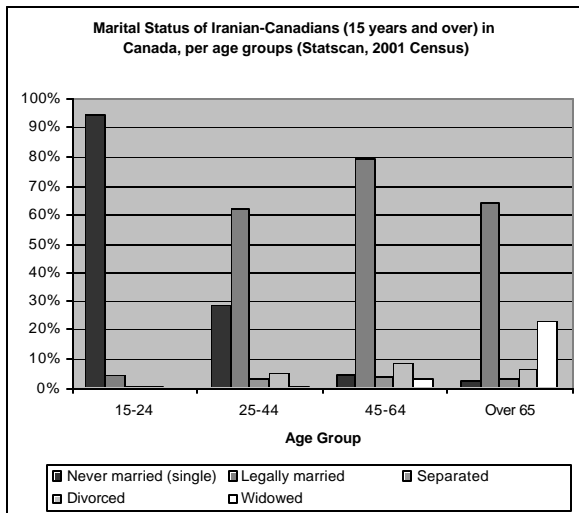


Figure 23

*Marital Status and Age Groups*

Categorized by four age groups (15-24, 25-44, 45-54, over 65), the marital status of Iranian-Canadians is analyzed in Figure 23. The rates conform to common sense as it is noticeable that most of the individuals in the 15-24 age group are single, and are legally married in the higher age groups. While looking at Figure 23, one interesting point is that about 5% of individuals in the age group of 45-54 are still single and have never married. This counts to approximately 835 (5% of 17,910) Iranian-Canadians as of 2001.

*Interracial Marriages*

Only about 8% of married Iranian-Canadians were married to non-Iranian individuals in the period of 1991-2001 (Figure 24). Interestingly, the rate of interracial marriages among Iranian-Canadians has decreased continuously in the last five decades. In the period before 1961, more than half (57%) of the marriages were interracial.

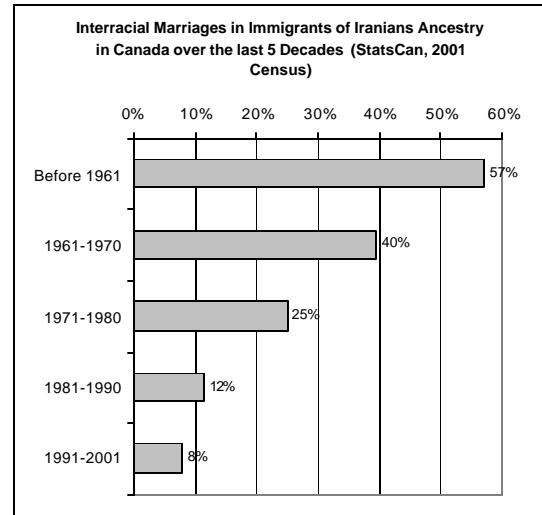


Figure 24

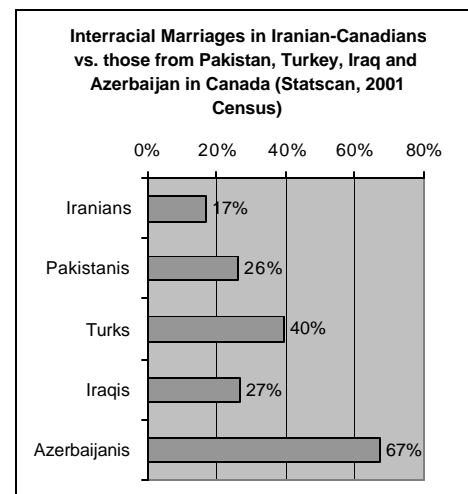


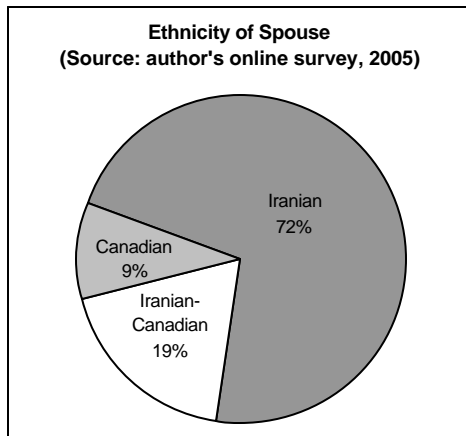
Figure 25

Comparing the percentage of interracial marriages in Iranian-Canadians vs. those from Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq and Azerbaijan in Canada (Figure 25), it is found out that in these days Iranians have the least tendency to marry someone who does not have Iranian background. Pakistani-Canadians and Iraqi-Canadians have some similar behavior, but considering the rate of interracial marriages in Turks-Canadians and Azerbaijani-Canadians, it seems that they are more open to marry with someone from other ethnic groups.



### *Ethnicity of Spouse*

Data from the online survey, conducted by the author, showed that the majority (72%) of Iranian-Canadians are married to Iranians (married in Iran prior to coming to Canada or have gone back to Iran for marriage and then returned to Canada.). The group “Canadian of Iranian ancestry” stands next and finally does the Canadian-spouses group (Figure 26).



**Figure 26**

#### **4.2.5 Family**

According to the author's experience in daily meetings with Iranian-Canadians, all types of individuals from family point of view have immigrated, immigrate and are living in Canada. By all types of individuals, we mean:

- *Singles*, who come to Canada alone and stay single for some time and then either marry an Iranian-Canadians in Canada, or go back to Iran and marry with an Iranian and then they come together to Canada, or marry someone with non-Iranian background. There are not clear statistics to distinguish these categories. However, some idea can be grasped by looking at the single- and multiple-origin responses in Figure 12 and Figure 13, for example. Certainly, multiple-origin responses come as a result of an interracial marriage between an Iranian and non-Iranian.
- *Members of a Family in Iran come altogether to Canada*: These are the families (with or without children) who apply for immigration to Canada (mostly through the Canadian embassy in Damascus, Syria) altogether and get all the qualifications, and move to Canada. They usually sell all or part of their belonging in Iran and transfer the funds to Canada to settle down here.
- *Members of a Family in Iran come to Canada in different phases*: These are the families (with or without children) who apply for immigration to

Canada altogether or individually and move to Canada in different times. For example, in a family of two parents and two children, the father and a son depart to Canada in the first year, but the mother and the daughter should wait (for many reasons including immigration policies or personal) for a while and then leave for Canada.

In the study on real cases, it is found that when either the wife or husband comes abroad while the other spouse is still in Iran, when the time gradually passes, emotional, psychological and family problems start to happen. Studies on this issues and finding possible ways to cope with it are needed.

### *Number of Families*

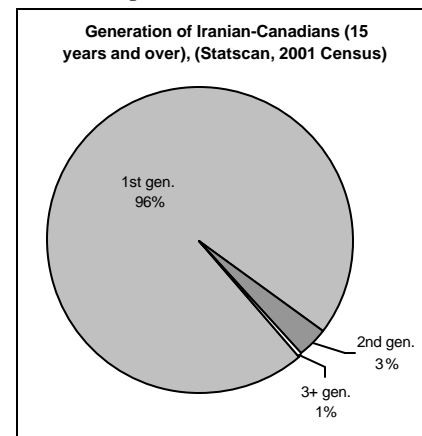
Statistics Canada's 2001 census [2] does not directly report the number of families neither does it report the average number of children per family. We use the following criteria to extract these information from the existing data. The census [2] reports that in 2001, there were 36,610 spouses and 34,790 children in the census families in the Iranian-Canadian population. If we assume that each two spouses (a husband and a wife) constitute a family, then we can say that the number of families will be equal to 18,305 (36,610/2).

### *Average Number of Children per Family*

As reported by the 2001 census [2], having totally 34,790 children, we can conclude that the average number of children per family should be around two (34,790 divided by 18,305 approximately yields 1.9).

### *Generations*

The high majority (96%) of the Iranian-Canadian community are the first generation (Figure 27). Interesting point is that about 1% are the third generation and over. It shows that their grandparents immigrated from Iran to Canada decades ago and confirms the long history of Iranians' presence in Canada.



**Figure 27**

### 4.2.6 Language

#### Knowledge of one or both of the Official Languages (English and French)

Statistics Canada’s 2001 census [2] indicates that a small percentage can not speak any of the official languages (Figure 28). In terms of numbers, 6% of Iranian-Canadian inhabitants in the province of Quebec and 5% overall in Canada are able to converse in neither English nor French. Since Quebec is a French-speaking province, therefore the ratio of French speakers in Quebec is higher than the overall ratio, and vice versa for English.

To the knowledge of the author, no other family-related statistics were publicly available from the Statistics Canada’s 2001 census [2]. Other studies related to family issues in the Iranian-Canadian community are needed.

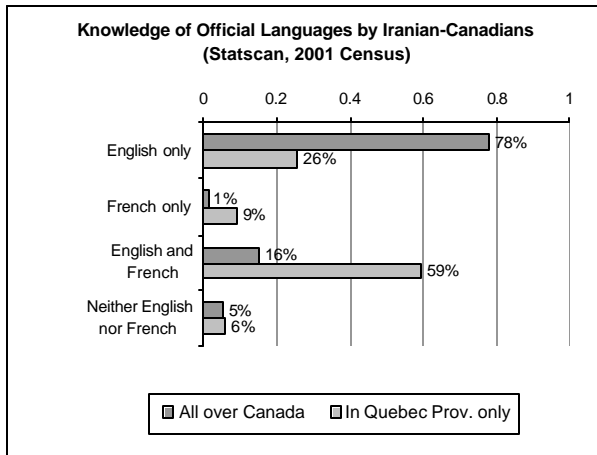


Figure 28

#### Languages at Home

Statistics [2] indicate that Farsi or other Iranian ethnic languages are the most spoken languages at home of most Iranian-Canadians. Farsi or other Iranian ethnic languages are used in 60.3% of the families (Figure 29), while English (alone) has the second rank with 31.6%. About 5% of the families use both English and Iranian languages at home. Studies to investigate the use of ethnic language (like Azeri or Kurdish) vs. Farsi at homes, or comparison of use of the ethnic language by the parents vs. the children will be interesting.

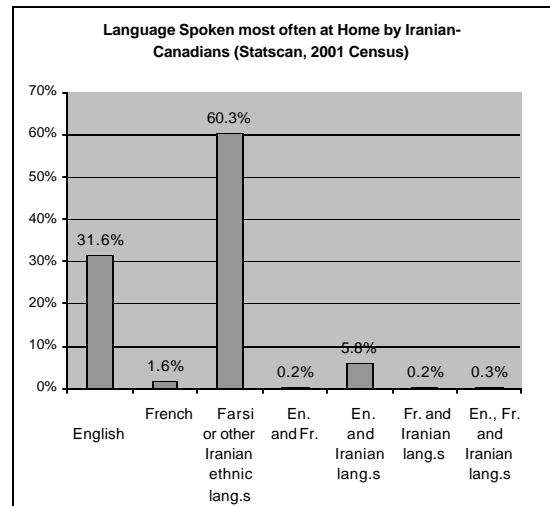


Figure 29

### 4.2.7 Ethnic Backgrounds

Statistics Canada’s 2001 census [2] does not provide any information about the ethnic backgrounds of Iranian-Canadians, meaning which Iranian ethnic group (such as Azeri, Kurdish, Arabs and etc.) they belong to. The author conducted an online survey on the Iranian-Canadian community in order to investigate this and some other issues related to the topic. In the sample population of 427 responses to the survey, 46% were Persian, 41% Azeri and the other 13% were shared by Kurdish, Lor, Gilak, Arab, Baluch, Turkmen and other Iranian ethnic groups (Figure 30). It seems that this ratio is more or less in conformance with the percentage of ethnic groups inside Iran [25]. The comparison is also shown in Figure 30.

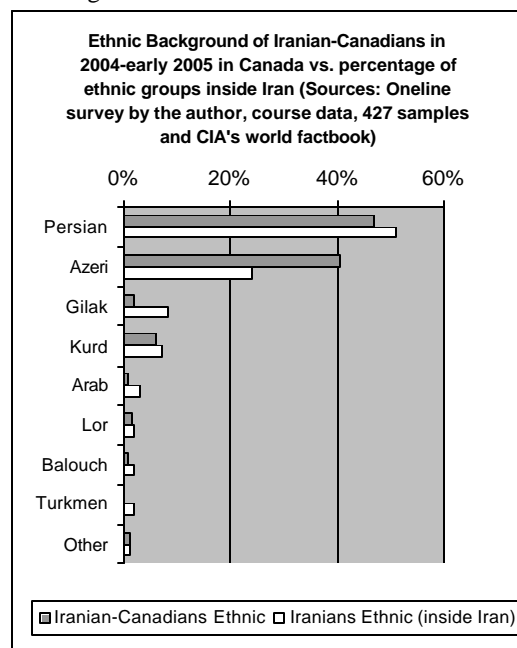
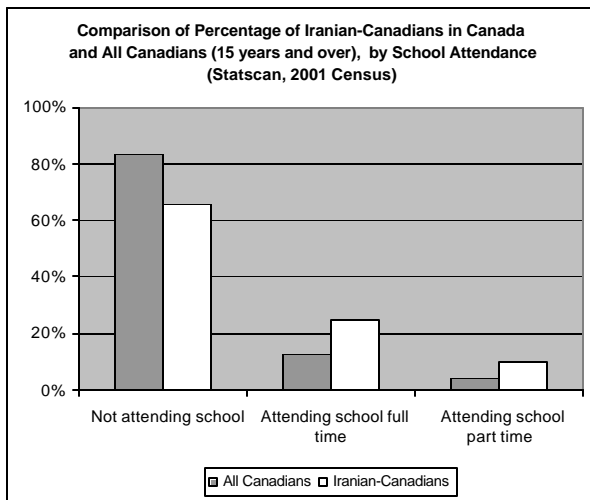


Figure 30

Personal experience and discussions with friends confirm that most of the Iranian-Canadians would prefer to spend time and interact with people with the same ethnic groups in cultural and social activities. In some bigger cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal, Iranians from different ethnic groups have their own communities with regular events and even some with their own TV and radio program. For instance, Iranian-Azeris have a weekly one-hour radio program, called Radio OdlarYurdu, meaning “the land of fires”, which goes on the air in the Vancouver area. The radio can also be listened to online in the internet at: [www.radioodlaryurdu.com](http://www.radioodlaryurdu.com).

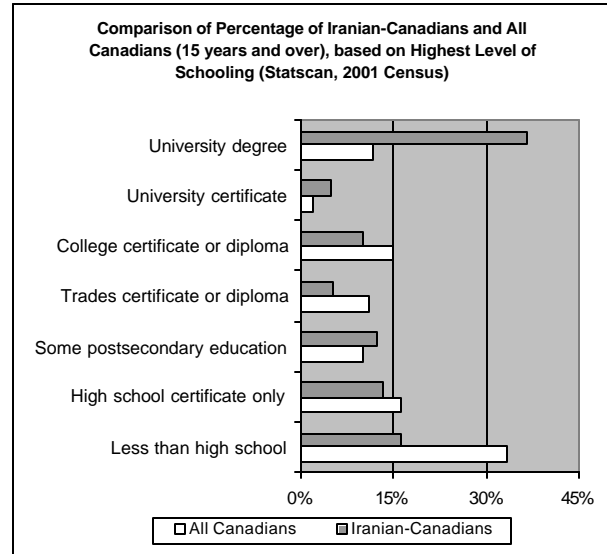
### 4.3 Education

Statistics Canada’s 2001 census [2] indicates that the Iranian-Canadian community is relatively more educated than typical Canadians (Figure 31-Figure 33). Figure 31 shows the comparison of percentage of Iranian-Canadians and all Canadians (15 years and over), based on the school attendance. The statistics show that 35% of all Iranian-Canadians over the age of 15 attended school or university, either part-time or full-time in 2001, compared to only 16% of all Canadians, at the same time.

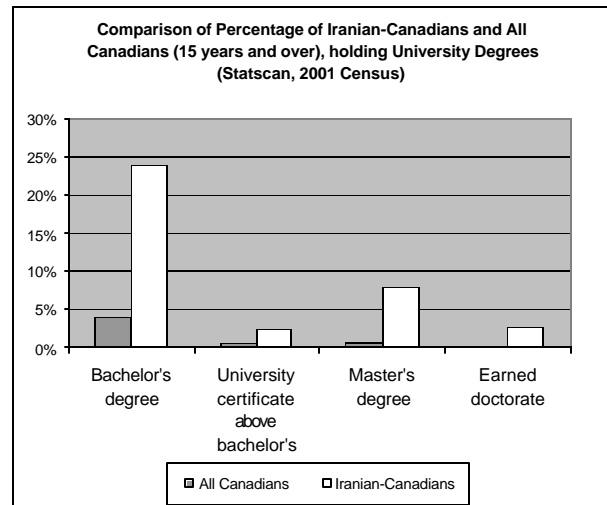


**Figure 31**

Figure 32 compares the Iranian-Canadians vs. all Canadians based on highest level of schooling (degree). It is evident from Figure 32 that about 37% of all Iranian-Canadians over the age of 15 hold a university degree, while only 12% of all Canadians have a university degree.



**Figure 32**



**Figure 33**

Figure 33 gives a comparison of Iranian-Canadians vs. all Canadians, based on the university degree level. According to Figure 33, about 24% and 3% of Iranian-Canadians have a bachelor’s and doctorate degrees, compared to only 4% and 0.1% in all Canadians, respectively. This amounts to 6 and 30 times in bachelor’s and doctorate degrees respectively, to the advantage of Iranian-Canadians.

### Major Field of Study

Comparing the percentage of Iranian-Canadians vs. all Canadians (15 years and over), by major field of study according to Statistics Canada’s 2001 Census [2], as it is depicted in Figure 34, it is visible that the two populations are quite similar. The main differences are in the ‘No postsecondary qualifications’ (Iranian-Canadians: 42%, all Canadians: 59%) Engineering and

applied sciences (Iranian-Canadians: %11, all Canadians: %1.2) and Mathematics, computer and related areas (Iranian-Canadians: %6.3, all Canadians: %1.1) categories. This indicates that Iranian-Canadians relatively possess more postsecondary qualifications than normal Canadians and also that percentage of Iranian-Canadians having education in engineering, mathematics and computer science degrees are more than that of the normal Canadian population.

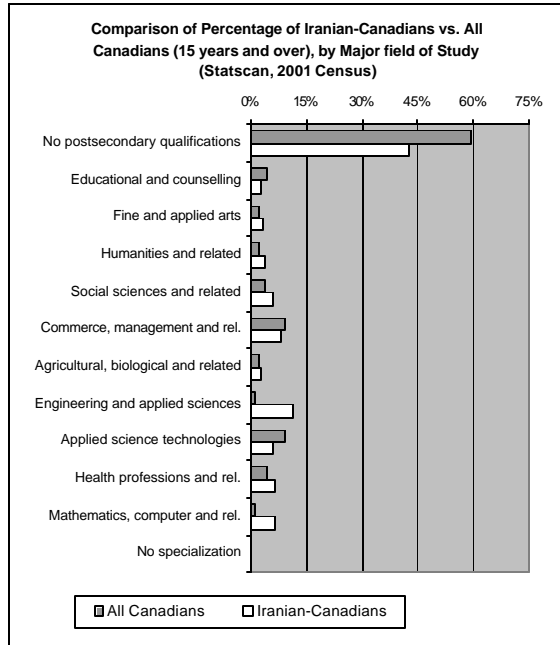


Figure 34

#### 4.4 Employment

Partly due to being relatively new to Canada, the percentage of Iranian-Canadians (aged 15 and over) without jobs in 2001 was higher than all Canadians' ratio. As Figure 35 shows, 34% of Iranian-Canadians did not work in 2001 versus 29% all Canadians. 37% of all Canadians had full-time jobs, while only 28% of Iranian-Canadians worked full-time in 2001.

Experience has shown that one of the interesting points to study on the employment aspects of the immigrant population in almost every immigrant receiving country is that quite a large percentage of the immigrants mostly can not find suitable jobs in their own profession especially at the first several years of their arrival. Therefore, for basic survival needs, they tend to find low level jobs in the areas other than their own field of profession. The author has had discussions with his friends in Canada about this issue and has himself observed and met some immigrants with Iranian and non-Iranian origins, working in areas non-related to their own profession and degree, even after several years of being in Canada. To the knowledge of the author, there are no public statistics on this issue about the immigrants

in Canada. This is one of the open issues to be studied by future works.

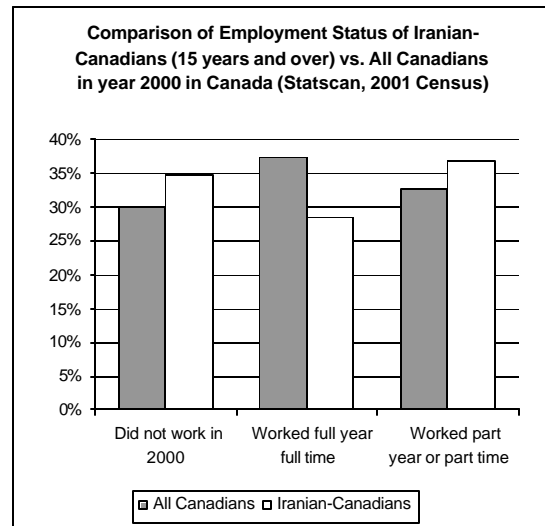


Figure 35

#### 4.5 Income

Similar to the case of employment in Section 4.4, partly because of being new to Canada, the percentage of Iranian-Canadians (aged 15 and over) without income (11%) in 2001 were more than all Canadians' ratio (5%). Looking more closely at the different income groups in Figure 36 and comparing the distribution of the Iranian-Canadian and all-Canadians histograms, it is evident that the Iranian-Canadian histogram tends to be heading towards the low-income extreme (bottom) while the all-Canadians one is pointing more towards high-income direction (up). This is more visible in Figure 37.

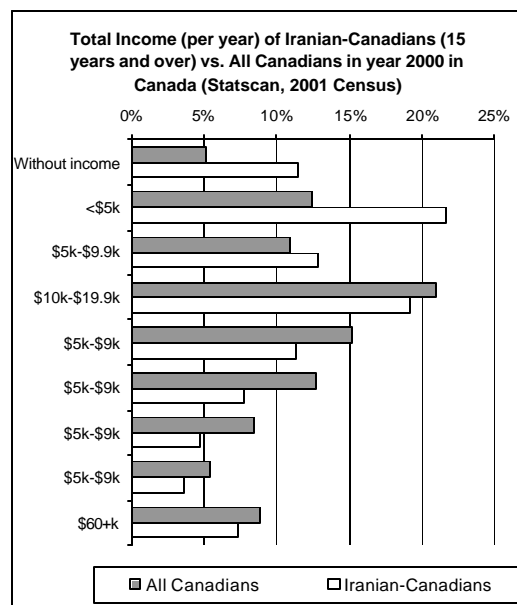
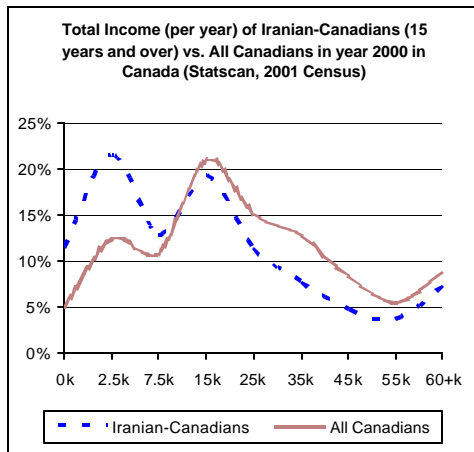
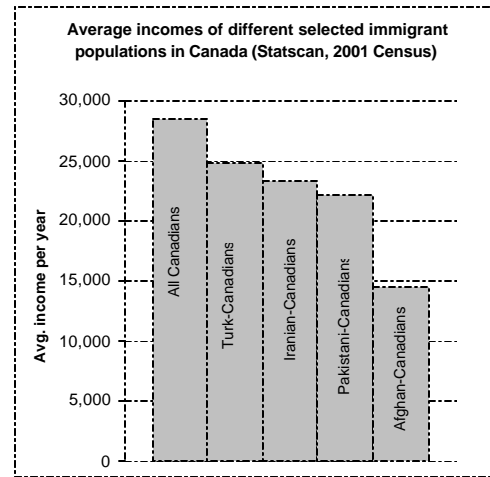


Figure 36



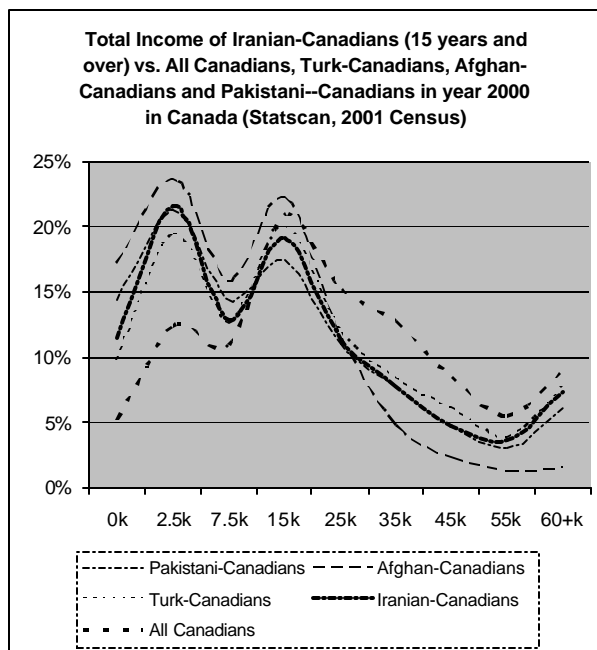
**Figure 37**



**Figure 39**

*Income vs. other Middle Eastern-Canadians*

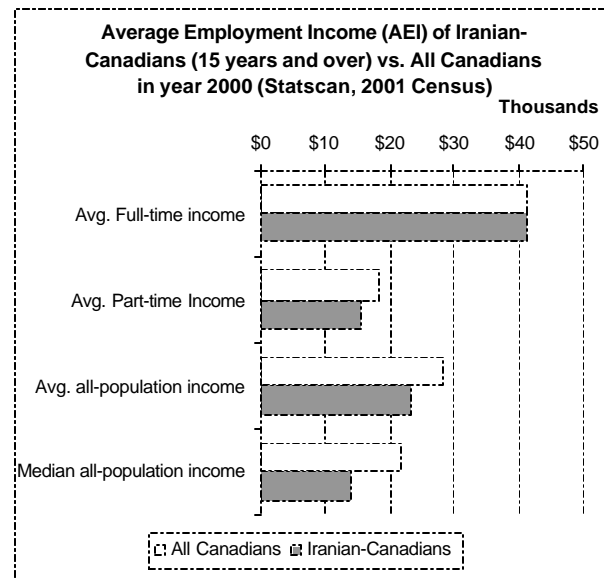
By comparing the income histogram of Iranian-Turkish-, Pakistani-, Afghan- and all Canadians in Figure 38, it is evident that almost all immigrant populations (except Afghan-Canadians) have roughly the same distribution in the income levels. Remarkably, Afghan-Canadians seem to have lower average in the income levels. The average income among each of the aforementioned immigrant communities are shown as in **Error! Reference source not found.** As mentioned, the Afghan-Canadian group has the lowest average of pay per annum. Then, in the increasing order, Pakistani-, Iranian-, Turkish-, and all Canadians stand.



**Figure 38**

*Average Employed- and All-Population Income*

Interestingly, it is observable that the average annual income for full-time employed Iranian-Canadians and average Canadians are roughly equal, \$41,281 and \$41,226 respectively, in 2001 (as shown in Figure 40).



**Figure 40**

This might be an indicator of the fact that Canada is, in large, an employment equity employer [26], or in simple saying meaning that all Canadian have the chance/right to have same level of income no matter what their backgrounds and ethnic groups are. Again according to Figure 40, it seems that that the part-time Iranian-Canadians employees received (\$15,596) a bit less income than their average Canadian peers (\$18,204). Note that the mentioned numbers are only for employed individuals and does not include unemployed persons in the average calculation.

Two last two categories in Figure 40, meaning average and median all-population income, are the

average and median statistical values for ALL the two populations, i.e. including unemployed and low-income people. For instance, the average income of all Iranian-Canadian population in 2001 was \$23,344 while the average income of full-time employed Iranian-Canadians was \$41,281.

**Incidence of Low Income**

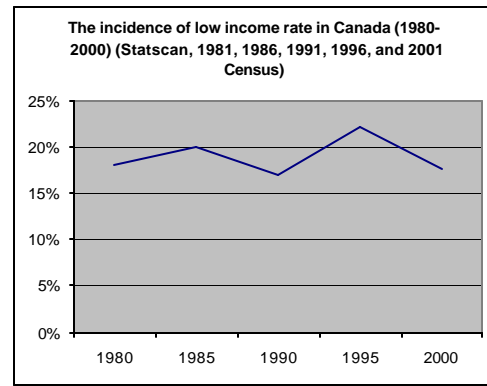
Low Income Rate (LIR) in Canada is defined as: “Proportion of persons in economic families and unattached individuals with incomes below the Statistics Canada low-income cut-off (LICO). The cut-offs represent levels of income where people spend disproportionate amounts of money for food, shelter, and clothing. LICOs are based on family size and degree of urbanization; cut-offs are updated to account for changes in the consumer price index.” [27]

Low-Income cutoffs (LICO) depend on family size since larger families need more income to meet their needs. The cutoffs also take into account the varying costs by community size. In 2002, a family of four living in a city with a population of half a million or more would be counted as low income if the total of the after-tax income for all family members fell below the cutoff of \$30,576. For the same family living in a rural area, the cutoff was \$20,047.

Figure 41 is comparing the incidence of low income rate in Iranian-Canadians vs. all Canadians in 2001 (according to Statscan, 2001 Census [2]). It is evident that Iranian-Canadians families and unattached individuals (15 years and over) have a substantially high low income rate of 34% vs. 11% in all Canadians and 55% vs. 39% in all Canadians, respectively.

**Brief Analysis of Incidence of Low Income in Canada**

According to [29], low-income rates within Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) were higher among certain groups, making them disproportionately represented among the low-income population.

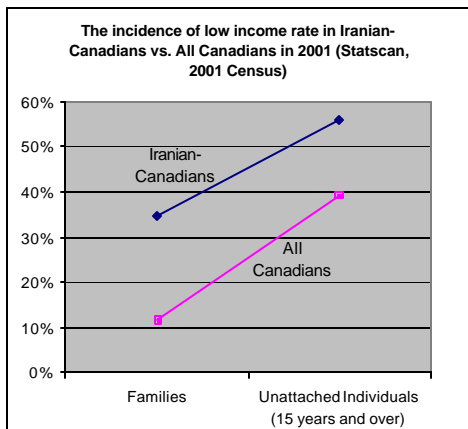


**Figure 42**

Recent immigrants in CMAs had an estimated low-income rate of 35% in 2000, nearly twice the rate in CMAs overall. Their low-income rate rose over the 1980 to 2000 period, from 23% in 1980 to 35% in 2000. This increase was observed in all CMAs with a large population of recent immigrants.

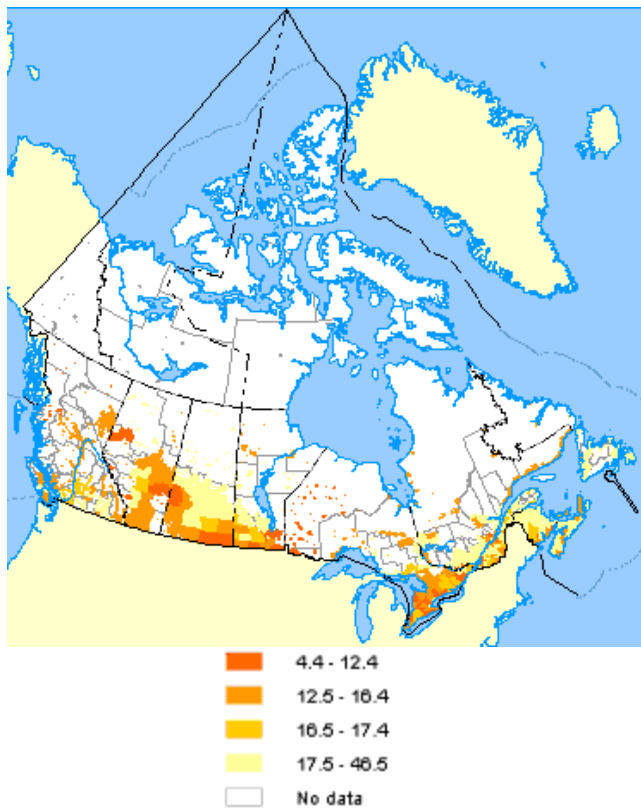
In some large CMAs, rising low income in the 1990s was concentrated among recent immigrants. In Toronto, where the low-income rate rose by 1.8 percentage points between 1990 and 2000, the low income rate among recent immigrants rose by 4.6 points from 28.2% to 32.8% during the same period. In contrast, the low-income rate among the remainder of Toronto’s population was virtually unchanged.

Aboriginal people and lone-parent families also displayed much higher than average low-income rates in CMAs. In 2000, approximately 42% of Aboriginal people living in CMAs were in low income, more than double the national average for CMAs. The low-income rate for people living in lone-parent families was 47% in 2000, compared with 15% among people in other types of families. However, low-income rates among lone-parent families did decline significantly over the 1980 to 2000 period. Incidence of low income in Canada and the enlarged section for the Ontario are shown in Figure 43 and Figure 44, respectively.

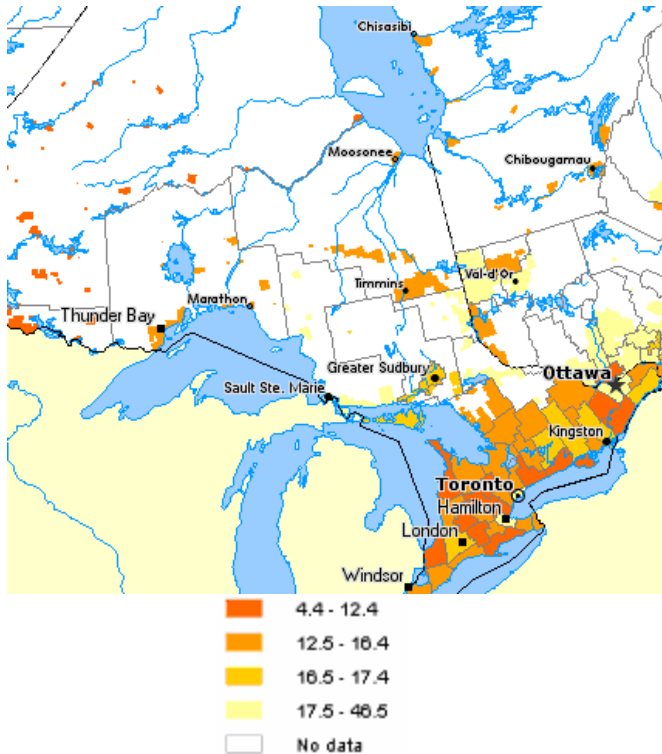


**Figure 41**





**Figure 43. Incidence of Low Income Cut-Off %, in Canada (1995) [28]**



**Figure 44. Incidence of Low Income Cut-Off %, in the Province of Ontario, Canada (1995) [28]**

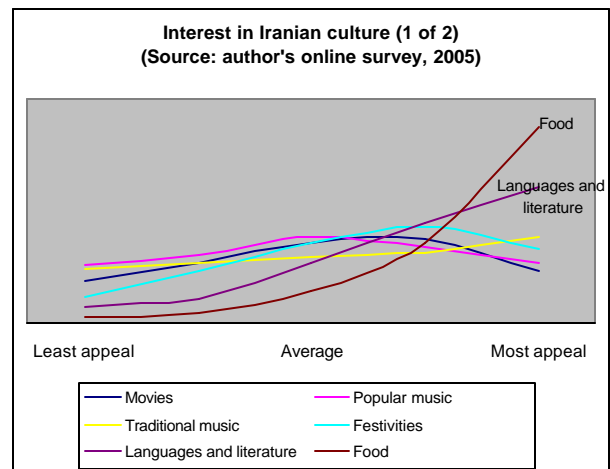
### 4.6 Ties with the Home Country (Iran)

Experience has shown that most of the immigrants in Canada, and among them Iranian-Canadians, keep strong ties to their home country after coming to Canada. In the following sections, we are going to study the aspects of tie with the home country among Iranian-Canadians in these categories:

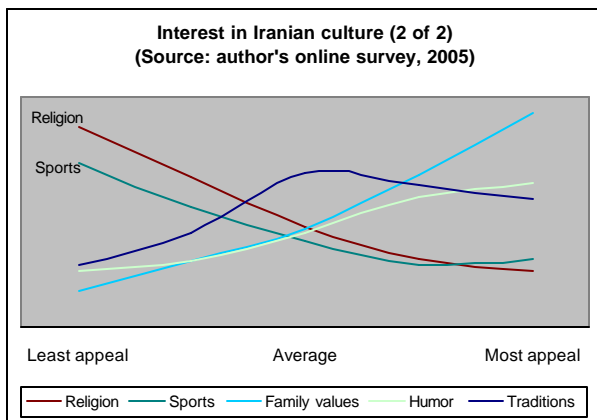
- Interest in the home culture
- Preserving the home culture
- Number of visits to Iran
- Contributions to charities in Iran
- Identity in Canada
- Following news related to Iran
- Interest in investment in Iran

#### 4.6.1 Interest in the Home Culture

Data from the online survey<sup>1</sup>, conducted by the author, showed that the majority of Iranian-Canadians are culturally most interested in the Iranian languages, literature and foods (Figure 45). Survey participants showed marginally above average interests in other cultural subjects in the survey, naming movies, popular music, traditional music, festivities, family values, humor and traditions. Religion and sports gained the lowest interest.



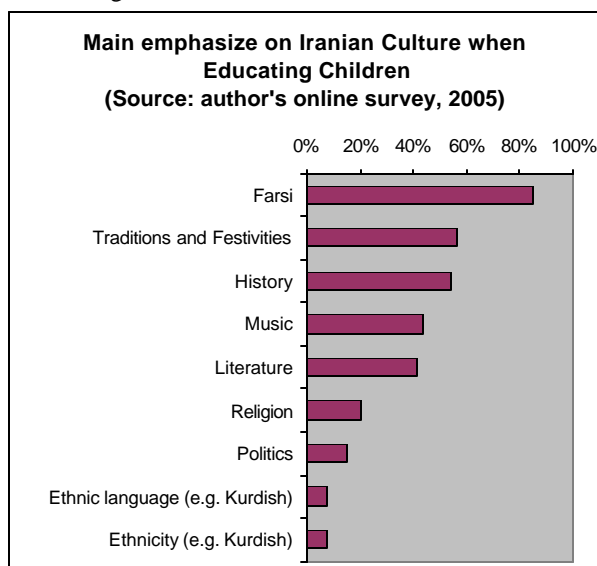
<sup>1</sup> <http://sql-05.sce.carleton.ca/~vahid/irca2005survey>



**Figure 45**

**4.6.2 Preserving the Home Culture**

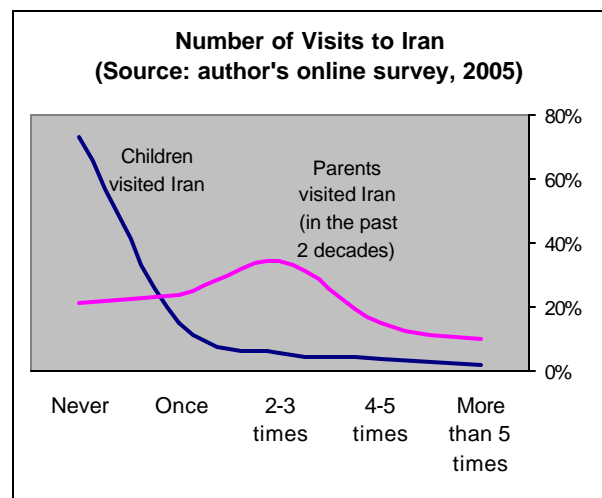
High majority (85%) of the survey participants indicated that Farsi is one of their main emphases when educating their children, and in this way preserving their home culture. Other categories are shown in descending order in Figure 46.



**Figure 46**

**4.6.3 Number of Visits to Iran**

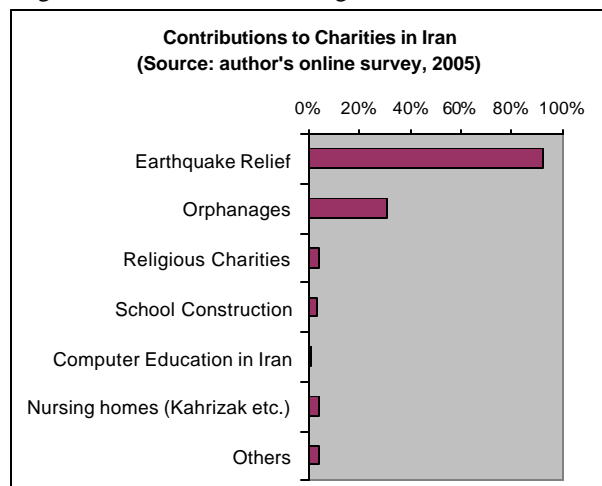
An interesting interpretation can be derived from Figure 47, which shows the number of visits back to Iran by Iranian-Canadians, in two categories: parents (1<sup>st</sup> generation) and children (2<sup>nd</sup> generation). As shown, most of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation Iranian-Canadians have visited Iran two or three times in the last two decades, while most of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generations haven't had any visit to Iran in the same period. This shows the stronger feeling of connection to the roots and the home country in the 1<sup>st</sup> generation than the 2<sup>nd</sup> and the rest.



**Figure 47**

**4.6.4 Contributions to Charities in Iran**

A considerable percentage (68%) of the participants in the survey reported that they have donated contributions (at least once) to charities in Iran (Figure 48). Most of these contributions were made towards earthquake relief funds in Iran, which most probably have been towards the last two devastating earthquakes in Iran, i.e. Bam in 2003 and Roudbar in 1995. Other contributions have been for charities such as orphans and religious works, as shown in Figure 48.



**Figure 48**

**4.6.5 Identity in Canada**

Survey data indicated that when being asked about the ethnicity, most of Iranian-Canadians introduce themselves as "Iranians", among other terms as Persian, Iranian-Canadian, "depends on the situation", Persian-Canadian, and Canadian categories (Figure 49).

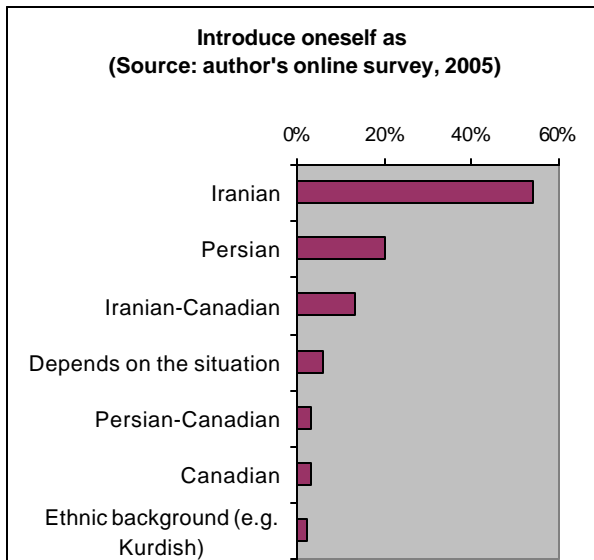


Figure 49

#### 4.6.6 Following News related to Iran

It seems that not a very high ratio of Iranian immigrants in Canada follows news related to Iran. This can be extracted from Figure 50 in a way that none of the data series in the figure have a high value in either of the “Usually” or “Frequently” categories. The most popular media are the Iranian expatriate websites (meaning those owned and operated outside Iran). These websites include but are not limited to Gooya.com, Payvand.com, and Iranian.com. Iranian expatriate satellite TV stations (mostly those from California) seem to be the least popular sources for news among those Iranian-Canadians who do follow Iran’s news. Interestingly, Canadian news sources (like CBC – Canadian Broadcasting Corporation- and CTV – Canadian TeleVision) are *slightly more* popular to get news about Iran than US media (like CNN - Cable News Network, Fox, New York Times) and also news sources from inside Iran (like IRNA – Islamic Republic New Agency, IRIB - Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, Ettela’at, Hamshahri and many others).

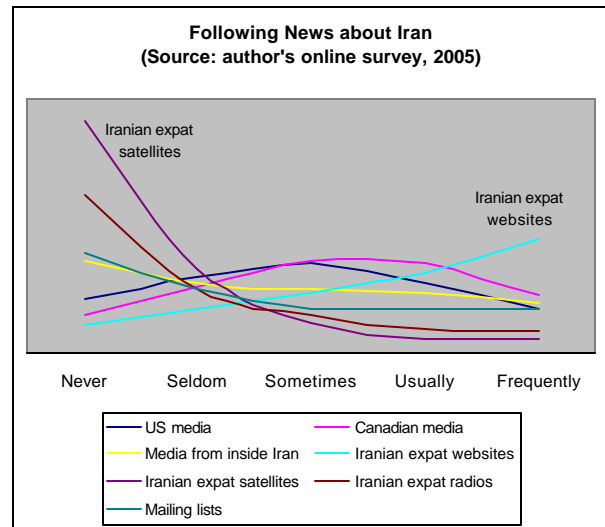


Figure 50

#### 4.6.7 Interest in Investment in Iran

Participants in the survey reported that “favorable political and economic developments”, and “improved asset and human security” are among the most important factors that might encourage them to consider investments in Iran (Figure 51). The factor of “Removal of US sanctions against Iran” did not end up to be an important factor on this decision, although it was initially assumed to be so by the author.

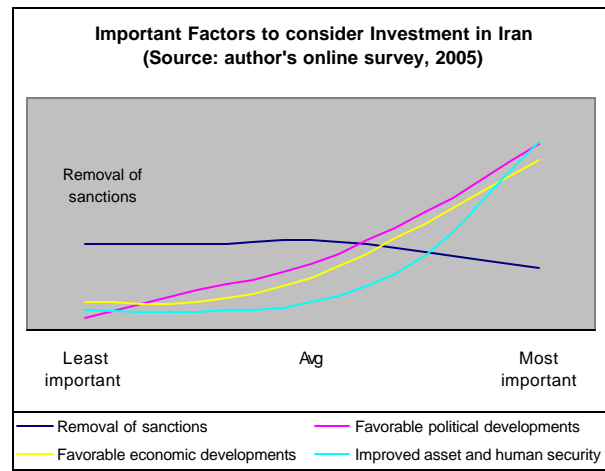
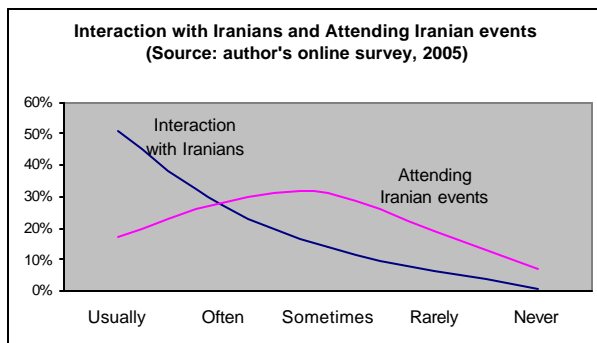


Figure 51

#### 4.7 Intra-social Relations in the Iranian Community

As shown in Figure 52, the survey gave the judgment that most of the Iranian immigrants have frequent interactions with other Iranians. However, with respect to Iranian events (social, cultural, religious or etc.) held in the local communities and neighborhoods, the attendance level decreases to “sometimes”, or the distribution is more around the average, according to the X-axis of Figure 52.



**Figure 52**

## 5 Some Experience-Based Notes

In the following, we briefly present some experience-based notes discussing the problems related to the Iranian-Canadians, the causes to the problems, and some of the strengths/capacities of the Iranian-Canadians that should be better utilized by the Canadian society.

### 5.1 Problems

- Unemployment and underemployment
- Under utilization of the Iranian professionals
- Inadequate language training for newcomers
- Insufficient accessibility to information, training and services
- Cultural differences with the host country
- Family conflict
- Intergenerational gap
- Insufficient social and emotional support for seniors
- Insufficient community co-operation

### 5.2 Causes of Problems

- Lack of recognition of non-Canadian credentials
- Under utilization of Iranian professionals
- Absence of adequate emotional support
- Disturbance in family relationships
- Inadequate access to services and information
- Inadequate orientation and language training for newcomers
- Low self-esteem
- Peer pressure (youth)
- Systemic racism
- Financial shortcoming
- Conflicting cultural values
- Ineffective immigration policies and negative attitude and treatment of refugees
- Lack of resources to train competent interpreters/translators for refugees
- Inadequate facilities for seniors
- The government's lack of commitment to multiculturalism

## 5.3 Strengths/Capacities of the Iranian-Canadians

- High level of education
- Tenacity, flexibility, and adaptability
- Willingness to learn
- Self-reliance and hard work
- Secular community and vibrant culture
- Strong Family ties
- Existence of many Iranian Professional associations
- The ability to analyze and solve problems
- The ability to seek help
- Cooperation and goodwill toward the host country

## 6 Conclusions

This work was one of the possible continuations of the previous study by the author [1]. It can be regarded as the next step in the road of immigration, in a way that, we studied the Iranian-Canadian community. We analyzed the statistics showing statistically what happens to most Iranians after they decided to immigrate from Iran and come to Canada. We discussed what the demographic features of the Iranian-Canadian community are. The addressed demographic features, included population, immigration status and characteristics of immigrations, age groups, marital status and marriages, family conditions, language and ethnic background of Iranian-Canadians who live in Canada. There were also some discussions and findings on comparing some of the social/cultural aspects of the Iranian-Canadian community versus typical Canadians and also Canadians with other Middle Eastern backgrounds such as: Pakistanis, Turks, Iraqis, Afghanis and Azerbaijanis.

The author hopes this data clarifies the illusion on the reality seen by Iranians prior to their immigration to foreign countries and Canada, in particular. He further hopes that this data and analysis help the decision makers, both in Canada and Iran, and also Iranian associations, groups and societies in Iran and in Canada to better analyze and solve the social, cultural, and psychological shortcomings and problems of the Iranian-Canadian community.

## 7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the individuals from the Iranian-Canadian community who accepted his invitation to take part in the online survey.

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Vahid Garousi was born in 1978 in Miyaneh, Azerbaijan, Iran. He received his BSc degree in Software Engineering from the Department of Computer Engineering at Sharif University of Technology, Tehran, Iran in 2000. After graduation, he worked for one year in software companies in Tehran as Software Architect and Database Analyst. He then left Iran for Canada in 2001. He got his MASc degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Canada in 2003. He is currently a PhD candidate in the area of Software Quality Engineering at the Department of Systems and Computer Engineering in Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. He is expecting to finish his PhD by 2006. Among his awards is the rank 61<sup>st</sup> in Iranian Nation-wide University Entrance Competition (Konkoor) among about 490,000 students from all over the country in year 1996.

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