

**BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT AND UTILIZATION OF
HIGHLY SKILLED IRANIANS IN GREATER
VANCOUVER REGIONAL DISTRICT**

by

Leyla Nouhi
B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2004

PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY

In the
Faculty
of
Arts and Social Sciences

© Leyla Nouhi, 2007

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

2007

All rights reserved. This work may not be
reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy
or other means, without permission of the author.



**SIMON FRASER
UNIVERSITY** library

STATEMENT OF ETHICS APPROVAL

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

(a) Human research ethics approval from the Simon Fraser University Office of Research Ethics,

or

(b) Advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University;

or has conducted the research

(c) as a co-investigator, in a research project approved in advance,

or

(d) as a member of a course approved in advance for minimal risk human research, by the Office of Research Ethics.

A copy of the approval letter has been filed at the Theses Office of the University Library at the time of submission of this thesis or project.

The original application for approval and letter of approval are filed with the relevant offices. Inquiries may be directed to those authorities.

Simon Fraser University Library
Burnaby, BC, Canada

Abstract

To investigate barriers to employment and utilization of highly skilled Iranians in Greater Vancouver Regional District, I conducted a survey where the majority of respondents cited lack of Canadian work experience, lack of networking, lack of credential recognition, and lack of available jobs as their main obstacles to finding employment in their area of training. A large percentage of respondents did not obtain any information about the Canadian labour market prior to immigration. Of those who did so, most considered the information they accessed only 'somewhat helpful'. The objective of this study is to propose methods that will help smooth the transition of skilled Iranian-born immigrants and improve their integration into the labour market. Proposed alternatives to the status quo include the provision of mandatory information sessions prior to immigration, streamlining credential assessment, and developing internship programs to help skilled immigrants gain their first Canadian work experience.

Executive Summary

This study looks at barriers to employment and utilization of highly skilled Iranians in Greater Vancouver District (GVRD). Compared to other immigrant groups, Iranians are relative newcomers in Canada. Immigrated Iranians in Canada are highly skilled with relatively high levels of education. However, they do not score high when it comes to employment. In 2000, only 28 percent of Iranian-born individuals worked full time (Garousi, 2005). Furthermore, according to the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada, six months after their arrival, only 27 percent of immigrants from Iran were employed and the unemployment rate was 53 percent, well above average of 37 percent for the Asia and the Middle East region (Statistics Canada, 2005c).

To investigate main barriers to employment of skilled Iranian-born immigrants in the GVRD, I designed an individual questionnaire and made it available on-line on a secure website between November 2006 and January 2007. I collected the data non-randomly by sending an email to an undisclosed recipient list of 53 Iranian friends and family living in the GVRD. I also used the 2001 census to draw a picture of the Iranian-born population living in Canada. The email contained a cover letter that described the purpose of the study, the website address for the study, and a password to access the questionnaire. I kindly asked individuals to participate in the survey and to pass the email to an undisclosed recipient list of their friends and family living in the GVRD, (increasing the survey base in this way).

The focus of the survey is permanent residents and Canadian citizens. Out of the 208 participants that returned the survey, 5 surveys were excluded because 4 participants held student visas and one held a temporary work permit. Consequently, I base my analysis on 203 returned surveys using frequency distributions and cross-tabulations. Even though I looked at responses from all participants in the survey, I was particularly interested in skilled immigrants. For the purposes of my analysis, I define skilled immigrants as those who have completed tertiary education (i.e. Bachelors Degree, Masters Degree or PhD). Following is a summary of key findings from my survey:

- In terms of occupations prior to immigration, engineers dominate this sample. Approximately 51 percent of the skilled participants are between ages of 21 and 35. The next

largest group are those between 41 and 50 (15.4 percent). The majority of the skilled immigrants (77.2 percent) qualify as Economic Class immigrants and 17.3 percent are Family Class immigrants; approximately 82 percent arrived in Canada since 1996. About 60 percent of participants state they are highly proficient in English, where they can communicate effectively in most community and work place situations; 34 percent of participants claim they are moderately proficient in English where they can speak, listen to, and read the language well. Altogether, these skilled immigrants have great potential to contribute to the Canadian economy. However, 57.4 percent of these skilled immigrants have not found employment in their area of training.

- Skilled Iranians lack accurate and reliable information regarding Canadian labour market prior to immigration.
- The main barriers to employment for skilled immigrants in scale of importance from highest to lowest are: lack of Canadian work experience, lack of networking, and lack of foreign credential recognition. These findings are consistent with literature review. Perceived barriers to employment for skilled Iranian immigrants have steadily increased over time.
- Those who migrated more recently seem to face more labour market difficulties than previously, particularly recent Iranian immigrants who have never worked in Canada.

Building on my survey findings and the literature, I developed three policy alternatives to address barriers to employment and utilization of highly skilled Iranians in GVRD. I assessed the appropriateness of each alternative using four criteria of effectiveness: public acceptance, political commitment, institutional coordination, and implementation cost. Evaluation of the policy alternatives leads to the following recommendations:

- Provide mandatory information sessions for skilled Iranian immigrants in Iran about labour markets, regulated professions, licensing process, credential assessment process, and the required documentation, professional associations, language proficiency, support agencies, along with networking tips on how to get connected with potential employers.
- Restructure and reorganize foreign credential assessment.
- Develop a national framework for foreign credential recognition by adopting common standards and procedures.
- Develop a common updated data bank of universities and colleges abroad to determine Canadian equivalencies.

- Promote existing credential recognition services to raise employer awareness about available services.

Dedication

This capstone is dedicated to Mahdad for all his love, patience, and support. I would have not been able to do it without you.

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Dr. Dominique Gross for your guidance, support, dedication, and feedback throughout this process. I would also like to thank Dr. Nancy Olewiler for encouraging me to apply to this program and for all your encouragement and support. Thank you to Dr. Doug McArthur as well, for the valuable comments during defence.

I would like to thank Mr. Bill Walters and Yu Li of Immigration Policy and Intergovernmental Relations Division, Ministry of Attorney General, and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism of BC for providing me the LIDS data. I thank Mr. Morteza Jaffarpour for his valuable time. A special thank you to Dr. Vahid Garousi for giving me access to data used in his paper.

To Kemi and Kiran: I don't know how I would have made it without you. I will cherish our friendship forever. A big thank you to all my family and friends who helped distribute the survey and those who participated. Without your participation, I would have not been able to investigate the Iranian community. Also a big thank you to my capstone group: Anja, Jen, Kemi, Aaron, and Dane. Your valuable insight helped immensely throughout this process.

I would like to thank Mr. and Mrs. Morawej for their help during my research. I would also like to thank Ardalan, Afsaneh, Parisa, Neda, Nasim, Kamyar, Mehdi, Amir, Mahmoudreza, Homayoun, Roya, and Yalda for their feedback and support. A big thank you to Mahdad for setting up the website, Mom and Mehrnoush for data entry, and Yasaman for listening to me over and over again before my defence. Finally, I would like to thank my Mom, Dad, Yasaman and Mahdad for all their continual love, support, encouragement and patience.

Dear Bahram: your leaving us has been extremely difficult to accept. You were one of a kind and you will always be in my heart. Mr. Salamat your passing was a shock and you will be missed greatly.

Table of Contents

Approval.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Executive Summary	iv
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgements.....	viii
Table of Contents	ix
List of Figures.....	xi
List of Tables	xii
1 Introduction.....	1
2 Canada's Recent Immigration Policies.....	4
3 Barriers to Employment.....	10
3.1 Institutional.....	10
3.2 The Taxi Driver Phenomena	14
3.3 Other Barriers to Employment	15
4 Iranians in Canada	18
4.1 Iranian Immigration to Canada.....	18
4.2 Characteristics of Iranians in Canada.....	22
4.3 Characteristics of Iranians in Vancouver	26
5 Methodology.....	27
6 Survey Analysis.....	31
6.1 General Characteristics of the Respondents.....	31
6.1.1 Background	31
6.1.2 Work.....	32
6.1.3 Education.....	34
6.2 Analysis of Skilled Respondents.....	35
6.2.1 Background	36
6.2.2 Work.....	37
6.2.3 Education.....	41
6.3 Skilled and Unemployed	42
6.4 Main Findings	43
7 Policy objectives and criteria.....	45
7.1 Policy Objectives.....	45
7.2 Criteria.....	46

8	Policy Alternatives	48
8.1	Status Quo	48
8.2	Alternative 1: Provide Quality Information	49
8.2.1	Features of the proposed alternative.....	49
8.3	Alternative 2: Streamline Foreign Credentials Assessment	50
8.3.1	Features of the proposed alternative.....	51
8.4	Alternative 3: Streamline Foreign Credential Assessment plus Provide Internship Programs	51
8.4.1	Features of the proposed alternative.....	53
9	Evaluation of Policy Alternatives	54
9.1	Evaluation of Status Quo.....	54
9.2	Evaluation of Alternative 1: Access to Quality Information.....	56
9.3	Evaluation of Alternative 2: Streamline Foreign Credential Assessment	57
9.4	Evaluation of Alternative 3: Streamline Foreign Credential Assessment plus Provide Internship Programs	59
10	Recommendations	63
11	Conclusion	65
	Appendices	67
	Appendix A- A.1 Immigration Application Form for Skilled Immigrant	68
	A.2 Self-Assessment Worksheet from Citizenship and Immigration Canada	72
	Appendix B- Survey Instrument	77
	Bibliography	82
	Works Cited.....	82
	Websites Reviewed.....	86

List of Figures

Figure 1: Landed Immigrants by Class: 1980-2004	8
Figure 2: Permanent Residents 15 Years of Age or Older and Level of Education.....	8
Figure 3: Immigration Status and Period of Immigration of Iranian-born Individuals to Canada	20
Figure 4: Population of Iranian-born Immigrants in Canadian Cities and Metropolitan Areas in 2001	23
Figure 5: Knowledge of Official Language of Iranian-born individuals in Canada in 2001	24
Figure 6: Percentage comparison of major field of study of Iranian-born individuals and all Canadians over 15 years of age in 2001	25
Figure 7: Skilled Immigrants' Main Source of General Information Prior to Immigration.....	37
Figure 8: Main Barriers to Employment in Area of Training for Skilled Immigrants	41

List of Tables

Table 1: Labour Force Rates by Country of Origin from Asia and the Middle East	2
Table 2: Evolution of the Points System	5
Table 3: Current Immigration Classes.....	6
Table 4: Top Destination Countries by size of Iranian-born Population.....	18
Table 5: Structure of the Questionnaire	29
Table 6: Background responses of the Participants.....	32
Table 7: Work responses of the participants	33
Table 8: Education responses of the participants	35
Table 9: Occupation of Skilled Immigrants Prior to Immigration to Canada	36
Table 10: Helpfulness and type of labour market information received prior to immigration	39
Table 11: Percentage of unemployed skilled Iranian immigrants who have sometime worked in Canada vs. unemployed skilled Iranians who have never worked in Canada and barriers to their employment (multiple responses allowed).....	43
Table 12: Criteria, Definitions, and Measurements	47
Table 13: Policy Alternatives Evaluation Matrix	61
Table 14: Summary of Evaluation Matrix.....	62

1 Introduction

I could not find a job as an engineer and with all my experience as an engineer; I did not want to open a pizzeria here, so I moved back to Iran with my wife where I receive a lot of respect for the position I hold and earn good money.

This comment by one of the participants in my survey best explains the frustration many skilled immigrants to Canada share. They face consistent inability to transfer their foreign credentials, including high levels of education and years of experience, into jobs related to their training. Skilled immigrants are underutilized (also called underemployment hereafter) in the Canadian workforce and job markets. The decline in immigrants' employment success in spite of their level of education and skills has drawn considerable attention from researchers and policymakers (Alboim, 2002; Alboim, 2003; Omidvar, 2006).

Key to underemployment of skilled immigrants is lack of Canadian work experience, lack of networking, lack of credential recognition, and language problems (Couton, 2002; Goldberg, 2002; Martin and Reitz, 2005; Reitz, 2001; Statistics Canada, 2001). Most barriers to the integration of highly skilled immigrants with foreign credentials are recognized, but less is known about how these people can successfully overcome these barriers and integrate into the Canadian labour market. In this paper, I intend to lend insight into the issue of integration of highly skilled immigrants, particularly Iranians, in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD).

Compared to other immigrant groups, Iranians are relative newcomers. There were very few Iranians living in Canada prior to 1970s and the real influx of immigrants started following the Iranian revolution in 1979. British Columbia is the second province after Ontario with a high population of Iranian immigrants, and for the most part they are concentrated in the GVRD, especially on the North Shore (the local shorthand identifying the municipalities of West Vancouver and North Vancouver).

Immigrated Iranians in Canada are highly skilled and possess relatively high levels of education. Even so, they do not score high when it comes to employment. Table 1 presents labour force rates for a number of countries in Asia and the Middle East region from the Longitudinal

Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC). According to the LSIC, six months after their arrival, Iranian immigrants had an unemployment rate of 53 percent and labour force participation rate of 56 percent. As shown in Table 1, these rates are well above average of 37 percent unemployment and 69 percent participation rates for Asia and the Middle East region.

Table 1: Labour Force Rates by Country of Origin from Asia and the Middle East

Country of Origin	Unemployment Rate*	Participation Rate**
China	44	69
India	27	80
Iran	53	57
Pakistan	39	65
Philippines	19	83
South Korea	53	51
Sri Lanka	31	55
Asia and Middle East Region	37	69

Source: Statistics Canada 2005c

**Refers to the number of immigrants who are unemployed and looking for work over the total number of immigrants in the labour force*

***Refers to the number of immigrants in the labour force over the total number of immigrants aged 15 and over*

Too many skilled Iranian born immigrants are underemployed and underutilized in the Canadian labour market, which presents a policy problem this paper study attempts to address. To investigate the employment barriers for skilled Iranian-born immigrants in the GVRD, I designed an individual questionnaire and made it available on-line on a secure website between November 2006 and January 2007. I collected the data non-randomly by sending an email to an undisclosed recipient list of 53 Iranian friends and family living in the GVRD. The survey helps toward understanding Iranians motivations for coming to Canada, their main sources of information about Canada and the Canadian labour market, their educational background, their occupation prior to and post immigration, and their main barriers to employment in their area of training.

Findings from this study would be of particular interest to relevant stakeholders dealing with issues pertaining to integration of skilled immigrants in BC, particularly since no study has looked at barriers to employment of Iranian-born immigrants in this province to date. To attract and integrate skilled immigrants into the labour market, participation and collaboration between

various stakeholders is crucial. These stakeholders include but are not limited to the BC government, educational institutions, regulatory bodies, credential assessment agencies, employers, professional associations, settlement service agencies, job-finding agencies, and skilled immigrants. Everyone benefits when skilled immigrants work in their area of training: employers benefit from the increased pool of talent available to them, skilled immigrants benefit when they work in their area of training, and the economy benefits when skilled immigrants work at their full capacity.

This capstone is broken down into eleven sections. Section 2 exhibits an overview of Canada's recent immigration policies and discusses the evolution of the points system Canada uses to assess skilled worker immigration applicants. Section 3 reviews the process of foreign credential recognition in Canada and presents evidence of skilled immigrants unable to get their foreign credentials recognized. Section 4 provides background and literature on Iranian immigration to Canada, with particular attention to the last wave of immigration from Iran. Moreover, the 2001 census draws a picture of the Iranian community living in Canada. Section 5 discusses the methods used to investigate underemployment and underutilization of skilled Iranian immigrants in the GVRD. Section 6 examines survey results, discusses findings, and compares barriers to employment of Iranians to that of the Canadian skilled immigrant population in general. This investigation guides the policy objective and criteria for analysis and in Section 7. Section 8 presents a number of policy alternatives that may help relax barriers to employment faced by skilled Iranian immigrants; Section 9 evaluates the proposed policy alternatives and Section 10 draws out those policy issues most relevant to improving integration of skilled Iranian immigrants into the Canadian labour market. Finally, Section 11 provides concluding remarks.

2 Canada's Recent Immigration Policies

Canada is a country built upon the continuous influx of immigrants. The country's expansion and economic growth has consistently depended upon new immigrants arriving to fill in gaps in population and labour shortages. In recent years, immigration policy has placed greater precedence on attracting immigrants who possess high education levels, are skilled, and have professional training. The following section provides an overview of Canada's recent immigration policies and the evolution of the points system, which assesses skilled worker applicants for immigration.¹

Canada introduced the points system in 1967. The system awards potential immigrants points towards admission into Canada based on criteria such as education, language ability, experience, adaptability, and age. The goal was to ensure that prospective applicants were evaluated based on criteria that would increase their employability and Canadian economic development (Reitz, 2006). However not all applicants are subject to the points system, as people can enter the country under compassionate and humanitarian grounds. The Immigration Act further divides prospective applicants into three classes: independent applicants, nominated relatives, and sponsored dependants. Independent applicants are selected and assessed using the points system. As shown in column 1 of Table 2, in 1967, to qualify they needed a minimum of 50 marks out of the total 100. The nominated relatives are also subject to the points system; however, they are awarded bonus points because of their family ties and they only require 20 to 25 points out of 100 to qualify for entry. Sponsored dependant applicants, also known as family class, are not subject to the points system and are admitted based on their kinship ties.

¹ This section is heavily based on papers by Shi (2003) and DeVorctz (2006b).

Table 2: Evolution of the Points System

Factor	1967 (1)	1974 (2)	1978 (3)	1986 (4)	1993 (5)	1996 (6)	Post-1996 (7)	2002 (8)
Education	20	20	12	12	14	21	16	25
Experience	-	-	8	8	8	9	8	21
Specific Vocational Preparation	10	10	15	15	16	-	18	-
Occupational Demand	15	15	10	10	10	-	10	-
Labour Market Balance	-	-	-	-	-	10	-	-
Age	10	10	10	10	10	13	10	10
Arranged Employment	10	10	10	10	10	4	10	10
Language	10	10	15	15	14	21	15	24
Personal Suitability	15	15	10	10	10	17	10	10
Levels	-	-	10	10	8	-	-	-
Demographic	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-
Relative	0/3/5*	0/3/5	-	-	-	5	5	-
Destination	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	110	100
Pass Mark	50	50	50	70	67	65**	70***	67

Source: Shi (2003)

Note: The table shows maximum points possible in each category.

* Points awarded depend on relationship to sponsor.

** The pass mark varies by skill group. The pass marks are: professional, 52; skilled administrator, 52; technical, 47; trades, 45.

*** A visa officer will award points for personal suitability, up to a maximum of 10, at interview.

In 1976, Immigration Canada added a Refugee Class to the list of immigration classes. Refugees, persecuted or displaced persons are included in this new class and are exempt from points system assessment. Then, in 1986, they added two new sub-categories to the Economic Class: 1) self-employed workers and entrepreneurs, and 2) investors. Applicants under the former are assessed using the points system in a special manner as they are expected to establish a business in Canada. Applicants under the latter are admitted based on their investments, which must include specific amounts invested in Canadian enterprises. Business immigrants were added to the Economic Class to support development of Canadian economy either through their

investment, their entrepreneurial activity or their self-employment.² Table 3 presents the current immigration classes and its sub categories.

Table 3: Current Immigration Classes

Economic Class	Family Class	Refugee Class
-Skilled worker -Business: Investor Entrepreneurs Self-employed Provincial/territorial Nominee Live-in caregiver	-Spouses, fiancés, & children -Parents & grandparents	-Government assisted -Privately sponsored -Refugees landed in Canada -Dependants abroad

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

In the early 1990's, the Economic Council of Canada concluded that Canada needed to experience scale economies in manufacturing to enhance productivity. However, to develop these scale economies, the Council recommended increasing Canada's market through free trade agreements rather than immigration, arguing the latter could be a drain on government social spending. Therefore, immigration into Canada in the 1990's was seen as a counterweight to Canadian skilled emigration to the United States that resulted from both the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement in 1989 and the North America Free Trade Agreement in 1995 (DeVoretz, 2006b). In particular, DeVoretz and Coulombe (2005) argue increased trade, foreign direct investment and the emergence of a trade related visa (i.e. TN visa) accelerated the movement of Canadian citizens in 64 skilled occupations to the United States. To compensate for NAFTA induced Canadian skilled emigration to the United States and to meet the need for professionals and engineers, Canada amended its immigration selection system by placing more emphasis on human capital of potential immigrants and began aggressively recruiting Asian skilled managers and professionals. For instance, DeVoretz (2006a) notes the special attention paid to recruiting large numbers of managers from Hong Kong and Taiwan because policy makers hoped the integration of these skilled managers into Canadian firms would result in increased employment opportunities for Canadians.

The changes to the Immigration Act of 1992 enshrined the power of Immigration Canada officials to control the levels and occupational composition of the immigration flow, with

² For more information see Canada Immigration Act <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/imm-law.html#act7>

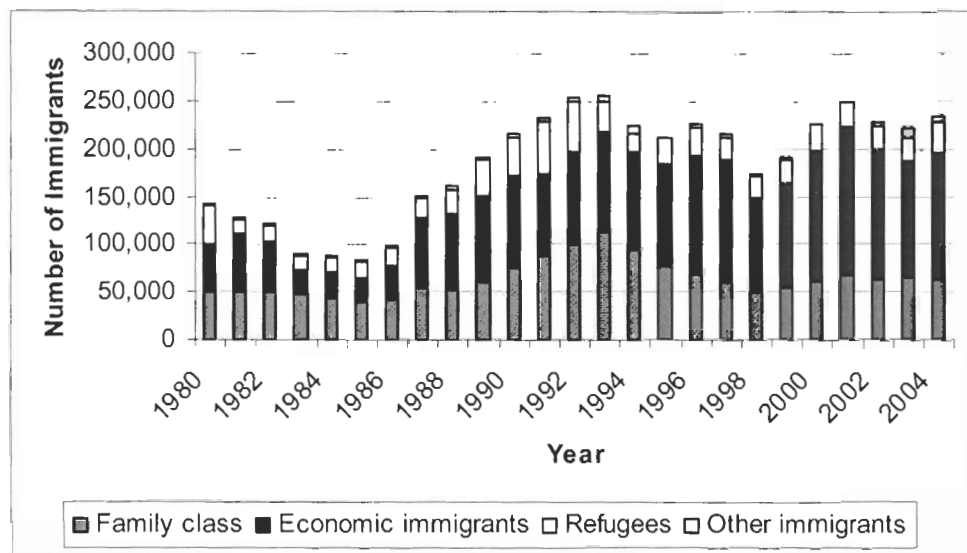
direction given to prioritize immigrants whose skills or intended occupations were in short supply in Canada by awarding them bonus points and a higher processing priority. For example, between 1995 and 2001, 19,829 scientists and 77,790 engineers and architects landed in Canada (DeVoretz, 2006a).

Parliament proclaimed the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) in 2001 and implemented it in 2002. Under its provisions, Canada amended the points system to address the current and future demands of the Canadian labour market. Unlike previous emphasis on specific occupational criteria, the new Act now places greater importance on the transferable skills possessed by potential immigrants.³ The new system values education, language abilities, and work experience, with 80 points out of the possible 100 allotted to these factors (see column 8 in Table 2). “The focus is now on selecting immigrants with the flexible and transferable skills needed to succeed in a rapidly changing knowledge-based economy, rather than on qualifications for specific occupations” (CIC, 2005: 2).

From 1994 onwards, admission of immigrants in the Economic Class has been consistently higher than any other category (see Figure 1). Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2, during the last decade, the number of landed immigrants with post secondary education - including bachelor’s degrees, master’s degrees and doctorates - has increased sharply due to changes in policies that have placed more emphasis on human capital of immigrants. Between 1993 and 2001, maximum points awarded towards education increased from 14 to 25 points (see columns 5, 6, and 7 in Table 2). The increase in education points, have on one hand led to the increase in the number of more educated immigrants, those with post secondary education, and on the other hand, to the decrease in the number of immigrants with less than 12 years of schooling (see Figure 2). Still, even with this large influx of skilled and educated immigrants, the Canadian labour market did not perform as well as the government had hoped it would.

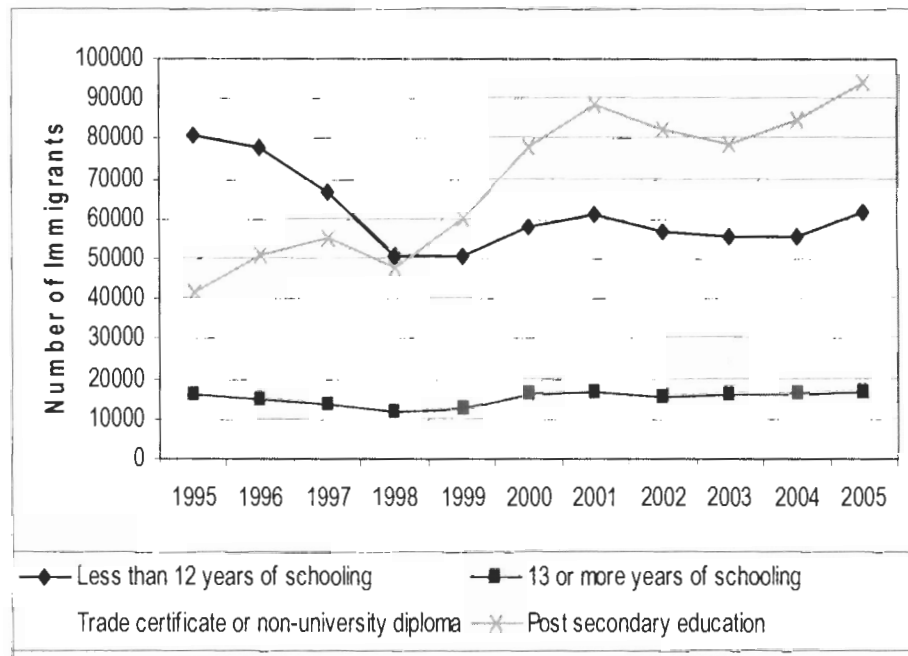
³ The immigration application form for skilled immigrants is available in Appendix A. I have also made available a copy of the self-assessment worksheet prepared by CIC for applicants to determine whether they will qualify as a skilled worker. For more details see: www.cic.gc.ca/english/application/guides/EG74html

Figure 1: Landed Immigrants by Class: 1980-2004



Source: CIC 2004b

Figure 2: Permanent Residents 15 Years of Age or Older and Level of Education



Source: CIC 2004b, 2005b

The Canadian government's policy of promoting the country's economic growth and stability by encouraging immigration is a consistent practice throughout the history of the country. It is only in recent years that the policy has moved towards valuing and rewarding

educated, trained and professional immigrants. Potential immigrants meet this policy change with enthusiasm, applying for entry into Canada as Economic Class immigrants in consistent and often increasing numbers.

3 Barriers to Employment

The knowledge-economy highly values and credits qualification as specific criteria for individuals to successfully enter and participate in their chosen fields of study, research, and employment. Recognition of credentials is essential for individuals and groups to enjoy the benefits of their work and experience. This is particularly true for immigrants. This section describes regulated professions and the process of credential recognition in Canada. It then provides statistics, which mark successful credential recognition and employment attainment in regulated professions, and reviews the barriers to skilled and educated immigrants in achieving these goals.

3.1 Institutional

Regulated professions and apprenticeable trades are the two types of regulated occupations in Canada. Regulated professions require post-secondary education, practical experience under the supervision of a licensed worker in the chosen profession, and the successful completion of a licensing examination (Work Destinations, 2007). Medicine, nursing, pharmacy, engineering, law and accountancy are just a few examples of regulated occupations. “Apprenticeable trades usually require the completion of a period of apprenticeship training on the job by a licensed supervisor, some specialized college education courses, and the successful completion of a certification examination” (Work Destinations, 2007). Mechanics, electricians, and welders are examples of workers in these trades. There are about 50 different regulated professions and at least 100 apprenticeable trades in Canada, which represent approximately 20 percent of available occupations (CICIC, 2007). This section focuses on the regulated professions.

Provincial and territorial legislation establishes the self-governing bodies that usually regulate professional occupations.⁴ “The regulatory body governing the profession has the authority to set entry requirements and standards of practice, to assess applicants' qualifications

⁴ It is important to note that provinces and territories may have different expectations and requirements from their regulated professionals. Therefore, a licensed individual in one province may have to reapply for a license in another province in order to practice their profession.

and credentials, to certify, register, or license qualified applicants, and to discipline members of the profession” (CICIC, 2007, para.3). Requirements for entry usually comprise components such as examination to test both professional and language competency, submission of credentials, and a specified Canadian supervised work experience.

Public safety and consumer protection are two rationales behind regulated occupations. Regulated professions ensure their members are adequately trained and meet the desired standards of skill and proficiency. Prohibiting those without proper training from practice ensures public safety and reduces potential harm. Immigrants who have obtained their education and training from outside of Canada and who wish to work in a regulated occupation must have their foreign credentials assessed. The regulatory bodies must compare their education and training to the general education ladder in Canada, and see whether the applicant meets the minimum requirements and standards for practice in Canada.

The Open Learning Agency (OLA), in partnership with business and other educational training organizations provided educational and training services at home, in school, in communities and in the workplace.⁵ The OLA provided a credit bank function for students and offered its programs and services through Open College, British Columbia Open University, and the Knowledge Network. In 1995, the province of British Columbia funded OLA to establish International Credential Evaluation Services (ICES) to provide educational evaluation services to individuals with foreign training. This initiative was in response to concerns expressed by educational bodies, immigrant groups and ethno cultural organizations over lack of foreign credential assessment. The ICES started operation in January 1996; in May 2004, the services were transferred from OLA to the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) in Burnaby. The ICES “evaluates international educational credentials and identifies their comparable level in terms of Canadian credentials in order to facilitate the processes of employment, professional licensing, immigration, and academic admission” (BCIT, 2004, para. 4). Individuals, employers, associations and regulatory bodies can all use the services offered by the ICES.

The ICES conducts two types of assessment, basic and comprehensive. The basic assessment costs \$125 per credential and only compares foreign earned education to Canadian

⁵The OLA, located in Burnaby, was funded by the government of British Columbia and by grants, tuition fees, sales and donations, sponsorships and partnerships. After examining the operations of the OLA for 2 years, the British Columbia government announced breaking up the agency in 2004, with efficiency and savings as their main reasons. The Knowledge Network continues to operate as part of the OLA. Other programs and services offered by the OLA were passed on to the newly created Thompson River University, located in Kamloops, British Columbia. For more information see Saltman (2004) and <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/app/ccc/search/navigate.do?language=eng&portal=1&subPortal=&estblmntNo=234567031023&profile=completeProfile> and www.ola.ca

education. The ICES defines a credential to be “one partially or fully completed educational program taken at one institution or school leading to a certificate, diploma or degree” (BCIT, 2007b, p.3). Any coursework completed at two or more institutions and applied (or transferred) toward a credential is considered a separate credential (BCIT, 2007a). The assessment takes at least 4 weeks to complete once ICES receives all the necessary documents. It is important to note that individuals are required to submit official or original educational documents.⁶ The comprehensive assessment, which is more detailed, costs \$225 per credential; it lists courses taken, converts both grades and credits or units, provides grade point averages, and identifies the language of instruction.⁷ It takes at least 7 weeks to complete a comprehensive assessment once ICES has all the required documentations.

Individuals who intend to work in regulated professions have different education and experience backgrounds. To license members of professions, regulatory bodies require they take a licensing examination. The exam tests individuals on skills essential to safe practise and which meet standards laid out by the profession. For most professions, these examinations are the last step an individual must take before receiving the license that allows them to work.

Obtaining a license is usually a costly process for the immigrant seeking Canadian credentials. Those who wish to go through the process pay for the translation of documents, their credential recognition, and every exam taken. The process is also time consuming since exams are usually offered once or twice each year, and in most cases applicants are required to take a series of exams before they qualify to take the licensing examination. Moreover, it takes time to obtain original education documents, to translate them for credential assessment, and to prepare and study for the different examinations.

One of the extreme examples is that of international medical graduates who must demonstrate equivalent general medical knowledge. To do so, they need to pass the Medical Council of Canada Evaluation Examination (MCCEE) and the Medical Council of Canada Qualifying Examinations. The average cost for these exams is about \$1000 Canadian dollars. In addition, applicants complete supervised postgraduate clinical medical training, (also called residency training). They also take certification exams.⁸ To prove their language proficiency, they are required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which costs \$160

⁶ Documents are considered official when they arrive directly from the institution to the ICES office and bear the proper seals, signature, and postal markings. Documents are considered original when they arrive to the ICES office by the client, their family or friends.

⁷ For more information see <http://www.bcit.ca/ices/apply/reports.shtml>

⁸ For more details see Nouhi (2006) “Barriers to Integration of International Medical Graduates in British Columbia”. Mimeo. MPP, Simon Fraser University

Canadian dollars.⁹ In a survey of 659 International Medical Graduates (IMGs) who passed all the required examinations and applied for residency training in 2002, it was observed that more than half (54.6 percent) of the applicants had their medical education in English, and most (69.3 percent) had done postgraduate training outside Canada. Additionally, before arriving in Canada, 42.8 percent of these IMGs had practiced medicine between 1 to 5 years and 45.6 percent had practiced between 6 to 20 years (Crutcher et al., 2003). More often than not, these skilled immigrants with education and training from outside Canada had the proper training to practice medicine in Canada.

Less complicated and less expensive is the case of International Engineering Graduates (IEGs). According to the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of British Columbia (APEGPBC), to become a registered Professional Engineer in British Columbia, applicants need to first register with the Engineering Association and pay an application fee of \$400 (APEGPBC, 2004).¹⁰ Next, depending on their qualifications, applicants could be asked to write any of the confirmatory or qualifications examinations, which cost \$275 each. They would then need to pay \$150 for the Professional Practice Examination, and approximately \$310 for the Law and Ethics Seminar or \$354.95 for the Law and Ethics CD Rom Set. Once IEGs complete all the requirements for registration, they become a Provisional Member. After becoming a Provincial member, IEGs will need one year of Canadian work experienced supervised by a Professional Engineer before becoming registered Professional Engineer themselves. There is also number of fees required after gaining membership including a \$175 licensing fee, a \$10 Secondary Liability Insurance fee, and a roughly \$257 Professional Membership Annual Fee. Overall, to become a registered Professional Engineer in British Columbia could cost IEGs approximately \$1,852.

Given the examples above, many skilled immigrants would find it extremely hard to go through the licensing process. According to Goldberg (Keung, 2000), "sixty percent of foreign trained immigrants who took jobs unrelated to their training when they first came to Canada were stuck in the same jobs three years later." Most newly arrived immigrants do not have money saved, invested, or available as ready cash. They have families to support and must often take jobs outside of their skill set, very often work that is unskilled, to make ends meet. When one works full time at a minimum wage in order to support one's family, there is little time left to

⁹ TOEFL fee depends on where the exam is taken. For more information see <http://www.ets.org/bin/getprogram.cgi?test=toefl>

¹⁰ There are no English Language test requirements and the association has indicated that even though individuals may go through ICES to get their credentials recognized, the association conducts its own assessment of credentials. For more information see APEGPBC (2004).

prepare for examinations and little money to cover the necessary licensing fees to practise one's chosen profession.

3.2 The Taxi Driver Phenomena

There is mounting qualitative and quantitative evidence showing significant proportions of immigrants in Canada are unable to convert their foreign qualifications into jobs corresponding to their training (Couton, 2002; Goldberg, 2000; Reitz, 2001, 2005). All reports suggest the intended occupation of immigrants is not analogous to their attained occupation.¹¹ Moreover, studies show the market value of immigrant credentials is generally lower than native-born Canadians (Li, 2001; Reitz, 2001, 2006). Consequently, the returns on their educational qualifications and work experience are less and in most cases, they do not receive full compensation for their foreign credentials (Li, 2001; Reitz, 2001).

Fewer than 25 per cent of immigrant professionals work in their field (Goldberg, 2002). Highly skilled new immigrants like those trained as doctors or engineers in their country of origin settle for less skilled occupations upon their arrival in Canada, such as driving taxis (Keung, 2000, Statistics Canada, 2003). The term "brain waste" describes underutilization of immigrants with professional qualifications (Martin and Reitz, 2005). According to Statistics Canada, "[m]any degree holders who came to Canada in the 1990s worked in lower skilled jobs. Only 29 occupations employed the majority of these men, including restaurant and food service managers, taxi and limousine drivers and chauffeurs, truck drivers, security guards and related occupations and janitors, caretakers and building superintendents" (2003, p.13). Furthermore, their earnings were substantially below those of native-born Canadians in the same occupations. Faced with an inability to convert qualifications into jobs corresponding to their training, new immigrants take jobs unrelated to their fields.

Barriers related to qualification recognition generate substantial loss to the economy. Reitz (2001) conducted a human-capital analysis on incomes and suggested three possible sources of earnings deficits of immigrants with the same level of education and work experience relative to their native-born counterparts: 1) lower immigrant skill quality; 2) under-utilization of immigrant skills, and 3) pay inequities for immigrants doing the same work as native-born Canadians. Using 1996 census data, he estimated the total annual immigrant earnings deficit

¹¹ For the purposes of this study, intended occupation is defined as: the occupation that immigrants report at time of landing which can be used as an indication of their occupation prior to immigration to Canada, and the occupation that they would be likely to seek after their arrival in Canada.

from all three sources to be about \$15 billion, with \$2.4 billion related to underutilization of skills. This means Canadian earnings are much less than they should be because skilled immigrants are not working in occupations for which they have qualifications (Martin and Reitz, 2005). The Conference Board of Canada has produced a similar, albeit somewhat larger, estimate. "They project the lost value due to 'unrecognized learning' across the Canadian workforce as between \$4.1 and \$5.9 billion, and estimate that immigrants constitute 74 percent of the workers affected" (Reitz, 2006, p.9).

3.3 Other Barriers to Employment

The Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) is a comprehensive survey designed to study how new immigrants adjust over time to living in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2001). The LSIC interviewed about 12,000 new immigrants three times over four years. Interviews with the participants occurred six months, two year and four years after their arrival and settlement in Canada.¹² By the end of their first six months in Canada, 70 percent of the respondents were in the labour force. Forty four percent of these respondents had found a job while the remaining 26 percent were looking for work. Furthermore, of those who were able to find employment, only 40 percent were able to do so in the same field as before their move to Canada. What is remarkable is that most newcomers had not found employment in their intended occupations 2 years after their arrival. Of those who found employment, 33 percent found a job in their intended occupation during their first year in Canada, and another 9 percent did so during their second year. For example, only about half of the skilled workers (49 percent) who intended to find work in natural and applied sciences and related occupations had actually done so by the end of the two-year period. Contrary to the presumption of the new points system, the survey results demonstrated that educational level has little or no impact on whether or not an immigrant will be employed in their same occupational field after migration. About 4 out of 10 of those with university education and those with less than high school education were working in their intended occupational group after their arrival.

Findings from the first wave show 70 percent of the respondents encountered problems when trying to find employment. The most commonly reported difficulties immigrants experienced when entering the labour market included lack of Canadian work experience, lack of

¹² The first wave was interviewed between April 2001 and May 2002, about six months after their arrival in Canada. The second wave included 9,300 immigrants from the first wave. These individuals were interviewed in 2003, two years after their arrival. The third wave must have been interviewed by now however, results from their survey are not available yet.

recognition of their foreign credentials or experience, inability to communicate in an official language, lack of available jobs, and lack of connections and networking in the job market. Survey results indicated that 26 percent of new immigrants identified lack of Canadian job experience as a hurdle to employment six months after their arrival. Two years after landing, lack of Canadian job experience was still a critical hurdle to employment. Furthermore, 24 percent of the participants cited lack of recognition of their credentials as the most critical obstacle in seeking employment six months after their arrival in Canada. This problem was still persistent for the majority of immigrants looking for jobs two years following their landing in Canada.

Lack of language skills in either official language is another major hurdle to employment. The survey results indicate that of the 70 percent of the newcomers who indicated encountering a problem when trying to find employment, 22 percent claimed language problems as their main barrier. In the Credential Recognition Forum held by Sino United Chinese Community Enrichment Social Service (SUCCESS) on January 24, 2007, there was consensus among stakeholders that lack of language and communications skill, especially occupation specific language skills, is the primary barrier to employment of skilled immigrants.

Closely related to lack of Canadian work experience is the problem of employer discrimination. Intended or unintended, employment discrimination exists due to any one or a combination of imperfect knowledge of foreign credentials, apprehension, or prejudice (Couton, 2002). In making their hiring decisions, employers not only rely on credentials, but they also often rely on personal references as informal processes of skill validation. Reitz (2000, p.9) notes, "even if personal networks do not allow greater play for discriminatory sentiments, they may disadvantage immigrants whose qualifications fall outside the knowledge of referees typically consulted."

The inability to transfer foreign credentials, lack of Canadian work experience, and lack of official language skills result in very high rates of unemployment for new immigrants to Canada. In 2001 unemployment rates for recent immigrants were 1.5 times those of native-born Canadians (11.4 percent compared to 7.4 percent for the native-born Canadian). In addition, for the same amount of education and work experience, immigrants earn less compared to their Canadian counterparts (Grant, 1999), and analysis of the 2001 census reveals recent arrivals earned roughly 20 percent less than their native-born counterparts (Galarneau and Morissette, 2004). Dougherty (1999), using immigrant records from taxation data, and Drew et al. (2000), analyzing successive censuses, examined the overall labour market trends for immigrants. They

found significant evidence to show the employment success of newly arriving immigrants is on the decline.

Immigrants may arrive in Canada with the expectation that their work, education, specific training and experience in their home country will be valued and will work in their favour as they seek to establish themselves and their families. Too often though, this is not the case. There are still many, and it seems, increasing barriers facing skilled immigrants seeking employment in their new country.

4 Iranians in Canada

Iranian immigration to Canada came in three major waves, with two occurring after the Islamic revolution in 1979. This section presents some historical context of Iranian immigration and illustrates why the waves occurred. The section then draws a picture of the Iranian-born community living in Canada using 2001 census data.¹³

4.1 Iranian Immigration to Canada

More than one million Iranians are living outside of Iran.¹⁴ As Table 4 demonstrates, there were 366,155 Iranian-born people living in North America in the year 2000. This figure is approximately 1.45 times greater than that of population of Iranian-born population in top 6 European destinations. Political and economic hardship in Iran combined with the difficulty of immigrating to the United States and Western European countries led to Canada becoming a favourite destination for Iranians.

Table 4: Top Destination Countries by size of Iranian-born Population

North America	366,155
- United States	291,040
-Canada	75,115
Top 6 European Destinations	253,371
-Germany	65,750
-Sweden	53,982
-Israel	51,300
-Britain	42,494
-Netherlands	21,469
-France	18,376
Oceania	18,789
-Australia	18,789

Source: University of Sussex (2000)

¹³ I do thank Dr. Garousi for giving me access to data used in Garousi (2005).

¹⁴ This section is heavily based on papers by Hakimizadeh (2006) and Moallem (1998).

Until the late 1970s, the number of Iranians in Canada did not exceed a few thousand (4,890). Then from 1981 to 1990, the number of arrivals increased dramatically to 20,265. This figure more than doubled in the following decade with 46,645 Iranian-born immigrants living in Canada. Since 1995, Iran has been the top source country for immigration to Canada from Africa and the Middle East (CIC, 2004b) and according to Canadian 2001-census, 88,225 Iranian-born immigrants were living in Canada in 2001. This number includes 13,455 non-immigrant Iranian-born individuals in Canada, who study at Canadian colleges and universities as international students with student visas.

The movement of people out of Iran plays a role in the telling of Iranian history. In the last century, particularly since the 1950's, people moved out of Iran in three major waves which generally correspond to their socioeconomic status and motivations for migration, and include both forced and voluntary departures.

The first significant departures began in 1950 and lasted until the Islamic revolution in 1979. There were three distinct groups in the first wave: children of middle and upper class families; those related to monarchy; and religious minorities.

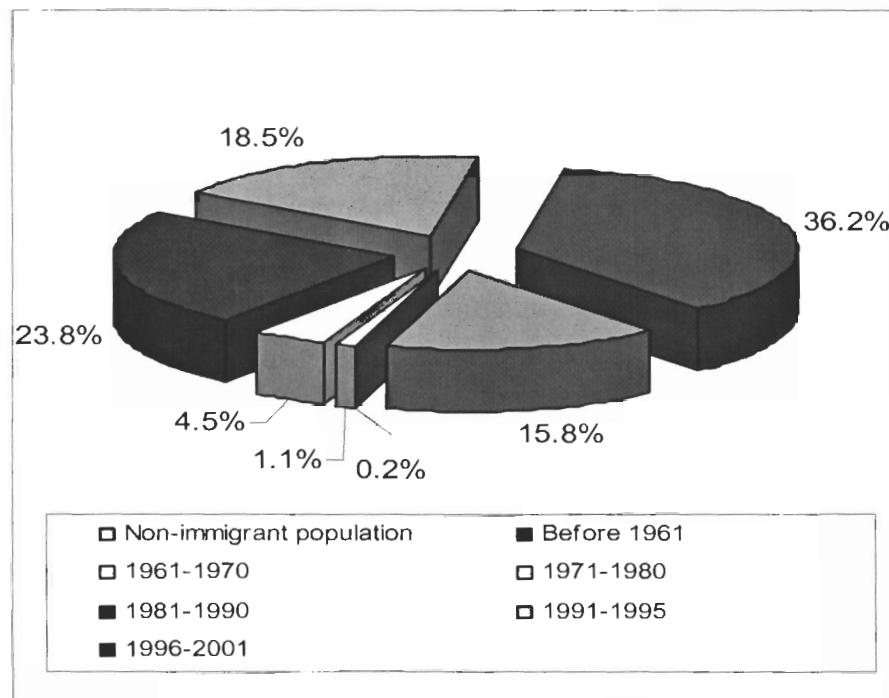
The first group were children of middle and upper class families, mostly males, who were sent abroad voluntarily for higher education as a means of ensuring socioeconomic security and political access upon return.¹⁵ A rise in oil prices and subsequent revenues generated from oil exports enabled families to send their children abroad; the country's newfound wealth also contributed to the sudden change in Iranian society from traditionalism to modernization. Among Iranians that settled in Canada were those who married native-born Canadians or those who finished their studies at Canadian universities and stayed in the country to work. Many of these Iranian-born individuals decided not to return to Iran and many of their families joined them abroad after the 1979 revolution.

The second group of emigrants were families closely related with the monarchy, such as members of government, state administrators, and military personnel. These individuals escaped during the early stages of the revolution, between mid-1977 and mid-1979, and were able to move their financial capital abroad, which was in some way protected given the relatively favourable exchange rate of the Iranian currency.

¹⁵ There were about 100,000 Iranian students abroad, of whom 36,222 were in United States universities, in 1977-1978 academic years. The number of Iranian students in the United States peaked to 51,310 in 1979-1980. See Hakimzadeh (2006) for more details.

The third group of peoples to leave the country in appreciable numbers included members of religious minorities like the Baha'i¹⁶ and religion-ethnic groups such as Armenians, Assyrians, and Jews that feared persecution under the new Islamic regime. According to the 2001 census, these three groups in the first wave represent approximately 5.8 percent of Iranian-born people in Canada (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Immigration Status and Period of Immigration of Iranian-born Individuals to Canada



Source: Census 2001

The second significant wave of emigration from Iran took place after the 1979 Islamic revolution and lasted until 1989. This surge in emigration resulted from the socio-political changes caused by the revolution, the Islamization of the country and its subsequent repressive

¹⁶ Baha'i are a minority religion group in Iran that emphasizes the spiritual unity of mankind. The problem is that there is lack of freedom of religion in Iran and since the Islamic revolution Baha'i are considered infidels and are heavily discriminated against. For more information see <http://www.bahai.us/persecution-bahais-iran>, retrieved January 4, 2007.

measures against women,¹⁷ and the Iran-Iraq war, which started in 1980 and lasted until 1988. The first people to leave were those opposed to the new regime, young women and families that could not stand the overly conflicting gender limitations and young men who fled to avoid mandatory military service due to the Iran-Iraq war. According to the 2001 census, these immigrants represent about 24 percent of Iranian-born individuals in Canada (see Figure 3). This large influx was largely involuntary and characterized by a considerable number of Iranian-born migrants seeking refugee status. Of the Iranian-born individuals arriving in Canada during the 1980s, 32 percent were refugees, 32 percent were independent immigrants, and 15 percent were family class immigrants (Moallem, 1998, p.3). Iran ranked 13th among Canada's source countries of immigration between 1985 and 1988.

Departure of large numbers of Iranian professionals, entrepreneurs, and academics during the second wave, resulted in accelerated "brain drain" from Iran. Brain drain is a term used to describe the movement of highly skilled individuals from a country due to personal and professional hardship, to a different country where they can work in better conditions and receive higher earnings (Oxford University Press, 2006).

According to Iran's Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, there were 16,222 professors teaching in Iran's universities right before the revolution and the subsequent closure of all universities in 1980. This figure dropped by roughly 56 percent to 9,042 after the universities reopened in 1982 (Hakimizadeh, 2006, p.3). Similarly, the Iran Times (cited by Hakimizadeh, 2006) estimates that one out of every three physicians and dentists left Iran after the revolution.

The final significant wave of emigration from Iran occurred over the last decade, from about 1995 to present. Two distinct groups of people are arriving in Canada: highly skilled individuals (a continuation of the second wave), and working class migrants and economic refugees who sometimes have lower educational levels and less transferable skills. According to the 2001 census, about 36 percent of Iranian-born immigrants arrived in Canada during the third wave (see Figure 3). It is worth noting that approximately 16 percent of Iranian-born individuals living in Canada in 2001 are categorized as non-immigrants. The majority of people in this category are international students studying in Canadian post secondary institutions or working in Canada on work permits.

¹⁷ The post-revolution era forced women to wear the veil, offered them limited educational possibilities, and created extreme gender inequalities. Therefore families with daughters were more inclined to leave Iran together as a family unit. Even though it is becoming more common for Iranian families to send their daughters for education or work to a foreign country on their own, it is not culturally common for unmarried women to live on their own. The same does not apply to unmarried men.

Income levels are not high for educated individuals in Iran (Garousi, 2003). Low income levels coupled with high inflation rates make achieving comfortable lifestyles very difficult. Garousi (2003) compares annual salaries for a software engineer in Iran, Canada and the United States. He finds that the salary for a software engineer is approximately 5 and 6 times greater in Canada and the United States respectively. Furthermore, the unemployment rate is high in Iran. Each year 270,000-university graduates enter Iran's labour market; only 75,000 are able to find employment (Hakimizadeh, 2006, p.7). There is also the problem of intense demand for university seats in the country. Approximately 1.5 million people take the university entrance exam, *konkour*,¹⁸ every year and only 11 percent are accepted into a university.¹⁹ There is a lack of general intellectual and social security where individuals are not able to think and write freely, and self-censoring by the government makes research exceptionally difficult. It should come as no surprise then that a January 2006 report of the International Monetary Fund ranked Iran highest in brain drain among 91 developing and developed countries, with an approximately 150,000 to 180,000 educated individuals leaving the country per year (Hakimizadeh, 2006, p.7).

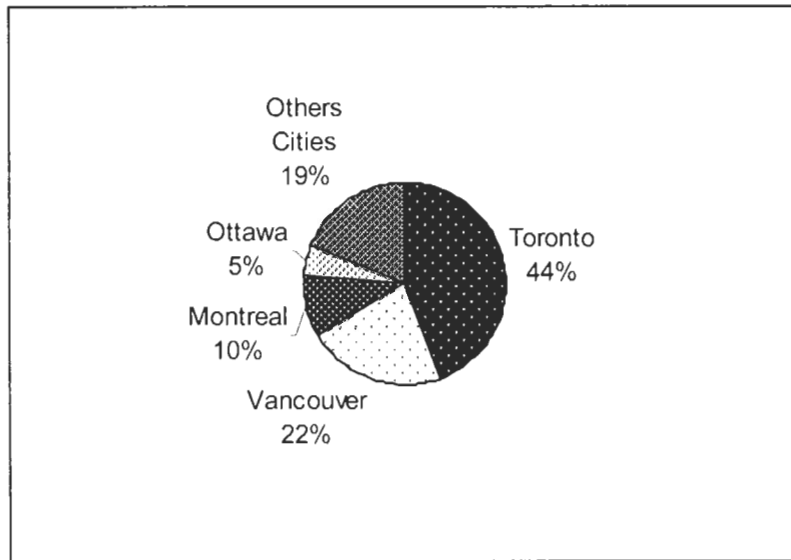
4.2 Characteristics of Iranians in Canada

In this section, using 2001 census data, I attempt to present a picture of the Iranian-born community living in Canada. The majority of Iranian-born immigrants chose Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec as their province of destination with a vast majority of them settling in Toronto (44 percent), Vancouver (22 percent), and Montreal (19 percent) (see Figure 4). Large numbers of Iranians settle in Toronto due to its industrial nature and the perception of increased employment opportunities. Those who chose Vancouver on the other hand, do so because the climate is very similar to Iran. In 2001, there were 21,910 Iranian-born individuals living in British Columbia with 20,490 living in Vancouver.

¹⁸ *Konkour* is the title of the nation-wide university entrance exam in Iran. Each summer, high school students from all parts of Iran take the exam, which tests students on grade 9 to 12 curriculum.

¹⁹ All 1.5 million participants could choose up to 100 fields of study and university locations across Iran. However, one's admission to a university is contingent on one's rank in *Konkour* and their selected field. For example, if an individual wants to be accepted into a good university and study in an engineering field, they need to rank under 2,500 among the 1.5 million who take the test.

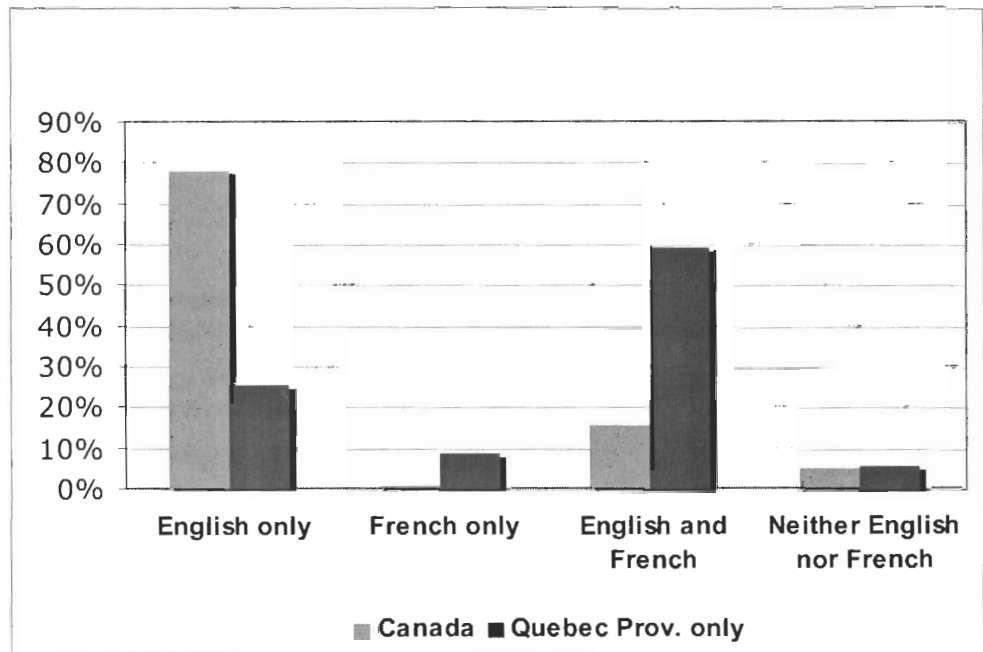
Figure 4: Population of Iranian-born Immigrants in Canadian Cities and Metropolitan Areas in 2001



Source: Adapted from Garousi (2005)

The Iranian-born population living in Canada is rather young. In 2001, approximately 38 percent of the Iranian-born individuals were under 25 years of age, followed by 37 percent between 25 and 44 years of age. The gender split among Iranians in Canada is very close. Of the 88,225 Iranians living in Canada in 2001, there were 47,350 (53 percent) males and 40,875 (47 percent) females. When it comes to conversing in either Canadian official language, English and French, a majority of Iranians do well. As illustrated in Figure 5 below, very few Iranians have no knowledge of Canadian official languages; 78 percent of those living outside Quebec had knowledge of English, and 16 percent knew both languages in 2001. Among those Iranians living in Quebec at the time of the census, 59 percent knew both languages, 9 percent only knew French, and 6 percent had no knowledge of the official languages.

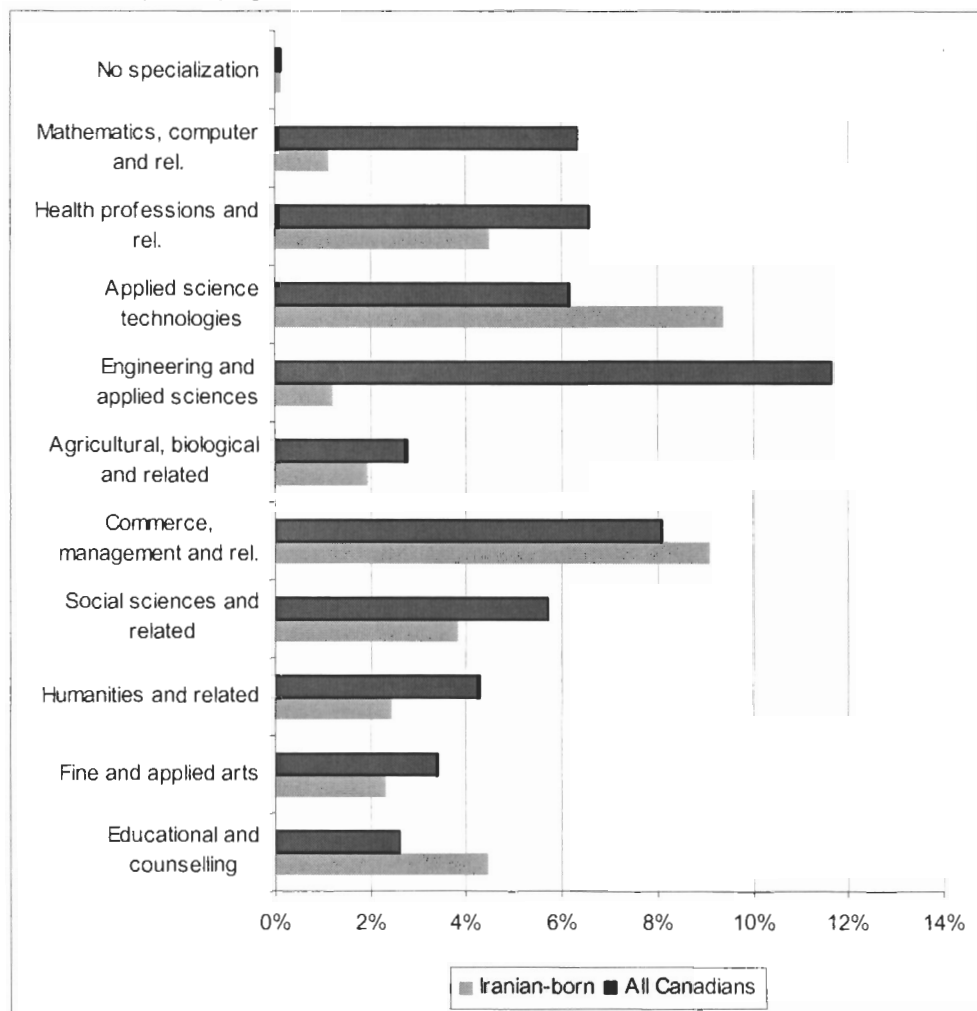
Figure 5: Knowledge of Official Language of Iranian-born individuals in Canada in 2001



Source: Adapted from Garousi (2005)

Iranian-born immigrants are highly educated: about 37 percent over the age of 15 hold a university degree compared to 12 percent of their Canadian counterparts. According to Garousi (2005), about 27 percent have a Master's degree or a PhD compared to approximately 4 percent of all Canadians. In addition, as shown in Figure 6, most Iranian-born individuals have their degrees in engineering and applied sciences followed by mathematics and computer and physical sciences.

Figure 6: Percentage comparison of major field of study of Iranian-born individuals and all Canadians over 15 years of age in 2001



Source: Adapted from Garousi (2005)

In spite of high levels of education, Iranian immigrants do not score high when it comes to employment. In 2000, only 28 percent of Iranian immigrants worked full time. A Statistics Canada (2005c)²⁰ study shows that six months after their arrival in Canada, 57 percent of Iranian immigrants were in the labour force and the unemployment rate was 53 percent, well above the 37 percent average for the Asia and the Middle East region. As for earnings in 2000, more than half (55 percent) of Iranian-born individuals had earnings below \$20,000 compared to 44 percent of their Canadian counterparts.

²⁰ Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada

4.3 Characteristics of Iranians in Vancouver

Of the Iranian-born immigrants who come to British Columbia, the majority reside in GVRD, especially on the North Shore. Characteristics of Iranian-born immigrants to Vancouver are similar to that of Canada as a whole. Between 2001 and 2005, 6,459 individuals whose last country of permanent residency was Iran and whose intended destination was GVRD landed in British Columbia²¹. The gender split of these immigrants is equal: 50 percent males and 50 percent females. As for their education, more than half (57 percent) of these immigrants over the age of 25 had university degrees. Approximately 51 percent of these Iranian-born immigrants had English language abilities. Very few (2.6 percent) had language abilities in both official languages and 46 percent did not have either English or French language abilities.

Iranian immigrants are consistently educated in fields beneficial to the maintenance and growth of the Canadian economy and social structures. It will benefit both the individual immigrants and Canada as a whole when policy and professional regulations change in order to ease this group's ability to take up employment in their fields of study and experience.

²¹ I do thank Yu Li of Immigration Policy and Intergovernmental Relations Division Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism of BC for providing me the LIDS data in this section in February 2007.

5 Methodology

This section outlines the methodological approach used in this study. I obtained my information through a survey of Iranians living in the GVRD between November 2006 and January 2007. The aim was to gather information on their main demographic characteristics, their motivation to migrate to Canada, their labour market experience in Canada, and their perceived barriers to employment; all of this to aid form policy alternatives.

I designed an individual questionnaire and made it available on-line on a secure website. I collected data non-randomly by sending an email to an undisclosed recipient list of 53 Iranian friends and family living in the GVRD. The email contained a cover letter that described the purpose of the study and contained the website address and a password to access the questionnaire. I kindly asked individuals to participate in the survey and to pass the email to an undisclosed recipient list of their friends and family living in the GVRD; I also asked them to do the same (increasing the survey base in this way). The survey was anonymous and participation was voluntary. I made the questionnaire available from November 11, 2006 to January 10, 2007. The questionnaire had 26 questions.²² I designed the first 25 questions close ended where participants chose from multiple options. The last question was open-ended for participants to write down any feedback or comment. A total of 208 individuals participated in the survey.

The survey was only available in English and therefore those who had language problems were less inclined to participate in the survey.²³ The rationale behind the decision to provide the survey in English was that knowledge of either official language, English and French, is crucial to communicate and find employment. In addition, the target group for this study is highly skilled immigrants. I assumed this group would have sufficient English skills to participate in this survey since they were assessed using the points system when they immigrated and they would have been awarded points for their language abilities (see Table 2). Therefore, this should not

²² The complete questionnaire is in Appendix B.

²³ I received an email from one person who had the following comment regarding not having the survey translated: "Don't you think it was better to make the survey in Persian? Since of the problem of choosing low profile jobs with minimum wage is language, so how do you anticipate them to fill out your application?"

invalidate my results. To prevent discouraging those with less knowledge of English however, I used simple wording when designing the questions.

The objectives of the survey were fourfold. First, I hoped to obtain some estimate of the highly skilled Iranians in the GVRD that are underemployed and underutilized in the labour market. Additionally, I hoped to reveal barriers to employment of this group of individuals and to observe whether foreign-trained Iranian professionals are working or have ever worked in their field of training. Finally, I wanted to identify the main source(s) of labour market information for Iranian immigrants prior to migration and evaluate the usefulness of the information.

The questionnaire had three sections. Table 5 below, presents the structure of the questionnaire. The background section aimed at obtaining information regarding age, sex and marital status, year of arrival in Canada, and immigration status. I asked whether the participant was the main applicant for immigration and if not, to indicate their relationship to the main applicant and in either case to disclose their immigration class. This reveals what percentages of the skilled immigrants come through the different immigration classes. I also wanted to know where and to whom individuals turned to obtain general information about Canada such as information about its healthcare and education systems, and the economic situation. Therefore, the last question in the background section asked participants to indicate their main sources for general information about Canada.

Table 5: Structure of the Questionnaire

	Type of Questions
Section 1: Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Age, gender, marital status, year of arrival, country of previous residency, ❖ immigration status, relationship to the main applicant, immigration class, source of information about Canada
Section 2: Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Type of labour market information and its usefulness ❖ Occupation prior to immigration, current occupation, whether found job related to training ❖ Employment experience in Canada
Section 3: Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Highest level of education and the country education was obtained from ❖ Fluency in English, whether have studied English since arrival ❖ motivations for migration, satisfaction with migration

The work section asked work related questions such as participants' occupation prior to and post immigration and actions taken for those who have not found a job in their related field. I was particularly interested to know what percentage of skilled immigrants have never worked in Canada and one way to achieve this was to ask the participants to compare their overall employment experience in Canada with their previous country of residency. In that question, there was an option of 'have not worked in Canada'. I also wanted to know whether applicants had acquired any labour market information prior to immigration. Therefore, I asked them the type of information they obtained prior to immigrating: job availability in general, in their occupation, in other occupations, and specific licensing requirements in their profession. Then, I asked them whether the information they had gathered was helpful or not.

I designed the third section to obtain educational information about participants. I asked participants what their highest level of education was and where they had obtained it. I also wanted to know their English language abilities and therefore asked them how they rate their fluency in English. I did not ask the participants about their language abilities in French, as English is the main speaking language in British Columbia. Finally, I asked participants to reveal their motivations for migration and to indicate whether they are satisfied about their decision to come to Canada.

In order to put survey findings in context and set the stage for more vigorous inquiries, difficulties encountered while conducting the survey need to be addressed. The first limitation involves the questionnaire itself. The questions and the content were limited due to the nature of the data collection. I did not have access to a ready and available group of skilled Iranian immigrants to target when conducting the survey and so designed the questions not to discourage those who were not skilled from completing the survey, should they receive it. Therefore, I chose not to ask more detailed questions targeting skilled immigrants.

The second limitation involves the survey method, as it relies on non-random, self-reported data. It is difficult to generalize results to the population with a non-random sample. Furthermore, misunderstandings of questions, especially because I did not translate the survey, can contribute to inaccuracies in data. The data was self-reported and information regarding occupation, education, and language ability was not verified. This is important to consider, especially when looking at the findings on English language abilities in particular.

The third limitation involved the distribution of the survey, which was electronic. Collection of survey data by solely electronic means is not always the best way to proceed, but this should not invalidate my results; my focus was skilled immigrants who more often than not have computer knowledge and access to the internet through either personal computers at home or public places (i.e. public libraries). I understand my sample does not allow generalized inferences about the entire skilled immigrant population; however, my conclusions shed light on the complexities surrounding the issues that skilled immigrants face assimilating Canadian labour market.

6 Survey Analysis

This section provides a description and analysis of the survey findings using frequency distributions and cross-tabulations. The section focuses on the characteristics of all the participants to the survey responses in the three section of the survey. Furthermore, it narrows down the analysis to the skilled participants, particularly those that are unemployed, and looks at barriers to their employment.

6.1 General Characteristics of the Respondents

The focus of the survey is permanent residents and Canadian citizens. Out of the 208 participants that returned the survey, 5 surveys were excluded because 4 were holding student visas and 1 was holding a temporary work permit. Consequently, I base my analysis on 203 returned surveys. It is worth noting that not all participants responded to all questions. For example, 4.4 percent of the participants did not answer whether they were employed or not at time when the survey was conducted. This is not problematic however since the percentage of no responses for each question was not very large to be of concern. I will now turn to each section of the survey and discuss participants' responses.

6.1.1 Background

Table 6 presents the summary of participants' responses in the background section of the survey. Almost half (49.3 percent) are between ages of 21 and 35. The next largest group are those between 41 and 50 (17.7 percent), followed by those 51 - 55 (14.8 percent). The gender split of participants is close: 54.7 percent male and 45.3 percent female; the majority of people (71.9 percent) are married. Approximately 73 percent of the participants entered Canada under the Economic Class. Almost half (48.8 percent) came to Canada between 1996 and 2000, and approximately 80 percent of them arrived in Canada after 1996. Interestingly, the years of arrival are consistent with the third emigration wave from Iran discussed earlier, and correspond to the amendments to the points system in the past decade.

Table 6: Background responses of the Participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Age:	21-35	100	49.3
	36-40	19	9.4
	41-50	36	17.7
	51-55	30	14.8
	Over 55	17	8.4
Sex:	Male	111	54.7
	Female	92	45.3
Marital Status:	Single	51	25.1
	Married	146	71.9
	Separated or Divorced	6	3.0
Year of Arrival:	1978-1990	13	6.4
	1991-1995	28	13.8
	1996-2000	99	48.8
	2001-2006	63	31.0
Main Applicant:	Yes	93	45.8
Immigration Class:	Economic	148	72.9
	Family	37	18.2
	Refugee	12	5.9
Main source of general information:	Family and Friends	154	76.0
	Lawyer/Consultant	57	28.1
	Books/internet/television	53	26.1

6.1.2 Work

Table 7 provides a summary of participants' responses in the work section of the survey. About 46 percent of the participants claim they obtained information about job availability in general followed by 28 percent who inquired about job availability in their own profession. Approximately 43 percent had not obtained any labour market information. When asked how helpful the information they received has been, about one third stated it was somewhat helpful and 24 percent believed the information was not helpful.

In terms of occupation prior to immigration, engineers (36.5 percent) and students (24.6 percent) dominate the sample. More than half of participants (56.7 percent) are currently working

and 35 percent found employment in their area of training. Still, approximately 52 percent have not found employment in their related fields. They identify the main barriers to employment as a lack of Canadian work experience, lack of networking opportunities and lack of foreign credential recognition. Comparing their overall employment experience in Canada with their previous country of residence, 29 percent of all participants indicate their experience in Canada is positive, about 10 percent state their employment experience in Canada is similar to that of their previous country of residence and close to 23 percent consider their experience negative.

Table 7: Work responses of the participants

	Frequency	Percentage
Type of labour market information:		
Job availability in general	94	46.3
Job availability in own profession	57	28.1
Job availability in other profession	16	7.9
Licensing information in own profession	17	8.4
Received no information	88	43.3
Helpfulness of the labour market information:		
Helpful	17	8.4
Somewhat helpful	62	30.5
Not helpful	49	24.1
The information was misleading	23	11.3
Occupation prior immigration:		
Engineer	74	36.5
Student	50	24.6
Able to find job related to training:		
Yes	71	35.0
No	110	52.4
Main Barriers to employment:		
Lack of Canadian work experience	69	34.0
Lack of contacts/networking	62	30.5
Lack of credential recognition	52	25.6
Language problems	29	14.3
Currently employed:		
Yes	115	56.7
No	79	38.9

	Frequency	Percentage
Have never worked in Canada	21	10.3

6.1.3 Education

Table 8 offers a synopsis of participants' responses in the education section of the survey. The majority of participants (78.8 percent) completed post secondary education. About 47 percent received their highest level of education from Iran and 36.5 percent did so in Canada. Besides those who studied in Canada, another 8.4 percent obtained their highest level of education from English speaking countries such as the United Kingdom (9 participants), the United States (7 participants), and Australia (1 participant). About 3.9 percent received their highest level of education from a number of European countries, such as Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden. Close to 60 percent state they are highly proficient in English. Participants in my survey self-assessed their proficiency in English and I did not validate their response through testing or a verification process. As a result, there is a possibility that some of the participants have overestimated their language abilities.

As mentioned in Section 5, *Konkour* has made it very difficult for individuals to get into universities in Iran and to study one's field of interest. This is reflected in responses of participants with regard to their motivation for coming to Canada; 68 percent state they moved to Canada because of the greater education opportunities for themselves and their children.

The next largest group (67 percent) are those who come to Canada to live in a safe and peaceful country. This is not surprising given the 8-year war between Iran and Iraq after the 1979 Islamic revolution, the tensions in the Middle-East region, and economic embargoes and war threats, especially since the events on September 11, 2001. The majority (84.7 percent) are satisfied with their move to Canada; however many made the comment that it took them a long time to adjust and the first 5 years were very difficult for them. One of the participants said the following:

I consider the move successful after 18 years! It was very difficult for us for the first 5 years. I still am not working in my related field. I own a business with my brothers and go back to Iran 6 months in a year to work there. The money is better and the work is related to my field. I do consultation for our business while I am here as well. My family is here though so again it is hard to be away from my wife and children every year for 6 months

Table 8: Education responses of the participants

	Frequency	Percentage
Education:		
Bachelors	90	44.3
Masters or PhD	70	34.5
Studied English since arrival:	139	68.5
English proficiency:		
High	120	59.1
Moderate	69	34.0
Basic	10	4.9
Obtained highest level of education from:		
Iran	95	46.8
Canada	74	36.5
United Kingdom and United States	16	7.9
Motivation for move to Canada:		
Education system	138	68.0
Living in a safe and peaceful country	136	67.0
Less stressful life	121	59.6
Political/religious reasons	54	26.6
Satisfied with move to Canada:		
Yes	172	84.7
No	22	10.8

6.2 Analysis of Skilled Respondents

For the purposes of my analysis in this section, I define skilled immigrants as those with completed tertiary education (i.e. Bachelors Degree, Masters Degree or PhD). Approximately 80 percent of the sample is skilled. In terms of occupations prior to immigration, engineers dominate this sample. As shown in Table 9, 14.8 percent of the participants selected 'none of the above' option. Among those, there were 4 participants who identified themselves as students and 1 as a high school teacher, who must have missed the options of 'student' and 'teacher' in the questionnaire. Of the residual 18 participants, 4 had not responded to the next question to specify their occupation prior to immigration. Of the remaining participants there were 2 managers, 4 graphic designers, 1 business man, 1 journalist, 1 Real Estate Electrician, 1 university professor, 1

Iran embassy officer, 1 artist, 1 business administrator, 1 kindergarten director, and 1 cultural travel consultant and guide.

Table 9: Occupation of Skilled Immigrants Prior to Immigration to Canada

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Engineer	72	44.4
Student	38	23.5
None of the above	24	14.8
Physician	6	3.7
Dentist	5	3.1
Teacher	4	2.5
Housewife	3	1.9
Nurse, Psychologist	2	1.2
Accountant, Surgeon, Medical Laboratory Technologist	1	0.6
Optometrist, Lawyer, Architect	0	0
No indication	3	1.9
Total	162	100

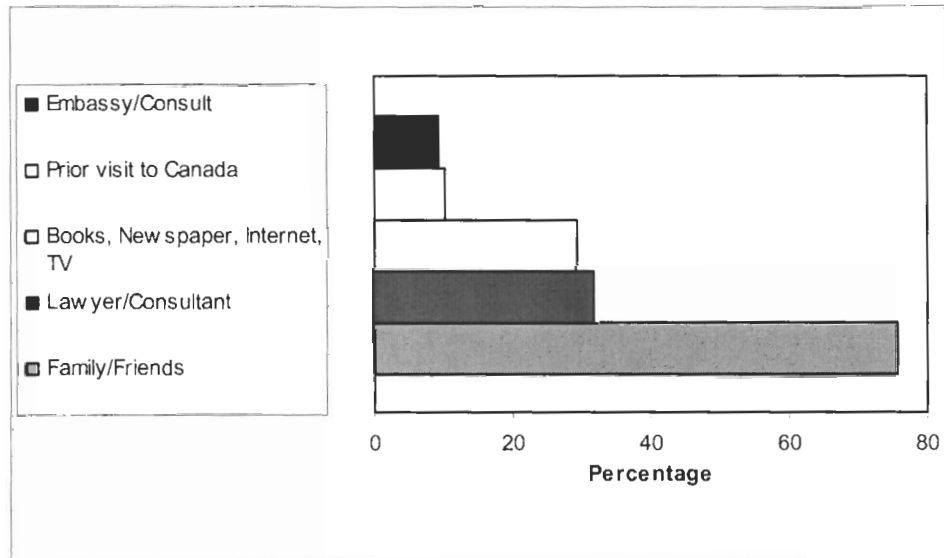
6.2.1 Background

Approximately 51 percent of the skilled participants are between ages 21 and 35. The next largest group are between 41 and 50 (15.4 percent), followed by those between 51 and 55 (14.8 percent). Exactly half (50 percent) are the main applicants in the immigration process and the other 50 percent are related to a main applicant either as their spouse or their children. The majority of the skilled immigrants (77.2 percent) qualify as Economic Class immigrants and 17.3 percent are Family Class immigrants, and approximately 82 percent arrived since 1996.

I asked participants about their main sources of general information about Canada prior to immigration. Since individuals could have acquired information from number of different sources, I allowed for multiple responses. As illustrated in Figure 7, almost three quarters of the skilled immigrants indicate they obtained their general information (such as costs of living, healthcare and education systems, and the economic situation) from their family and friends. The next large groups were those who contacted a lawyer or a consultant (31.5 percent), those who

obtained information from mediums such as books, newspapers, internet, and TV (29 percent), those who had previously visited Canada (9.9 percent) and finally those who contacted the Canadian embassy or the consulate (9.3 percent). This indicates that majority of skilled Iranian immigrants do not have accurate source of information prior to immigration.

Figure 7: Skilled Immigrants' Main Source of General Information Prior to Immigration



6.2.2 Work

When I asked about the type of labour market information acquired, 45.1 percent of the skilled immigrants indicate they obtained some general information on job availability in Canada prior to immigration. Some 30.9 percent obtained information on work in their own occupation, followed by 8 percent who sought information regarding job availability in other occupations. Just 10 percent acquired information regarding occupation-specific licensing procedures. I expected this figure to be higher given that 43.8 percent of participants are educated and trained in regulated Canadian occupations. However, it is worth noting that not all regulated professions in Canada are regulated in Iran. In addition, licensing procedures are different in the two countries.

Most interestingly, about 43.2 percent of the skilled immigrants acquired no information about the Canadian labour market prior to immigrating. I expected this figure to be significantly lower because immigration is a major move in an individual's life; I suspected that individuals would find out as much as they could about the new country they plan to call home. There may be

a number of explanations for this large percentage. One explanation may be that even if individuals were warned that finding employment in their occupation in Canada might not be as easy, they would discount this information thinking that there must be jobs available for them if they have been selected based on their occupation. The second explanation may be that Perhaps individuals did not care about the labour market, and thought anything would be better than what they had in Iran and if their friends have made it, they will make it too. One of the participants reflects:

I am sure as time passes we will be able to find a job in our related field and earn better income and no matter the hardship here, our lives and our children's lives would be better here compared to Iran.

The third explanation, may be that some of these skilled individuals might have had high pay careers in Iran and only migrated to Canada so that their children would be able to take advantage of the good education system in Canada, something very hard to attain in Iran (Swanton, 2005) One of the participants expressed the following:

My move was more for my kids than for myself. I am happy to see that they have gained a better life here than they could have in Iran. I did not realize that I had to be away from my wife and kids for long period of time in order to make money overseas.

When speaking to skilled immigrants in the Iranian community who have not been able to find employment in their area of training, many complain about receiving misleading information prior to immigration about job availability in their field. To test this proposition, I asked participants whether the labour market information they received was helpful.²⁴ Table 10 presents a summary of the type of labour market information participants received and its helpfulness, regardless of whether participants found employment in their area of training.

²⁴ Of the 162 skilled immigrants, only 125 answered this question. Due to a technical problem, there were more 'not helpful' responses than they should have been. I did not ask those who chose 'received no information' to proceed by skipping the next question. As a result, some of the participants who indicated they did not acquire any labour market information did not answer this question, as it did not pertain to them. On the other hand, some of those who did not ask for any labour market information chose the option 'not helpful' when asked how helpful the labour market information was. Therefore to analyze this question, I excluded 'not helpful' responses from those who had not obtained any information.

Table 10: Helpfulness and type of labour market information received prior to immigration

Type of Information received	Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Misleading
General job availability	9.4%	35.4%	15.7%	10.2%
Job availability in own profession	4.7%	18.9%	9.4%	6.3%
Licensing requirements	2.4%	7.9%	0.8%	1.6%

Generally, of the skilled participants that acquired labour market information, more (35.4 percent) considered it 'somewhat helpful' than did anything else. Surprisingly, of those skilled immigrants who acquired information about job availability in general (or in their own profession), more participants considered the information to be 'not helpful' than 'helpful' (see Table 10). In addition, more participants perceived the information they received as more misleading than helpful, especially for those asking about job availability in general. These responses confirm that immigrants did not have access to accurate information about what to expect, regulated professions and licensing procedures, credential assessment procedures, or useful and effective contacts prior to immigration. One of the participants had the following to say:

The amount of resources given to immigrants before entering the country should definitely be increased. Immigrants leave their country with such a great hope and normally face great disappointments once they arrive. Many will face numerous difficulties and unbearable challenges before getting comfortable in the society, in some cases this level of living will take a long time to be reached or does not happen at all.

Another respondent made the following comment regarding inaccurate information prior to immigration:

I am a dentist and before coming to Canada, I was told that there is a Mickey Mouse test that you write in Canada. I was told that it takes maybe 2 months to prepare for the test and once I pass that, my salary would be about \$300,000. Well that information was nothing but misleading. I am still in the process of getting my credentials recognized after 18 months and it is not only one test to be written.

These results are similar to Goldberg's (2002) interview findings of 643 skilled immigrants that wanted to work in Ontario's regulated professions. Of the immigrants who obtained information about a chosen profession before coming to Canada in that sample, about 6 percent considered the information 'very helpful'. However, 23 percent considered the information only to be 'helpful' and 11 and 12 percent considered it 'not very helpful' and 'not helpful at all' respectively.

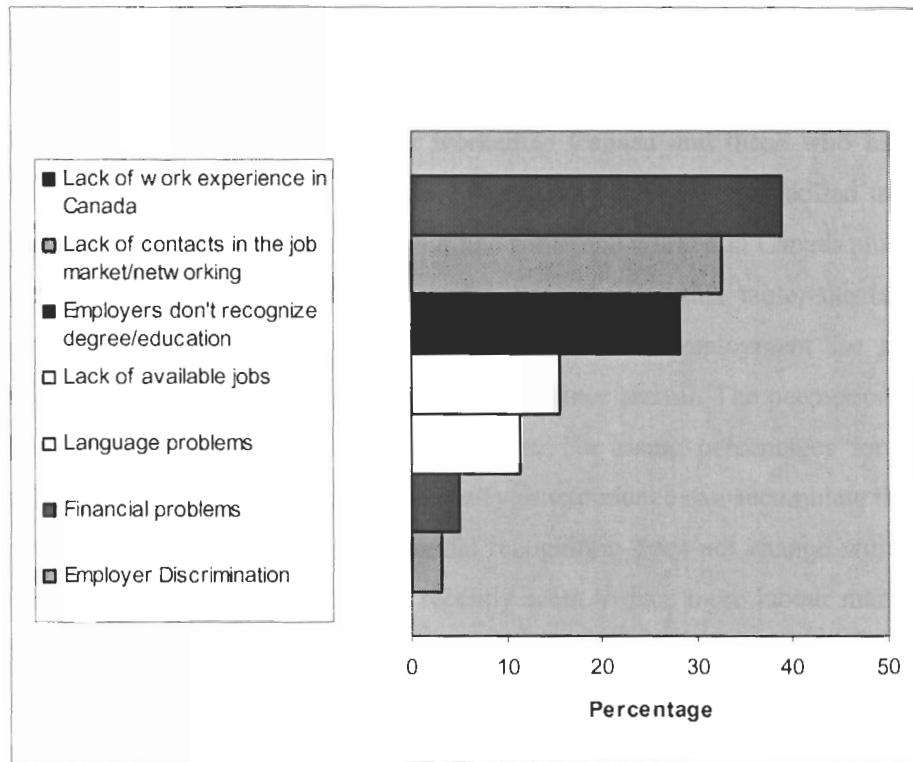
In the Credential Recognition Forum held by SUCCESS, a number of immigrants brought up the issue of lack of access to quality information. An Iranian immigrant pointed out that she did not know she needed 'original' documents and transcripts for credential recognition. For Iranian immigrants, this is a major problem since it is very difficult to get original documents in Iran in person, let alone authorizing a family member or a friend to obtain them. The same person stated that she has no means of going back to Iran and has no one there to go after her paperwork. She stated that had she known about this requirement prior to immigration, she would have taken the appropriate steps to accommodate the credential agencies with the proper documents.

About 9 percent of the participants did not respond when asked if they found employment in their area of training. Of those who answered the question, approximately 43 percent indicated they found employment in their area of training and 57.4 stated that they did not. These results are comparable to Goldberg's (2002) findings. Of the participants in her study, "some 42 percent of the participants were employed in their exact or a related profession as their first job, while about 15 percent were employed in another profession and 43 percent were in a non-professional job as a means of earning income" (Goldberg, 2002, p.33).

I then asked the participants their current employment status. Approximately 59 percent indicate they are currently employed and 38.9 percent declare being presently unemployed.²⁵ Over half (58 percent) of the respondents who had not found employment in their area of training indicate they took supplementary training such as language training (16.7 percent), post-secondary education (16 percent), occupation specific programs (14.2 percent), and computer and technology courses (11.1 percent). Figure 8 summarizes the main barriers to finding employment in area of training for the skilled immigrants.

²⁵ The overall sample response was that 56.7 percent were currently employed and 38.9 percent unemployed.

Figure 8: Main Barriers to Employment in Area of Training for Skilled Immigrants



The majority of those skilled immigrants that had not found employment in their area of training cite lack of work experience in Canada (38.8 percent) followed by lack of contacts in the job market (32.5 percent), and lack of credential recognition (28.1 percent) as their main barriers to employment. These results, with the exception of language problems, are consistent with concerns of other immigrants groups (Goldberg, 2002), and both public and private sectors (Sangster, 2001). Altogether, these skilled immigrants are in working-age group and majority are highly proficient in English therefore have great potential to contribute to the Canadian economy; however, 57.4 percent of them have not found employment in their area of training.

6.2.3 Education

As I mentioned earlier in section 6.2, approximately 80 percent of the participants completed tertiary education. Moreover, about 60 percent of the participants state that they are highly proficient in English, where they can communicate effectively in most community and work place situations, followed by 34 percent of participants that claim they are moderately proficient in English where they can speak, listen to, and read the language well. This, surprising in the view of literature (Alboim et al., 2005; Statistics Canada, 2005b; Wayland, 2006), justifies why 'language problem' was not high on the list of main barriers to employment in this sample.

6.3 Skilled and Unemployed

To understand why skilled Iranians are not working in their area of training, I narrowed down my focus to those who were unemployed at the time of the survey. I then compared barriers to employment for those who have never worked in Canada and those who have sometimes worked in Canada since their arrival. Table 11 presents percentages of skilled immigrants that were unemployed at the time of the survey but had sometime worked in Canada since their arrival and those who have never worked in Canada. According to this table, the lack of foreign credential recognition has become an increasing barrier to employment for skilled Iranian immigrants whether they have worked or not worked since arrival. The perception of the role of language ability also seems to follow such pattern. The rising percentages for lack of work experience cannot however be interpreted that way as experience can accumulate through time. It is however clear that lack of foreign credential recognition does not change with the length of stay. Therefore, those who migrated more recently seem to face more labour market difficulties than previously, particularly recent Iranian immigrants who have never worked in Canada. For example, of the unemployed skilled Iranian immigrants who arrived between 1996 and 2000 and who have never worked in Canada, 11.8 percent considered lack of foreign credential recognition as an obstacle to their employment (see Table 11). This figure reached 18.4 percent for those who arrived between 2001 and 2006, an increase of approximately 56 percent. Lack of credential recognition seems to be the main barrier to employment for the unemployed skilled Iranian immigrants who had worked at some time since their arrival in Canada. On the other hand, lack of Canadian work experience was the primary hurdle to employment for those who have never worked in Canada.

Table 11: Percentage of unemployed skilled Iranian immigrants who have sometime worked in Canada vs. unemployed skilled Iranians who have never worked in Canada and barriers to their employment (multiple responses allowed)

	1978-1990		1991-1995		1996-2000		2001-2006	
	Have worked	Have never worked	Have worked	Have never worked	Have worked	Have never worked	Have worked	Have never worked
Lack of work experience	1.3	2.6	0	6.6	5.4	15	6.6	31.6
Language problems	0	2.6	0	2.6	2.6	5.3	3.9	6.6
Lack of credential recognition	1.3	5.3	1.3	3.9	5.3	11.8	6.6	18.4
Lack of networks	1.3	5.3	1.3	6.6	5.3	18.4	6.6	19.7
Job availability	0	0	1.3	3.9	3.9	13.2	0	11.8
Financial Problem	0	0	0	1.3	1.3	0	0	6
Discrimination	0	0	0	1.3	1.3	1.3	0	3.9

6.4 Main Findings

A number of important issues are raised when considering participants' background information and responses to questions regarding their education. The majority of participants were accepted into Canada under Economic Class provisions; they are of an age that they are legally entitled to work in B.C., they are highly skilled and they claim to be highly proficient in English. All told, these skilled immigrants have great potential to contribute to the Canadian economy. However, 57.4 percent of these skilled immigrants have not found employment in their area of training.

Barriers to employment in this study, with an exception of language problems, are general to skilled immigrants. The following is a summary of responses gathered from the skilled participants in the survey that will influence policy analysis in the next section:

- 1) Skilled Iranians lack accurate and reliable information regarding Canadian labour market prior to immigration.
- 2) Perceived barriers to employment for skilled Iranian immigrants have steadily increased over time. Those who migrated more recently seem to face more labour market difficulties than previously, particularly recent Iranian immigrants with no Canadian work experience.
- 3) The main barriers to employment for skilled immigrants in scale of importance from highest to lowest are: lack of Canadian work experience; lack of networking; lack of foreign credential recognition
- 4) Many employers do not recognize the foreign credentials and work experience of skilled Iranian immigrants, and therefore reject them as potential employees.
- 5) There is little coordination among key stakeholders in designing, delivering and evaluating foreign credential programs and services for skilled immigrants.

7 Policy objectives and criteria

This section of the study provides a number of policy alternatives that the province of British Columbia may consider for improving the integration of highly skilled Iranians into the labour market. The section proceeds by presenting the criteria used to assess how well the policy alternatives achieve the stated objectives.

7.1 Policy Objectives

As mentioned earlier, Canada selects its skilled immigrants based on criteria such as education, language ability, experience, adaptability and age. These criteria are deemed necessary to increase immigrants' employability where they will be working in their area of training and contributing to Canada's economy. For reasons shown in previous sections of this study, the transition remains very rough for skilled immigrants and large proportions of them are underemployed and underutilized in the Canadian labour market.

The ultimate goal is for skilled immigrants to work in their area of training. As analyzed earlier, less than one third of the participants in the survey had obtained labour market information in their own occupation and 43.2 percent had acquired no information about the Canadian labour market prior to immigration to Canada. Moreover, as reflected by responses from participants in the survey, many employers do not recognize the foreign credentials and work experience of skilled Iranians immigrants, and therefore reject them as potential employees. The immediate response is to address the following 3 objectives. The first objective is that skilled immigrants should have good understanding of the Canadian labour market, which would enable them to form realistic expectations and prepare themselves accordingly. The second objective is for skilled immigrants to be considered as employable, ready to work, in their trade or profession by employers. The third objective is that skilled immigrants should have access to necessary resources and services to be able to transfer their knowledge and skills into occupations in their area of training. This objective refers to foreign credential recognition and requirements of Canadian work experience. Addressing these objectives will help smooth the transition and shorten the gap between settlement of skilled immigrants and their integration into particular labour markets where they would find employment in their areas of training.

7.2 Criteria

I have identified four criteria: effectiveness, public acceptance, political commitment and institutional coordination, and implementation costs to assess how well the policy alternatives achieve the objective of improving integration of highly skilled immigrants into the Canadian labour market.

I designed a scale for measuring the criteria from very strong to very weak and assigned a point value to each measure. I assigned the highest measure, very strong, value of 4 and the lowest measure, very weak, value of 1. I measure effectiveness criterion based on how well the proposed alternative will help skilled immigrants have better understanding of the Canadian labour market, and the extent that an alternative is anticipated to smooth the transition between settlement of Iranian-born skilled immigrants and their integration into the labour market by addressing lack of credential recognition and lack of Canadian work experience. I value effectiveness of a policy alternative as very strong if all 3 objectives are met. I value it as strong if 2 of the policy alternatives are met, and weak if the policy alternative only meets 1 of the objectives. If an alternative does not meet any of the objectives, I value it as very weak.

As for public acceptance criterion, I measure it in terms of the support from stakeholders like the skilled immigrants, taxpayers, and employers. If an alternative receives support from all stakeholders, I value that alternative as very strong in terms of public acceptance. If there is support from 2 of the stakeholders, then I value it as strong. I measure political commitment and institutional coordination criterion based on government's commitment to implement a proposed policy alternative within the existing political structure along with the level of coordination required between relevant stakeholders (such as regulatory bodies and credential assessment agencies) to implement an alternative. I value this criterion as very strong if political commitment is high and little coordination is required. On the other extreme, I value political commitment and institutional coordination as very weak when there is no political will and too much coordination among relevant stakeholders would be required to implement an alternative. For the costs criterion, I considered the approximate dollar amount of each alternative. To measure the cost criterion, a policy alternative that costs less than \$1,000 is valued as very strong compared to a cost that is above \$10,000, which is very expensive and valued as very weak. I will now turn to the next section where I will be proposing number of policy alternatives to better integrate skilled immigrants into the labour market and help them find employment in their area of training. Table 12 presents a summary of the criteria, definition and measurements that I use to evaluate each of the policy alternatives.

Table 12: Criteria, Definitions, and Measurements

Criteria	Measurement			
	4-Very Strong	3-Strong	2-Weak	1-Very Weak
Effectiveness	Alternative helps better integrate skilled immigrants into the labour market, addresses lack of information, lack of credential recognition and lack of Canadian work experience	Alternative addresses 2 of the following: Lack of Information, lack of credential recognition and lack of Canadian work experience	Alternative addresses 1 of the following: Lack of information, lack of credential recognition and lack of Canadian work experience	Alternative does not help better integrate skilled immigrants into the labour market
Public Acceptance	All stakeholders support the alternative	Majority of stakeholders support the alternative but there is minor opposition	There is major opposition from stakeholders	Not likely to be supported by the majority
Political Commitment & Institutional Coordination	High political commitment with low coordination requirement	High political commitment with high coordination requirement	Low political commitment; coordination requirement could be low/high	Low political commitment with high coordination requirement
Implementation Cost	Less than \$1000 per immigrant	Between \$1001 and \$5000 per immigrant	Between \$5001 and \$10,000 per immigrant	Above \$10,001 per immigrant

8 Policy Alternatives

This section of the study presents the policy alternatives that the province of British Columbia may consider to relax barriers to employment and utilization of highly skilled Iranians in GVRD. In addition to the status quo, I propose 3 policy alternatives to help skilled immigrants work in their area of training. This section presents the central tenants and features of each policy alternative. Even though the proposed policy alternatives are tailored to the Iranian immigrants, most are valid for other skilled immigrant populations in the province.

8.1 Status Quo

Even though status quo is not a viable option to further the integration of highly skilled Iranians into the labour market, it is essential to consider it for comparative analysis purposes. In the status quo, there are number of programs designed to help immigrants find employment. However, these programs are not designed towards improving integration of skilled immigrants in the labour market in the GVRD. An example is Skill Connect. This program helps connect new immigrants in Surrey who have professional background in construction, transportation, energy, tourism and hospitality industries with employers in their field.²⁶ There are also mentoring programs provided by SUCCESS and Multicultural Helping House Society (MHHS). In the case of the MHHS, their target was to help only 100 immigrants in 2006. There are currently no employment bridge or internship programs available in the GVRD to help skilled immigrants find employment in their area of training. In addition, there is no centralized approach to foreign credential recognition and majority of immigrants do not have access to accurate and reliable information about the labour market and regulated professions prior to immigration. As a result, the status quo is ineffective in terms of facilitating skilled immigrant's entry into the labour market.

²⁶For more information see:
http://www.dcrs.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=category§ionid=25&id=254&Itemid=517
retrieved January 20, 2007

8.2 Alternative 1: Provide Quality Information

Immigrants do not have accurate and reliable information regarding labour market prior to immigration. To improve integration of skilled immigrants into Canadian labour market it is very important that they have access to quality and up to date information regarding labour markets across the country, credential assessment (i.e. the process of credential assessment, the amount of time it takes to evaluate process, fees and etc.), and licensing province to province. Responses from the survey indicate that of the skilled Iranian immigrants who did acquire labour market information prior to immigration, more participants consider the information to be 'not helpful' than 'helpful'. In addition, my findings reveal that 43.2 percent of the participants did not have any labour market information prior to immigration. Put together, these findings point out the need for providing accurate and reliable information to skilled immigrants so they can better prepare themselves and form realistic expectations of their immigration experience and potential employment.

In this policy alternative, I propose that the Canadian government provide skilled Iranian immigrants with mandatory information sessions prior to immigration. Skilled Iranian immigrants will receive their immigration visa only after they attend the information session. The sessions which could be provided by the consulate or other agency, should inform skilled immigrants about issues and requirements around the regulated professions, licensing processes, professional associations, the employment situation province to province, language requirements, and support agencies available in the region of the country they plan to move to. Alternatively, given skilled immigrant's access to computer technology, a self-directed orientation session that includes the above information could be provided on the Immigration Canada or other web site.

8.2.1 Features of the proposed alternative

- 1) Provide mandatory information sessions in Iran about labour markets, regulated professions, licensing process, credential assessment process and the required documentations, professional associations, language proficiency, support agencies, and networking tips on how to get connected with potential employers.
- 2) When immigrants have accurate information, they are encouraged to do as much they can to prepare for their immigration while still in their home country.
- 3) There is a great deal of information available, however since this information is not centralized in one place, it makes it very difficult to gather information without a point of

reference. Many websites do provide valuable information about labour markets, regulated professions, and the process of credential assessment. Combining these sources into one information hub will ease the research process for immigrants, particularly given language differences and cultural differences in provision of services to citizens between Iran and Canada. For example, information from the Work Destinations website, a comprehensive source of information about regulated trades and professions in Canada, and from the Looking Ahead website, an Employment Access Strategy for Immigrants (EASI) initiative, could be combined in an online portal of information on programs and services that support immigrant employment in BC.

8.3 Alternative 2: Streamline Foreign Credentials Assessment

Many agencies within Canada assess foreign credentials. There are number of provincially mandated agencies providing foreign credential assessment, such as the ICES in British Columbia, however, there is no central national agency responsible for credentials assessment. Academic institutions, regulatory bodies, certifying bodies, and employers all have their own internal processes and specific procedures to assess foreign credentials. Lack of collaboration and coordination of assessment processes and procedures among such stakeholders has resulted in an unsystematic collection of procedures with few common standards (Omidvar, 2006; Riffel, 2006). Moreover, according to Riffel (2006), both Federal and Provincial governments have made funding available to promote development of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system to ensure that foreign-trained individuals achieve their full potential in the Canadian labour market and society. There are many successful RPL initiatives across Canada; however, these initiatives remain in isolation since relevant stakeholders do not share information regarding best practices (Riffel, 2006).

Improving coordination within the assessment community and streamlining recognition processes will be instrumental to effective integration of skilled immigrants into jobs corresponding with their training. In this policy alternative, I propose that the Federal government, in consultation with provinces and territories, regulatory bodies, professional associations, and other relevant stakeholders streamline foreign credential assessment and recognition policies, processes, and practices by developing a national framework for foreign credential assessment. To develop a national framework, all three levels of the government should initiate partnerships among key assessment institutions and organizations to adopt

common standards. The proposed policy alternative is therefore about restructuring and reorganizing the foreign credential assessment.

8.3.1 Features of the proposed alternative

- 1) Develop a national framework for assessment and recognition of foreign credentials
- 2) Adopt common standards for foreign credential assessment. It would be difficult to streamline regulated professional organizations in each province and territory as they each have different set of standards and procedures to assess foreign credentials. However, to successfully integrated skilled immigrants into the labour market, it is “critical for each profession to engage various stakeholders including federal and provincial/ territorial government, regulatory associations from each province/ territory, employers in the field, credential services and education institutions in designing, developing and implementing a national RPL framework for foreign-trained individuals” (Riffel, 2006, p.39).
- 3) Develop a common updated data bank of universities and colleges abroad to determine Canadian equivalencies.
- 4) Offer the assessment to immigrants prior to their arrival so that they would be able to have assessed credentials once they arrive. As mentioned earlier, depending on the type of assessment, it takes between 4 to 7 weeks to assess credentials once the credential organization receives all the required documents. Providing assessment services before immigrants arrive save immigrants both time and money (in terms of lost wages while waiting for their credentials to be recognized in Canada).
- 5) Promote existing credential recognition services to raise employer awareness about available services. In a survey of 20091 employers, Lopes (2004), finds that 82 percent of employers could not name an organization that provides credential recognition services.

8.4 Alternative 3: Streamline Foreign Credential Assessment plus Provide Internship Programs

Similar to other immigrant groups, Canadian work experience is the most difficult barrier to employment for skilled Iranian immigrants. Approximately 33 percent of the skilled immigrants in my survey who have not found employment in their area of training indicate that lack of Canadian work experience is a major hurdle to employment. Skilled immigrants with no

Canadian work experience face the a cyclical dilemma of no Canadian work experience, no job, no job, no Canadian work experience, which prevents them from contributing to Canada's economic growth (Career Bridge, 2007). To improve integration of skilled immigrants into labour market it is crucial to help them gain their first Canadian work experience.

In this alternative, I propose development of internship programs in BC, for skilled immigrants, especially for those *in regulated professions*. *The proposed internship program, which is inspired from Career Bridge program in Ontario, is to streamline credential assessment plus help skilled immigrants gain their first Canadian work experience.* Skilled immigrants with recognized credentials would get a chance to demonstrate their skills to employers during an internship period and receive stipend. This is a win-win situation for everyone. If employers like what they see and have the potential to take on new hires, they could hire the skilled immigrant after the internship period is over. In the case that employers do not have the capacity to hire the skilled immigrants after internship, skilled immigrants have gained their first Canadian work experience, have Canadian work references and therefore will face decreased problems applying for other positions elsewhere. This alternative also deals with lack of networking and contacts. Once skilled immigrants get into internship, they will be able to build on the job contacts with individuals in their field, and get better understanding of how the industry or profession works in their area of training.

Skilled immigrants who wish to register for the proposed internship programs would need to meet the following criteria: they reside in Canada for fewer than 4 years, have at least a bachelor's degree, possess a recent Canadian assessment of their credentials, and lack Canadian work experience in their profession. Additionally, they would be fluent in English, have at least 2 years of international work experience in their field, and must be able to attend a screening interview in person. The internship programs would be at least 6 months in length, with an opportunity to extend placements to maximum of 1 year. The federal government, through a joint project of Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, should provide funding to a *Career Internship Organization* to handle the administration and implementation of the program. Staff would sell the program by advertising to employers and creating awareness about pools of talent and expertise that they could have access to by providing internships to skilled immigrants. Once an employer agrees to buy in, they will select a candidate of their choice from the pool of candidates and interview them. After the

employer completes the selection process, the successful candidate is hired for the internship and becomes an employee of the host organization.²⁷

8.4.1 Features of the proposed alternative

- 1) Develop an internship program where skilled immigrants with recognized credentials would get a chance to demonstrate their skills to employers during an internship period and receive stipend.
- 2) Create awareness about the internship program among employers, especially small size employers that may not necessarily have the resources to hire individuals without Canadian work experience increases employer involvement. According to Kim Walker (Community and Environment, 2003), 75 percent of job vacancies are with small companies.
- 3) This is a win-win situation for everyone: employers, immigrants and the society as a whole benefit when skilled immigrants are successfully integrated into the Canadian labour market.
- 4) Provide tax breaks for providing the internship and the eventual hiring of skilled immigrants with international training creates an incentive for employers to hire immigrants with foreign credentials.
- 5) Giving foreign-trained immigrants the opportunity to demonstrate their learning that meets Canadian standards helps shorten training time and reduces costs both to the economy and to the skilled immigrants. In addition, it also increases retention, improves completion, and reduces skill shortages (Riffel, 2006).

²⁷ The Career Internship Organization invoices the employers for the stipend and the program delivery fee. The government could take the initiative by creating incentives for employers to become more active in assisting the entry of skilled immigrants into the labour market. The support could be in form of tax breaks for every skilled immigrant hired by the employers.

9 Evaluation of Policy Alternatives

This section outlines an overall evaluation of the proposed policy alternatives. The objective of this section is to assess each alternative utilizing the criteria. The section summarizes evaluation of the policies and presents them in matrices.

9.1 Evaluation of Status Quo

The status quo is not a viable option to improve integration of highly skilled immigrants into the Canadian labour market. The current system is not effective when significant proportions of immigrants in Canada are unable to convert their foreign qualifications into jobs corresponding to their training (Couton, 2002; Goldberg, 2000; Reitz, 2001, 2005). Highly skilled new immigrants like those trained as doctors or engineers in their country of origin settle for less skilled occupations upon their arrival in Canada, such as driving taxis (Keung, 2000, Statistics Canada, 2003). Skilled Iranians lack accurate and reliable information regarding Canadian labour market and the most commonly reported difficulties skilled Iranian immigrants experience when entering the labour market include lack of Canadian work experience, lack of recognition of their foreign credentials or experience, lack of connections and networking in the job market. The main barriers to employment of skilled Iranian immigrants in this study, with an exception of language problems, are general to other skilled immigrant populations. The status quo is not effective in terms of successfully integrating skilled immigrants into the Canadian labour market and underutilization of immigrants' skills costs the Canadian economy billions of dollars annually. Therefore, I value effectiveness as weak for the status quo.

In terms of public acceptance, not only is there opposition from skilled immigrants, but there is also opposition from taxpayers. Taxpayers oppose the status quo because skilled immigrants are not contributing to Canada's economic development at their full capacity. They understand that by being underutilized, skilled immigrants are more likely to depend on social programs than to contribute to development of social programs (Alboim et al., 2005). Therefore, considering significant opposition from skilled immigrants and taxpayers, I value public acceptance as weak for the status quo.

There is strong political commitment to change the current system where numerous initiatives are taking place to alleviate barriers to employment of skilled immigrants both at federal and provincial levels. In spite of increases in the immigration levels in the past decade, immigrant settlement funding has not risen significantly until recently (2006b). However, the 2006 budget provided an additional \$307 million in settlement funding for new immigrants over the next two years.²⁸ The new funding translates into over \$138 million for BC for the next two years, an increase of 86.7 percent. The coordination requirement (however) remains high, as the large numbers of stakeholders involved must be consulted so initiatives are not duplicated. Therefore, I value political commitment and institutional coordination as strong for the status quo.

In terms of costs, the BC government spent approximately \$565 per immigrant on settlement services in 2001/2002 (BCCII, 2002). This amount is for language instruction services, settlement services including job finding clubs, and hosts/buddy services.²⁹ As seen earlier, Reitz (2001) has estimated that \$2.4 billion immigrant earnings deficit relates to the underutilization of skills. This means that the opportunity cost of skilled immigrants not working in their area of training is \$2.4 billion per year. Li et al. (2006) find that more than half (52 percent) of recent immigrants, those in Canada for 10 years or less, with a university degree worked in a job requiring only high school education at some point between 1993 and 2001. Given this percentage and number of immigrants with university degrees that landed in Canada in 2001, there were 45,762 underutilized skilled immigrants in 2001.³⁰ The opportunity cost per skilled immigrant not working in their area of training is \$52,445 in 2001. To calculate the opportunity cost per skilled immigrant, I divided \$2.4 billion by the number of underutilized skilled immigrants in 2001. The total cost of status quo for the government is \$53,010, which is the highest cost among all alternatives (see Table 12). I value implementation costs as very weak for the status quo since \$52,445 exceeds \$10,001 as set out in the implementation cost criterion measure.

²⁸ For more information see <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/06/0620-e.html>

²⁹ Host /Buddy services help newcomers overcome the stress of moving to a new country by having a friend familiar with Canadian ways help them learn about available services and how to use them, develop contacts in their employment field, and participate in community activities. For more information see (BCCII, 2002)

³⁰ A total of 88,003 skilled immigrants landed in Canada in 2001. Of these skilled immigrants, 66,013 had a bachelors degree, 18,467 had a Masters degree and 3,523 had PhD. For more information see <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/facts2001/1imm-06.html>.

9.2 Evaluation of Alternative 1: Access to Quality Information

In 1998, Citizenship and Immigration Canada established the Canadian Orientation Abroad (COA) program. The sessions introduce Canada and provide information on topics such as culture shock and the settling-in period, employment, rights and responsibilities, climate, finding a place to live, living in a multicultural society, the cost of living, education, and adaptation to Canada (SNAP, 2005). The length of sessions varies and they are organized as one, three or five day modules. Due to limited resources, the program prioritizes refugees. A Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) employee was surprised to find the extent of information a participant of COA had about settlement in Canada. For example, the newly arrived immigrant knew about the required documents to obtain a Social Insurance Number and the health care card and he knew how to obtain each card (SNAP, 2005). This is one indication that providing information to immigrants prior to their arrival is effective. Even though the foundations of my proposed mandatory sessions are similar to that of the COA information sessions, there is a difference in the content covered. While COA information sessions cover topics that mainly help alleviate culture shock and assist with the settling-in period, the mandatory information sessions would cover Canadian labour market topics such as regulated professions, licensing process, credential assessment process and required documentation, professional associations, language proficiency, support agencies, and networking tips on how to get connected with potential employers. Providing mandatory information sessions to skilled Iranian immigrants prior to immigration would be as effective as the COA sessions. For instance, knowing they would need original educational documents for credential assessment, skilled immigrants would prepare the required documents prior to coming to Canada. This would help speed up the credential recognition process since as mentioned earlier, comprehensive assessment takes about 7 weeks once the agency has received all the required documents. Therefore, I value effectiveness as strong for this alternative.

In terms of public acceptance, even though skilled immigrants are proponents of having access to information prior to immigration, some taxpayers may oppose. It costs money to provide the mandatory information sessions and some taxpayers may think potential immigrants should find the information themselves and the government is not obligated to provide it with tax money. Employers, on the other hand, would support this alternative because the more knowledgeable skilled immigrants are regarding the labour market, the more likely it is they will become credentialed and therefore employable. As a result, they would be able to start work and

fill labour shortages in a more timely fashion. I value public acceptance as strong for this alternative.

Starting 2005-2006 COA sessions were scheduled for Iran (SNAP, 2005). This is an indication of very strong political commitment and institutional coordination. It is worth noting however, that refugees, who are not necessarily skilled, are given priority attendance at these sessions, and offering the sessions does not necessarily mean skilled immigrants have access to them. With the existing program in place, it is now a matter of expanding the program so the sessions are mandatory and contain more information that that pertains to skilled immigrants. I therefore value political commitment and institutional coordination as very strong for this alternative.

During 1999-2000, 3,159 prospective immigrants attended the COA sessions, with a per person costs of \$317 (CIC, 2000). I thought this would be a good benchmark for the mandatory information sessions. Since the costs of this alternative do not exceed \$1000, I value the implementation costs as very strong for this alternative.

9.3 Evaluation of Alternative 2: Streamline Foreign Credential Assessment

Streamlining recognition of foreign credentials will increase the credibility of the assessments and make it easier for the employers to accept the assessment and hire foreign-trained individuals (Alboim, 2003). In addition, Alboim et al. (2006) point out expenditure on foreign credential assessment represents an investment in information that could be used by educational institutions, regulatory bodies, and employers at low or effectively no marginal cost. Moreover, this alternative helps increase the number of ready to work skilled immigrants, especially if services are available to skilled immigrants prior to their arrival. Therefore, I value effectiveness as very strong for this policy alternative.

Lack of foreign credential assessment is one of the main barriers to the employment of skilled immigrants. Therefore, skilled immigrants who wish to work in their area of training will support this alternative, which would also give them the opportunity to start their assessment prior to their arrival in Canada. Taxpayers will also support this alternative because it increases the chances that larger numbers of skilled immigrants find employment in their area of training, hence contributing to the development of social programs, and depending less on such programs themselves. Many employers conduct their own credential assessment using their internal resources. By promoting streamlined credential assessment among employers, not only would

there be increased numbers of employers aware of the assessment services, but they would also be more inclined to use and accept the more consistent and credible assessments (Alboim, 2003). Furthermore, in the SUCCESS forum in 2007, all stakeholders pointed to the need for a more collaborative and efficient way of conducting foreign credential assessment to enable skilled immigrants ready to work in Canada. I therefore value public acceptance as very strong for this alternative.

Federal and Provincial governments provide funding to promote development of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system, and to ensure foreign-trained individuals achieve their full potential in the Canadian labour market and society (Riffel, 2006). It would be challenging to promote collaboration among agencies that compete for the same client pool. Alboim (2002) argues that collaboration is more likely if the client base for foreign credential assessment grows. In Alboim's (2002) opinion, one way to increase the client base is to provide access to a loan program which skilled immigrants can use to pay for credential recognition services. I value political commitment and institutional coordination as strong for this alternative.

In 2006, the federal government set aside \$18 million dollars over the next 2 years to proceed with the consultation process and take the first steps towards the establishment of a Canadian credential assessment and recognition agency. To estimate how much implementing this alternative costs per person, I first divided the \$18 million by the number of immigrants with post-secondary education who came to Canada in 2005,³¹ assuming they all need credential assessment and recognition, which totalled \$192 dollars per person. Then, assuming only half of the skilled immigrants require credential recognition, the cost per impacted immigrant rose to \$385 dollars. Like status quo, it is important to take into account lost wages as skilled immigrants wait for their credential assessment in Canada. As mentioned earlier, depending on the type of assessment, the process could take between 4 and 7 weeks from the time that the credential recognition organization receives the required documents. Assuming that skilled immigrants have all their documents prepared once they come to Canada and apply for credential recognition right away, they will lose at least 4 to 7 weeks worth of wages working in their area of training. Furthermore, assuming that skilled immigrants would start with salary of \$40,000 per year, lost wages range between \$3,333 and \$5,833 dollars. The total cost of starting the development of a Canadian credential agency when combined with the lost wages of impacted immigrants ranges

³¹ The latest available data on immigrants is 2005.

between \$3,525 and \$6,218 dollars per person. I value the implementation costs for this alternative as weak.

9.4 Evaluation of Alternative 3: Streamline Foreign Credential Assessment plus Provide Internship Programs

In 2004, the government of Ontario launched Career Bridge, a non-for-profit internship program that aims at helping internationally qualified professionals gain valuable career related paid work experience in the province. The program has been extremely successful. The program created 315 internships since its commencement, 86 percent of which resulted in full time permanent jobs, with 55 percent of the jobs being with the internship employer (Omidvar, 2006). The Ontario government is now investing \$14 million dollars over the next 3 years in 24 new bridge programs for over 100 trades and professional careers that will benefit at least 3,000 internationally trained professionals.³² This suggests that the internship programs work and are effective in terms of successfully integrating skilled immigrants into the labour market. Based on this evidence, I value effectiveness as very strong for this alternative.

Everyone in society benefits when skilled immigrants work in their area of training. Skilled immigrants benefit when they are compensated for their skills and do not have to work at survival jobs to support themselves and their families. Employers also benefit when skilled immigrants fill in the gaps. Furthermore, society benefits when skilled immigrants are successfully integrated into the labour market and contribute to economic development rather than depending on social programs themselves (Alboim et al., 2005). Even though skilled immigrants, employers and society as a whole benefits when immigrants work in their area of training, there may be some opposition from those who think providing incentives for employers to hire skilled immigrants would disadvantage them when applying for the same position. Therefore, I value public acceptance as strong for this alternative.

There is strong political commitment to change the current system. Numerous federal and provincial initiatives implement changes, which decrease barriers to the employment of skilled immigrants. The 2006 budget provided an additional \$307 million in settlement funding for new immigrants over the next two years³³. The new funding translates into over \$138 million for BC for the next two years, an increase of 86.7 percent. It will be necessary for coordination between stakeholders to continue and increase over time, particularly considering the consultation process

³² For more details see <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/about/b180506.htm>

³³ For more information see <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/06/0620-e.html>

required to set common accreditation assessment standards. However, less coordination is required with internship programs like Ontario's Career Bridge. Therefore, I value political commitment and institutional coordination as strong for this alternative.

To date, the Ontario government has invested over \$34 million dollars in bridge training programs that have benefited more than 6,000 newcomers.³⁴ The costs of these programs to the Ontario government therefore have been \$5,667 dollars per person. This would be a good benchmark for BC when considering the Internship Program alternative. Since this alternative is a combination of streamlining foreign credential assessment and providing internship programs, the costs from streamlining foreign credential assessment need to be added to the cost of providing internship programs. The total cost therefore ranges between \$9,192 and \$11,885 dollars per person. Therefore, I value the implementation costs as weak for this alternative. It is clear that costs associated with running the internship programs are high. In this capstone, I have only looked at costs of internship programs for highly skilled immigrants and have not addressed other groups in Canadian society who might equally benefit from internship programs. Therefore, this policy alternative may not be as feasible due to equity issues. If internships are provided to other groups, the budgetary implications would be larger.

³⁴ For more information see <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/about/b180506.htm>

Table 13: Policy Alternatives Evaluation Matrix

Alternatives	Criteria			
	Effectiveness	Public Acceptance	Institutional Coordination	Costs
Status Quo	Weak -does not integrate skilled immigrants into labour market	Weak -skilled immigrants and taxpayers oppose	Strong - increased funding and initiatives by the government to address integration of skilled immigrants	Very Weak - \$53,010/person
Provide Quality Information	Strong -immigrants will form realistic expectations and prepare themselves accordingly	Strong - skilled immigrants supports this but some taxpayers may oppose this alternative	Very Strong -orientation sessions already available to refugees; labour market information is available and needs to be centralized	Very Strong \$317/person
Streamline Credential Assessment	Very Strong -increase efficiency and credibility; increased employer awareness	Very Strong -all relevant stakeholders will support this alternative	Strong - funding from government to start consultation on a Canadian credential agency; challenging due to multi jurisdictions and players involved	Weak \$3,525- \$6,218/person
Streamline Credential Assessment Plus Provide Internship Program	Strong -majority of skilled immigrants enrolled in Ontario's Career Bridge have found employment, more than half of them with the internship employer	Strong - all relevant stakeholders support this; minor opposition from those who see this as increased completion in their trade	Strong -increased settlement funding; challenging due to multi jurisdiction and players involved	Very Weak \$9,192- 11,885/person

Table 13 presents a summary of the policy alternatives evaluation matrix. Essentially, this is a quantitative calculation that allows comparative analysis of the alternatives. An overview of the summary matrix reveals that the first alternative, providing quality information, achieves the highest score with 14 points. This alternative is the only one to achieve the value of very strong for implementation costs and receives the full 4 points. The second alternative, streamline foreign credential assessment, earns second place with 13 points. Moreover, streamlining foreign credential assessment is the only alternative that receives very strong values for both

effectiveness and public acceptance. The last alternative, streamline credential assessment plus provide internship programs earns third place with 11 points. This alternative receives a very strong score in terms of effectiveness; however, it scores very weak in terms of costs. The status quo is the least desirable alternative with 8 points out of the possible 16 points. It is the only alternative to score weak in terms of both effectiveness and public acceptance. This leads me to the next section where I will make my recommendations to help better integrate skilled immigrants into the labour market.

Table 14: Summary of Evaluation Matrix

Alternatives	Criteria				
	Effectiveness	Public Acceptance	Political Commitment and Institutional Coordination	Costs	Total Score (16)
Status Quo	2	2	3	1	8
Provide Quality Information	3	3	4	4	14
Streamline Credential Assessment	4	4	3	2	13
Streamline Credential Assessment Plus Provide Internship Program	4	3	3	1	11

10 Recommendations

In this section, I make two recommendations to better help integrate skilled Iranian immigrants into the Canadian labour market, which are based on my analysis in the previous section. My first recommendation is to provide quality information to skilled Iranian immigrants prior to immigration. Providing quality information will help skilled Iranian immigrants have realistic expectations and prepare themselves accordingly. Knowing the labour market and the process of accreditation, skilled Iranian immigrants can take steps to prepare themselves while they are waiting for their immigration visas. One good example of this is preparing original educational documentations for credential assessment while they are waiting for their immigration visas. Therefore, when they come to Canada, they know about foreign credential assessment, and they have all the required documentation to get their qualifications accredited. The earlier skilled immigrants get their credentials recognized and fill the gaps in their qualifications, the sooner they will be able to find employment in their area of training and contribute to the Canadian economy at their full potential.

This alternative can provide results on its own. However, it would be more effective in combination with my next recommendation. In addition, since the implementation costs of this alternative are a small fraction of current costs, I recommend streamlining foreign credential assessment as the second step towards better integration of skilled immigrants into the labour market. The combined costs of these two recommended alternatives do not add up to one quarter of the costs of the status quo.

Streamlined foreign credential assessment with common standards will increase the credibility of the assessments and would make it easier for employers to accept the assessment and hire foreign-trained individuals. Furthermore, creating awareness among employers is a key goal toward the integration of skilled immigrants into the labour market.

It is hoped all relevant stakeholders, most importantly the Federal and Provincial ministries promoting and encouraging people to immigrate to Canada and those officials who staff new immigrant's entry points to Canada, take notice of the recommended policy alternatives in this capstone. It is also hoped these stakeholders recognize the importance of these recommendations in relation to skilled immigrant integration into the Canadian labour market.

However, since these proposed policy alternatives are not exclusive to the immigrant community examined here, (indeed, these recommendations could be applied in a way that benefited all skilled immigrants to Canada, regardless of origin), some prioritizing of the recommended policy alternatives is provided.

If stakeholders take on these recommendations and decide only one policy alternative is possible to implement in the immediate future, policy regarding access to information at the immigrant's main points of contact with information providers and Canadian officials is of highest priority. Skilled immigrants must have access to quality information about the Canadian labour market prior to leaving their country of origin, including the requirements for credential recognition in their field of education, skill and employment experience, and the process of accreditation in order to prepare themselves for immigration and their future employment in Canada. Of course, streamlining the foreign credential assessment process is also important to get skilled immigrants working, but in the absence of the ability to do so in the short term, preparing skilled immigrants with highly accurate information is of most consequence, for the immigrant and their family, and for the Canadian economy as a whole.

11 Conclusion

In this study, I examined barriers to employment and utilization of highly skilled Iranian immigrants in GVRD by conducting a survey. My results indicate that skilled Iranian immigrants lack accurate and reliable information regarding Canadian labour market prior to immigration. In addition, the main barriers to employment of these immigrants in scale of importance from highest to lowest are lack of Canadian work experience, lack of networking, and lack of foreign credential recognition. Moreover, perceived barriers to employment for skilled Iranian immigrants have steadily increased over time. Those who migrated more recently seem to face more labour market difficulties than previously, particularly recent Iranian immigrants with no Canadian work experience.

In order to relax barriers to employment and increase the utilization of skilled Iranian immigrants, I recommend key stakeholders provide quality information to potential skilled immigrants prior to their immigration and arrival in Canada. The costs of implementing this alternative are very low compared to current settlement funding and opportunity losses associated with the underutilization of skilled immigrants. Therefore, my second recommendation is the streamlining of foreign credential recognition. These policies will address a number of barriers highly skilled immigrants face. Their combined implementation cost would be a small fraction of the status quo.

In his annual report to Parliament on immigration in 2006, Monte Solberg, Immigration Minister, announced Canada's plan to increase Immigration Canada's target immigration levels by 5.2 percent in 2007.³⁵ This goal translates into an ever increasing number of highly skilled immigrants entering Canada. In fact, HRDC projects the country's net labour force growth will entirely depend on immigration by 2011 (HRDC, 2002). Therefore, addressing barriers to employment of highly skilled immigrants is fundamental to developing effective policies to maximize their fullest potential in the labour market.

Immigrants make significant contributions to the development of the Canadian economy, society, and culture. If they continue to be underemployed and underutilized, there is an increased

³⁵ For more information see <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/06/0617-e.html> retrieved March 8, 2007

risk to Canada that they will migrate to another country or return to their countries of origin. Canada's ability to remain competitive in the global economy depends on how effectively it will attract and integrate necessarily highly skilled immigrants. Considering the experience of skilled immigrants from Iran and elsewhere in the last ten years, it is critical alternative policies are implemented which meet the needs of the next wave of immigrants Canada hopes to attract.

As Canada takes steps towards integrating skilled immigrants into the labour market, it is important to track progress. One possible area of future research is a panel study of the skilled immigrants enrolled in Ontario's Career Bridge program (since its commencement) in order to analyse the outcomes and impacts on them once they gain their Canadian work experience. In addition, it might be time to re-evaluate the points system that favours highly skilled immigrants who most often are unable to transfer their skills into related occupations, and instead focus on a system that would be more in keeping with the economy's needs. Although such amendment is important, it remains outside the scope of my analysis.

Appendices

Appendix A- A.1 Immigration Application Form for Skilled Immigrant



APPLICATION FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCE FEDERAL SKILLED WORKER CLASS SIMPLIFIED APPLICATION PROCESS

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED BY THE
PRINCIPAL APPLICANT ONLY

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY
Office file number (or IMM 1343 Case Label)
Date of receipt stamp at post

How many family members (including yourself) are included in this application for permanent residence?

Language you prefer for:

Correspondence: English French

Interview: English French Other

**You must meet all criteria
at the time you submit your application**

1. Your full name (as shown in your passport or travel document):

Family name
Given name(s)

2. Your sex Male Female

3. Your date of birth

Day	Month	Year

4. Your place of birth Town/City
Country

5. Your country of citizenship

6. Your country of residence
Since when?

Day	Month	Year

7. Your native language

8. Your height cm OR ft in

9. Colour of your eyes

10. Your current marital status

Never married Married Widowed Legally separated
 Annulled marriage Divorced Common-law

If you are married or in a common-law relationship, provide the date on which you were married or entered into the common-law relationship:

Day	Month	Year

11. Have you previously been married or in a common-law relationship?

No Yes Give the following details for each previous spouse or partner. If you do not have enough space, provide details on a separate sheet of paper.

Name of previous spouse or partner

Date of birth

Day	Month	Year

Type of relationship Marriage Common-law union

From

Day	Month	Year

 to

Day	Month	Year

12. Your residential address (include city and country)

13. Your mailing address, if different from your residential address

All correspondence will go to this address unless you indicate your e-mail address below, thereby authorizing correspondence, including file and personal information to be provided to the specified e-mail address.

14. Your e-mail address, if applicable

15. Your telephone numbers

At home	Country code	Area code	Number
	()	()	() () () ()
Alternative			() () () () () ()

16. Details from your passport

Passport number

Country of issue

Date of expiry

Day	Month	Year

17. Your identity card number, if applicable

18. Where do you intend to live in Canada?

City/Town

19. Your current occupation

20. Work in Canada

Have you or, if applicable, your accompanying spouse or common-law partner, previously worked full-time in Canada for at least one year?

No Yes You Your spouse or common-law partner

21. Study in Canada

Have you or, if applicable, your accompanying spouse or common-law partner, previously studied full-time for at least two years at a post-secondary institution in Canada?

No Yes You Your spouse or common-law partner

22. Education

How many years of formal education do you have?

What is your highest level of completed education?

No secondary Bachelor's degree
 Secondary Master's degree
 Trade/Apprenticeship Ph.D.
 Non-university certificate/diploma

23. Language

Which is your first official language: English French

Which is your second official language: English French

Your proficiency in English

	High	Moderate	Basic	None
Speak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23. Language (continued)

Your proficiency in French

	High	Moderate	Basic	None
Speak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Write	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. Do you or, if applicable, your accompanying spouse or common-law partner, have a relative living in Canada who is a citizen or a permanent resident of Canada?

No Yes You Your spouse or common-law partner

Relationship: Mother or father Grandmother or grandfather
 Daughter or son Granddaughter or grandson
 Sister or brother Aunt or uncle
 Niece or nephew Spouse or common-law partner

25. Funds

Amount of unencumbered transferable and available funds you have in Canadian dollars

\$

26. Your work experience

Starting with your current occupation, list your occupations within the 10 years preceding the date of your application. Give for each the appropriate National Occupational Classification code (NOC), the number of years of continuous full-time or equivalent part-time experience and a description of your main duties. List only occupations that fall in Skill Type 0 or Skill Levels A or B of the NOC. Use additional sheets of paper if there is not enough space on the form.

From		To		Occupation	NOC	Years of experience	Main duties
M	Y	M	Y				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year but less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years but less than 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years but less than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 years or more	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year but less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years but less than 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years but less than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 years or more	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 year but less than 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 years but less than 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 years but less than 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 years or more	

27. Details of family members

You must provide the following details about each of your family members, whether they will be accompanying you to Canada or not. You must include only your spouse or common-law partner, if applicable, and all of your dependent children (natural and/or adopted), and those of your spouse or common-law partner, who are not already permanent residents or citizens of Canada. If you have more than three family members, photocopy this page before you start completing it or print it from our Web site at www.cic.gc.ca. Make sure you have enough copies to fill in details about all your family members.

	FAMILY MEMBER	FAMILY MEMBER	FAMILY MEMBER
Family name	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Given name(s)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Date of birth	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Place of birth	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Town/City	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Country	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Country of citizenship	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Current country of residence	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Other countries with resident status	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Marital status (use one of the categories in question 10)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to you	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Will accompany you to Canada	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Passport details			
Passport number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Country of issue	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Date of expiry	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Identity card number	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Native language	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Can communicate in English	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can communicate in French	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Education			
Total number of years of formal education	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Level of education	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Current occupation	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Height	<input type="text"/> cm OR <input type="text"/> ft <input type="text"/> in	<input type="text"/> cm OR <input type="text"/> ft <input type="text"/> in	<input type="text"/> cm OR <input type="text"/> ft <input type="text"/> in
Colour of eyes	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

28. Declaration and signature

I declare that the information I have given is complete, truthful and correct.	<hr style="width: 100%;"/>	C M Y
		Date
	Signature of applicant	

The information you provide on this form is collected under the authority of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* and will be used for the purpose of assessing your application for permanent residence in Canada according to the requirements of the Act. It will be retained in Personal Information Bank CIC PPU 042 entitled Immigrant Case File identified in Infosource. It may be shared with other organizations in accordance with the consistent use of information under the *Privacy Act*. Under the *Access to Information Act*, individuals have the right to protection of and access to their personal information. Details on these matters are available at infosource.gc.ca and through the Citizenship and Immigration Call Centre. Infosource is also available in Canadian public libraries.

A.2 Self-Assessment Worksheet from Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Factor 1: Education (maximum of 25 points)

Education Level	Points
Master's or PhD and at least 17 years of full-time or full-time equivalent study	25
Two or more university degrees at the Bachelor's level and at least 15 years of full-time or full-time equivalent study; or A three-year diploma, trade certificate or apprenticeship and at least 15 years of full-time or full-time equivalent study	22
A university degree of two years or more at the Bachelor's level, and at least 14 years of full-time or full-time equivalent study; or A two-year diploma, trade certificate or apprenticeship and at least 14 years of full-time or full-time equivalent study	20
A one-year university degree at the Bachelor's level and at least 13 years of full-time or full-time equivalent study; or A one-year diploma, trade certificate or apprenticeship and at least 13 years of full-time or full-time equivalent study	15
A one-year diploma, trade certificate or apprenticeship and at least 12 years of full-time or full-time equivalent study	12
Secondary school (also called high school)	5

Source: *Citizenship Immigration Canada (2007)*

Factor 2: Language Ability (maximum of 24 points)

First Official Language	Read	Write	Listen	Speak
High Proficiency	4	4	4	4
Moderate proficiency	2	2	2	2
Basic proficiency	1	1	1	1
No proficiency	0	0	0	0

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007)

Second Official Language	Read	Write	Listen	Speak
High Proficiency	2	2	2	2
Moderate proficiency	2	2	2	2
Basic proficiency	1	1	1	1
No proficiency	0	0	0	0

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007)

Factor 3: Work Experience (maximum of 21 points)

Years of Experience	Points
1	15
2	17
3	19
4 +	21

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007)

Factor 4: Age (maximum of 10 points)

Age	Points
16 or under	0
17	2
18	4
19	6
20	8
21-49	10
50	8
51	6
52	4
53	2
54 and over	0

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007)

Factor 5: Arranged Employment (maximum of 10 points)

If	And	Points
You are currently working in Canada on a temporary work permit (including sectoral confirmation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -your work permit is valid for 12 or more months after the date you apply for a permanent resident visa; -your employer has made an offer to give you a permanent job if your application is successful 	10
You are currently working in Canada in a job that is HRSD confirmation-exempt under an international agreement or a significant benefit category (i.e. intra-company transferee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -your work permit is valid for 12 or more months after the date you apply for a permanent resident visa; -your employer has made an offer to give you a permanent job if your application is successful 	10
You do not currently have a work permit and you do not intend to work in Canada before you have been issued a permanent resident visa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -you have a full-time job offer that has been confirmed by Human Resources Skills Development (HRSD) -your employer has made an offer to give you a permanent job if your application is successful -you meet all required Canadian licensing or regulatory standards associated with the job 	10

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007)

Factor 6: Adaptability (maximum of 10 points)

Adaptability Criteria	Points
<p>A. Spouse or common-law partner's level of education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Secondary school (high school) diploma or less: 0 points - A one-year diploma, trade certificate, apprenticeship, or university degree and at least 12 years of full-time or full-time equivalent studies: 3 points - A diploma, trade certificate, apprenticeship, or university degree of two years or more and at least 14 years of full-time or full-time equivalent studies: 4 points - A Master's or PhD and at least 17 years of full-time or full-time equivalent studies: 5 points 	3-5
<p>B. Previous study in Canada:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You or your accompanying spouse or common-law partner studied at a post-secondary institution in Canada for at least two years on a full-time basis. This must have been done after the age of 17 and with a valid study permit. 	5
<p>C. Previous work in Canada:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You or your accompanying spouse or common-law partner completed a minimum of one year of full-time work in Canada on a valid work permit. 	5
<p>D. Arranged employment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You earned points under Factor 5: Arranged Employment. 	5
<p>E. Relatives in Canada:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You or your accompanying spouse or common-law partner has a relative (parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, child of a parent, sibling, child of a grandparent, aunt/uncle, or grandchild of a parent, niece or nephew) who lives in Canada and is a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. 	5

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007)

Appendix B- Survey Instrument

I am a Master student in the Graduate Public Policy Program at Simon Fraser University, working on my final thesis. The purpose of sending out this email is to ask you to take part in the survey I am conducting in order to gather the necessary data for my analyses. I would appreciate if you would spend maximum 5 minutes of your precious time to fill the on-line questionnaire. The survey is anonymous. I kindly ask you to participate in this survey only once. Therefore, please ignore this email if you have already participated.

My Master thesis looks at barriers and obstacles to employment of highly skilled Iranians in Vancouver. As an Iranian immigrant, it has always been a question to me why a large number of professional immigrants work in areas other than their expertise. For instance, we see doctors, engineers and lawyers working in low profile jobs with minimum wages. I am therefore conducting this survey to find out why this is the case and analyze what could be done about that problem. Findings from this survey may help existing and future immigrants to find jobs in their own field.

My thesis is expected to be completed in May 2007. If you are interested in my research results, please do not hesitate to contact me at leyla@sfu.ca .Thank you in advance for your great support,

Sincerely
Leyla Nouhi

Website: www.sfu.ca/~lnouhi
Computing ID: immigration
Password: Canada

In filling out this survey, you are consenting to participate in this study. Your responses will be confidential and will not be distributed to outside parties. If you already participated, please do not participate again. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you can withdraw at anytime. The survey is anonymous, please do not identify yourself. If you have any concerns or complaints, contact Dr. Hal Weinberg, Director, Office of Research Ethics, at hal_weinberg@sfu.ca or 604-268-6593.

1. Age: 18-20 21-35 36-40 41-50 51-55 over 55
2. Sex: Male Female
3. Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Separated
4. Please indicate your year of arrival in Canada
5. Prior to coming to Canada, what was your country of residency?
6. What is your current status in Canada?
Permanent Resident Canadian Citizen Other (please specify)
7. Are you the person who applied for immigration (main applicant)?
Yes No
8. If you answered No to question 7, what is your relationship to the main applicant?
Husband Wife Daughter Son
Other (please specify)
9. What was your immigration class?
Economic class (independent, skilled worker, business provincial nominee, caregiver)
Family class (sponsored by husband, wife, children)
Refugee
10. How did you or your family obtain general information about Canada before immigration? (i.e. cost of living, health care system, economic situation, and education system) (please check all that apply)
Family/Friends
Books, Newspaper, Internet, TV
Embassy/consulate
Lawyer/consultant
Prior visit to Canada
Other (please specify)

WORK:

11. Did you or your family receive any job market information before coming to Canada about: (please check all that apply)
- Job availability in general
 - Job availability in your profession
 - Job availability in other professions
 - Need license to work in your profession
 - Received no information
12. Was the job market information you received helpful?
- Helpful
 - Somewhat helpful
 - Not helpful
 - The information was misleading
13. Did you work in any of the following before coming to Canada?
- Engineer Lawyer Physician Nurse
 - Surgeon Accountant Architect Pharmacist Optometrist
 - Psychologist Medical Laboratory Technologist
 - Teacher Dentist Student, go to question 15
 - Housewife, go to question 17
14. If the occupations in the above question do not apply to you, please specify your work before coming to Canada.
Did you go to school or get any training for this occupation?
15. Have you been able to find a job related to your field?
- Yes: go to question 17
 - No if no, what have been barriers to your employment?
 - Lack of work experience in Canada
 - Language problems
 - Employers do not recognize degree/education
 - Lack of contacts in the job market/networking
 - Lack of available jobs
 - Financial problems (i.e. it was expensive to take courses to upgrade your skills, needed to work because had no other income)
 - Employer discrimination
 - Other (please specify)
16. If you were not able to find a job in your related field, did you do any of the following to find a job?
- Take computer/technology courses
 - Enrol in occupation specific programs
 - Enrol in Post-secondary education
 - Register in job finding clubs
 - Study English

17. If you have worked in Canada, what have your occupations been? (list as many as you can)
18. Are you currently employed?
 Yes: what is your current occupation?
 No
19. Compared with your job experience in your previous country of residence, how would you describe your overall employment experience in Canada?
 Much better
 Better
 The same
 Worse
 Much worse
 Had not worked before coming to Canada
 Have not worked in Canada

EDUCATION:

20. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?
 Some High School High School Diploma Associate Degree
 Bachelors Masters or PhD Other (please specify)
21. In which country did you receive your highest level of education?
22. Have you studied English since you arrived in Canada?
 No
 Yes if yes:
 ESL classes sponsored by government
 Private (for example: English classes offered at community colleges)
 Self study
 As a student at high school/college/university
23. Rate your fluency in English:
 High proficiency: you can communicate effectively in most community and workplace situations. You speak, listen, read and write the language very well.
 Moderate proficiency: you can make yourself understood and you understand what others are saying in most workplace and community situations. You speak, listen to, read and write the language well.
 Basic proficiency: you do not meet the above criteria for moderate proficiency but still have some ability to speak, listen to, read and write the language.

24. What were your reasons for moving to Canada (please check all that apply)

- Higher income
- Political or religious reasons
- Less stressful life
- Family reunion (for example: to join husband, wife, or parents)
- Living in the Canadian culture
- Natural environment
- Education/school system for your children and yourself
- Living in a safe and peaceful country

25. Do you think your move to Canada has been satisfactory?

- Yes
- No

26. Any feedback/comments?

Bibliography

Works Cited

- Alboim, Naomi; Finnie, Ross; and Ronald Meng. (2005). The Discounting of Immigrants' Skills in Canada: Evidence and Policy Recommendations. *Choices*. Vol. 11, no. 2.
- Alboim, Naomi and The Maytree Foundation. (2002). Fulfilling the Promise: Integrating Immigrant Skills into the Canadian Economy
- _____. (2003). For the New Government of Ontario: Integrating Immigrant Skills into the Ontario Economy, A Ten Point Plan
- APEGPBC, Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of the Province of British Columbia. (2004). *Occupational Fact Sheet for Internationally Educated Engineers: Guide for Registration as a Professional Engineer in BC*. Retrieved on December 21, 2006 from www.ei.gov.bc.ca/ProgramsAndServices/IQU/pdf_files/engineers_occupational_fs.pdf
- Banerjee, Rupa and Jeffrey G. Reitz. (2006). Racial Inequality, Social Cohesion, and Policy Issues in Canada, to appear as a chapter in *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada*, edited by Thomas J. Courchene, Keith Banting, and Wanda Wuttunee. Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy
- Beach, M., C. Green, G. Alan, and C. Worswick. (2005). *The Impacts of the Point System and Immigrant Class on Skill Characteristics of Immigrant Inflows: The Experience of Canada*. Available online at: <http://www.ssc.uwo.ca/economics/newsletter/misc/2005/beachnov21.pdf>
- BCCII, British Columbia Coalition for Immigrant Integration. (2002). *Inter-Provincial Report Card on Immigrant Settlement and Labour Market Integration Services*. Retrieved on February 5, 2007 from http://www.ocasi.org/reports/May_2002.html
- BCIT, British Columbia Institute of Technology. (2004). *BCIT to provide International Credential Evaluation Service*. Retrieved on April 2, 2007 from <http://www.bcit.ca/news/releases/newsrelease050304129.shtml>
- _____. (2007a). *International Credential Evaluation Service*. Retrieved on December 10, 2006 from <http://www.bcit.ca/ices/apply/reports.shtml>
- _____. (2007b). *Application Package*. Retrieved on March 1, 2007 from <http://www.bcit.ca/ices/downloads.shtml>
- CICIC, Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials. (2007). *Fact Sheet No.2: Assessment and Recognition of Credentials for Employment in Canada*. Retrieved on January 15, 2007 from <http://www.cicic.ca/en/page.aspx?sortcode=2.17.20>
- Canadian Labour and Business Centre Handbook. (2003). *Immigration and Skill Shortages*. Available online at: http://www.clbc.ca/files/Reports/Immigration_Handbook.pdf

- CIC, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2000). *Performance Report*. Retrieved on January 21, 2007 from http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/dpr/99-00/CIC-CIC/CIC9900dpr_e.asp
- _____. (2003). Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2003. Catalogue No. Ci1-2003.
- _____. (2004 a). Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2004. Catalogue No. Ci1-2004.
- _____. (2004 b). Facts and Figures 2004: Immigration Overview- Permanent and Temporary Residents.
- _____. (2005 a). Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2005. Catalogue No. Ci1-2005.
- _____. (2005b). Facts and Figures 2005: Immigration Overview- Permanent and Temporary Residents
- _____. (2006a). Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2006. Catalogue No. Ci1-2006.
- _____. (2006b). *News Release: Canada's New Government Delivers on \$307 Million in Settlement Funding*. Retrieved on January 22, 2007 from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/press/06/0620-e.html>
- _____. (2007). *Self-Assessment Worksheet*. Retrieved on January 10, 2007 from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/applications/guides/EG74.html>
- Couton, Philippe. (2002). Highly Skilled Immigrants: Recent Trends and Issues. *ISUMA: Policy Research*: 114-23.
- Crutcher, R. A.; Szafran, Olga; and Sandra Banner Mamoru Watanabe. (2003). Characteristics of International Medical Graduates Who Applied to the CaRMS 2002 Match. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*. Vol. 168, No. 9
- DeVoretz, Don J. (1995). *Diminishing Returns: The Economics of Canada's Recent Immigration Policy*. Toronto: *C.D. Howe Institute*
- _____. (2006a). The Education, Immigration and Emigration of Canada's Highly Skilled Workers in the 21st Century. *Vancouver Centre of Excellence Research on Immigration and Settlement*. Working Paper Series, No 06-16
- _____. (2006b). A History of Canadian Recruitment of Highly Skilled Immigrants: Circa 1980-2001. *IZA*. Discussion Paper Series No. 2197
- DeVoretz, D and D. Coulombe. (2005). Labour Market Mobility between Canada and the United States; Quo Vadis? In T. Lemieux and R. Harris (eds.). *Social and Labour Market Aspects of North American Linkages*. Calgary: *University of Calgary Press*.
- Dixon, David and Shirin Hakimzadeh. (2006). *Spotlight on the Iranian Foreign Born*. Retrieved on February 3, 2007 from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=404>
- Dougherty, C. (1999). New Entrants to the Labour Market: A Comparison of the Labour Market Performance of Immigrants Landed in the 1980s and 1990s. Presentation at the 4th International Metropolis conference, Dec. 7-11, 1999.
- Drew, D., T. S. Murray, and J. Zhao. (2000). Brain Drain and Brain Gain: The Migration of Knowledge Workers from and to Canada. Statistics Canada, *Education Quarterly Review*, 81-003-XPB, 6:03.
- Dryburgh, H., and J. Hamel. (2004). Immigrants in Demand: Staying or Leaving? Canadian Social Trends. *Statistics Canada*, Catalogue No. 11-008.

- Frenette, Marc, and Rene Morissette. (2003). Will they ever converge? Earnings of immigrants and Canadian-born workers over the last two decades. Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series. Ottawa: *Statistics Canada*, Catalogue no.11F0019MIE-No.215.
- Galarneau, Diane, and René Morissette. (2004). Immigrants: Settling for less. Perspectives on Labour and Income. Vol.16, No. 3, *Statistics Canada*, Catalogue no. 75-001-XPE
- Garousi, Vahid. (2003). *A Survey on the Immigration of Iranian Experts and Elite: Reasons, Losses and Possible Solutions*. Retrieved on December 8, 2006 from www.cst.uwaterloo.ca/~garousi/downloads/ICRO_paper_Vahid_Garousi_2003.pdf
- _____. (2005). *Iranians in Canada: A Statistical Analysis*. Retrieved on December 8, 2006 from <http://www.torontoiranians.com/modules/cjaycontent/index.php?id=11>
- Goldberg, M. (2002). The Facts are In! Newcomers' Experiences in Access in Regulated Professions in Ontario. Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Access to Professions and Trades Unit.
- Grant, M. (1999). Evidence on new immigrant assimilation in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Economics*. Vol.32, pp. 930-955.
- Green, Alan G. and David A. Green. (1995). Canadian Immigration Policy: The Effectiveness of the Point System and Other Instruments. *The Canadian Journal of Economics*. Vol. 28, No. 4b. pp. 1006-1041.
- Hakimizadeh, Shirin. (2006). *Iran: A Vast Diaspora Aboard and Millions of Refugees at Home*. Retrieved on December 10, 2006 from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/archive.cfm?Cat=profiles>
- Harrison, Frances. (2006). *Huge Cost of Iranian Brain Drain*. Retrieved on January 18, 2007 from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/6240287.stm
- Hiebert, Daniel. (2006). Beyond the Polemics: The Economic Outcomes of Canadian Immigration. *Vancouver Centre of Excellence Research on Immigration and Settlement*. Working Paper Series, No 06-15
- Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). (2002). *Jobs Future, World of Work*. www.jobfutures.ca
- Keung, N. (2000). *Newcomer's First Jobs are Critical: Study*. Toronto Star Available online at: www.canadianimmigrant.com/media_9.htm
- Kim Walker Community and Development. (2003). Pilot Project for Internationally Trained Engineers: Final Report. Prepared for Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC.
- Knowles, V. (1997). *Strangers at Our Gates: Canadian Immigration and Immigration Policy, 1540-1997*. Toronto: Dundurn Press.
- Li, Peter S. (2001). The Market Worth of Immigrants' Educational Credentials. *Canadian Public Policy*. Vol. 27. pp. 23-38.
- Li, Fatima W.B. (2005). *Thou Land of Hope for All who Toil?" The Effects of Social Resources on Job Search and Job Outcome of Skilled Immigrants in Toronto*. Toronto: University of Toronto Ph.D. dissertation.
- Lopes, Sandra. (2004). Bringing Employers into the Immigration Debate: Survey and Conference. Public Policy Forum.

- Martin, Philip and Jeffrey Reitz. (2005). *Report of the MD Toronto seminar, May 12-14, 2005: Immigration and integration issues in Canada*. Retrieved on November 6, 2006, from http://migration.ucdavis.edu/rs/more.php?id=174_0_2_0
- Moallem, Mino. (1998). *Iranians*. Retrieved on February 3, 2007 from <http://www.multiculturalcanada.ca/ecp/content/iranians.html>
- Mossayeb, Sina M and Roozbeh Shirazi. (2006). Education and Emigration: The case of the Iranian-American community. *Current Issues in Comparative Education*. Vol. 9 (1)
- Omidvar, Ratna. (2006). Practical and Doable Ideas that Will Make a Difference: Integrating Skilled Immigrants into Ontario's Labour Market. *The Maytree Foundation*.
- Reitz, J. G. (1993). Statistics on Racial Discrimination in Canada. *Policy Options*. Vol. 14, no. 2. 32-36.
- _____. (2000). Immigrant Success in the Knowledge Economy: Institutional Change and the Immigrant Experience in Canada, 1970-1995. *Center for Industrial Relations and Department of Sociology*, University of Toronto.
- _____. (2001). Immigrant Skill Utilization in the Canadian Labour Market: Implications of Human Capital Research. *Centre for Industrial Relations and Department of Sociology*, University of Toronto.
- _____. (2005). Tapping Immigrants' Skills: New Directions for Canadian Immigration Policy in the Knowledge Economy. *IRPP Choices*. Vol.11, no.1.
- _____. (2006). Recent Trends in the Integration of Immigrants in the Canadian Labour Market: A Multi-Disciplinary Synthesis of Research, unpublished paper prepared for Human Resources and Social Development Canada.
- Riffel, Margaret. (2006). Recognizing the Prior Learning (RPL) of Immigrants to Canada: Moving Towards Consistency and Excellence. *Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment*
- Saltman, Jennifer. (2004). *Agency Dissolved by 2005*. Retrieved on April 2, 2007 from <http://www.burnabynow.com/issues04/093104/news/093104nn1.html>
- Sangster, Derwyn. (2001). Assessing and Recognizing Foreign Credentials in Canada-Employer's Views. Prepared for Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Human Resources Development Canada in Consultation with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Canadian Labour and Business Centre.
- Shi, Yan. (2003). The Impact of Canada's Immigration Act on Chinese Independent Immigrants. *RIIIM Working Paper No. 03-07*.
- Settlement News Across the Province (SNAP). (2005). Orientation Sessions for Future Newcomers to Canada. Vol.1, no3.
- Statistics Canada. (2003). Earnings of Canadians: Making a Living in the New Economy. 2001 Census Analysis Series. Ottawa: *Statistics Canada*, catalogue no. 96F0030XIE2001013.
- _____. (2004). *Study: Immigrants in Canada's urban centres*. The Daily. Retrieved on November 5, 2006 from <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/040818/d040818b.htm>
- _____. (2005 a). *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada*. The Daily. Retrieved on October 10, 2006 from <http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/051013/d051013b.htm>
- _____. (2005 b). *Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, Progress and Prospects*. Catalogue no 89-611-XIE

- _____. (2005 c). Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: A Portrait of Early Settlement Experiences. Catalogue no 89-614-XIE
- Stuart, M.V. (2002). *Analysis of Policy Alternatives to Promote Tire Recycling in California*. Retrieved on February 12, 2007 from <http://www.csus.edu/indiv/w/wasmerr/stuartch4.pdf>
- Swanton, Dan. (2005). Iranians in Vancouver: 'Legible People'/Irredeemable Others/Migrant Stories. *RHIM Working Paper Series No.05-21*
- Trotter, M. (2005). *Broken Promises*. CTV News Report Available online at: http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/story/CTVNews/20051119/w5_broken_promises_051119/20051121?hub=WFive
- University of Sussex. (2000) *Global Migrant Origin Database*. Retrieved on December 10, 2006 from http://www.migrationdrc.org/research/typesofmigration/global_migrant_origin_database.html
- Wayland, Sarah V. (2006). Unsettled: Legal and Policy Barriers for Newcomers to Canada. A joint initiative of Community Foundations of Canada and the Law Commission of Canada
- Work Destinations. (2007). *Types of Regulated Occupations*. Retrieved on February 3, 2007 from http://workdestinations.org/paged_category_drilldown.jsp?categoryId=44&crumb=41&crumb=43&lang=en

Websites Reviewed

- Career Bridge. (2007). Career Bridge for Internationally Trained Qualified Professionals. Reviewed on February 10, 2007 from <http://www.careerbridge.ca>
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2007). Canada's official source of immigration and citizenship information. Reviewed on March 8, 2007 from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/index.html>
- Medical Council of Canada. (2007). Reviewed on January 28, 2007 from <http://www.mcc.ca/english/news/index.html>
- Ministry of Attorney General. (2007). Settlement and Multiculturalism Division. Reviewed on February 12, 2007 from <http://www.ag.gov.bc.ca/sam/index.htm>
- SUCCESS. (2007). Reviewed on Mach 5, 2007 from <http://www.successbc.ca/eng/>