

HUMAN CONSEQUENCES OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS: ANALYZING THE
EXPERIENCES OF IRANIAN RESIDENTS IN TORONTO AND HALIFAX ABOUT
THE INTERNATIONAL SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN.

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
August 2013

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ABSTRACT

This study will examine the impact of the hotly-debated sanctions against Iran from the perspective of the civilians who live in a country other than their sanctioned homeland, yet keep ties with their country of origin, specifically Iranians immigrants in Toronto and Halifax. Using transnationalism theory, this study shows that human consequences of the sanctions are not limited to the Iranians who live inside Iran but reach out to immigrants who live across borders. In particular, the more extensive these ties are, the more severe are the effects of the sanctions on all the people involved. Although sanctions are ostensibly to pressure a government, my study demonstrates that the effect of sanctions has transnational consequences beyond that which is desirable or foreseen. This study broadens our understanding of human consequences of economic sanctions. It also has implications for policy-makers to consider their immigration populations before imposing sanctions.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ALC	Asian Law Caucus (Organization)
CAD	Canadian Dollar
CISADA	Comprehensive Iran Sanctions Accountability and Divestment Act
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ISA	Iran Sanctions Act
ITR	Iranian Transaction Regulations
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control
PAAIA	Public Affairs Allianc of Iranian Americans
SEMA	Special Economic Measure Act
SWIFT	Society of World Wide Interbank Financial Telecommunication
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research is the result of my passion for education, new experiences and expanding my knowledge. Being the youngest child in my family and also the only one who was living with my parents, I made a firm decision to leave my parents and come to a country (Canada) which is 5584 miles away, in order to pursue my passion and higher levels of education. The mission was to put my heart and soul in everything I did therefore my parents could be proud and happy by my success. Completing my Master's thesis is one of the most significant achievements that I intended overcome during this journey, with that being said this has only been possible due to the support of everyone I've encountered throughout.

It gives me great pleasure in acknowledging the support and help of my supervisor Dr. David Black. He has played a significant role by providing me with his intellectual insights. I have enjoyed every single moment of sitting in his classes and I will never forget what he once told me when I had low self-assurance in taking classes with English being my second language: “don't sell yourself short”.

I am particularly grateful for having Theresa Ulicki as my second reader who gave me constructive comments and warm encouragements when needed. I would also like to thank Ruben Zaiotti who accepted to be in my research committee. My special thanks goes to Dalhousie International Development Department, faculty and staff particularly Nissim Mannathukaren, Owen Willis, and my dear Nicole Drysdale who has always been there for me.

I thank my friends who have assisted me in editing and proof reading my thesis and clarifying my points: Lisa Dawn Kindervater, Shiva Nour Panah and Arya Mirdjalali; I do not have enough words to thank them.

Special thanks to the participants of this study from the Iranian community in Halifax as well as Toronto, for contributing their time to this research and sharing their experiences along side insights with me. I must also mention my gratefulness towards my kind and supportive classmates especially Chris, Terrence, Arian and Sara.

From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank:

My mother, Mina; without her love, patience and caring I would have not been able to accomplish many goals in my life. She has always been the one to

support any of my choices and decisions, even if they make no sense at all. She is the one who makes me to believe nothing is impossible.

My dad, Kiomars; He has taught me the true meaning of Karma. He has always been there to challenge me and make me a better person. Putting aside his considerable financial support for my education, without his help, I would have not be able to speak English, fix a bicycle, comment on a broken car and participate in political discussions and so forth.

My sister, Kimia; my role model in life, she has always been there in times of crisis and happiness to lend me a hand. Also my brother, Ahmad, and my brother-in-law, Abdi, who have supported me in this journey, and made me believe that I am capable of anything that I set my mind to.

My kind managers at Dalhousie Mulifaith Centre, Martha Martin, John Dalton and Clement Mehlman who have helped me find a balance between school and work.

All my friends in Halifax especially my best friend, Golsa, who has never let me down and always says, “As hard as it is, I know you can do it”.

Last but not least, I would like to finish my acknowledgement by a quote:

“The trip was to be an odyssey in the fullest sense of the word, an epic journey that would change everything.”

– Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Economic sanctions generally come in the form of embargoes, boycotts, freezing of assets, travel bans on a country, or any kind of intervention in the usual stream of the trade and economic relations between the imposers and a targeted country as well as an attempt to disrupt social and diplomatic connections of the targeted country with the imposers and internationally. The declared aim of economic sanctions is to force the targeted government to comply with international laws, including those of human rights. While there are many debates on the effectiveness of sanctions, which I will outline below, a strong body of scholarly work maintains that sanctions are not effective (Ang, 2007, Nossal 1989), and that regular people are affected by sanctions rather than governments. For example, the sanctions on Iraq, Cuba and Haiti have had a significant impact on citizens, but far less impact on the regime. It is likely Iran's turn now. Although economic sanctions are not new in Iran and have been there since the Islamic revolution around 1979, they have been toughened since 2006 mainly because of Iran's nuclear power activities (Jabalameli & Rasoulinezhad, 2012). International support for toughened sanctions against Iran has never been at such a high level as it is today (Ahdiyyih, 2011). Being a member of the Iranian diaspora¹ in Canada, I have experienced the impact of economic sanctions and realized that it is not limited to the targeted government and the

¹This paper uses diaspora to refer to an expatriate minority community; the members of this community include immigrants, international students, exiled and refugees who, based on Moghissi (1999), maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland and for whom their relationship with their homeland is very important. The emphasis here is on the great variety of engagements between the host and home countries (transnationalism). According to Vertovec (1999) the term Diaspora is used to refer to any deterritorialised or transnational population, whose current place of habitat is

citizens inside that country, because it may reach people who immigrated, while maintaining vital ties with their country of origin, including financial, political and social ties. Interestingly, a gap exists in the literature on economic sanctions and their human consequences. To elaborate, the majority of the literature focuses on the lives and conditions of the civilian population inside a sanctioned country, while it ignores the many people who have immigrated and live in a diaspora, or in some cases in countries that have imposed sanctions against their homeland. For instance, Canada has imposed sanctions on Iran (including the severing of diplomatic relations), while having a substantial community of Iranians living within its borders. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining the impact of the international economic sanctions on people's lives in a diaspora. In particular, this study explores the impact of the international economic sanctions against Iran on the lives of Iranians who live in Canada, especially Toronto and Halifax.

This study is based on transnationalism theory. Transnationalism is a useful theoretical framework to conduct this research because it focuses on people who live in two or more countries, and keep socioeconomic and political ties with those nations, especially their countries of origin. According to transnationalism theory, the policies related to the home and host land of members of a diaspora and/ or transmigrants have an impact on their transnational activities. A good example is the Canadian policy on

different from their country of origin, whereas Transnationalism is a term often used to refer to migrants' durable ties across two or more countries. Based on these definitions diaspora refers to a social type that can have many characteristics of transnational communities but not all within this social group experience transnationalism and those who do so by maintaining social, economic and political ties with their country of origin are considered to be transmigrants. Therefore, my participants as transmigrants can be considered as members of the Iranian diaspora in Canada.

multiculturalism that has encouraged immigrants to develop their transnational social practices and involvement in society (Wong & Satzewich, 2006). Moreover, an authoritarian regime provides less opportunity for its people in diasporas to get involved in their homeland politics (Wong & Satzewich, 2006). It can be concluded that economic and social conditions of the home/host land, or any conflict between these countries, affect diasporas and their transnational practices (Basch et al., 2008). A deeper understanding of the experiences of these Iranians living with the consequences of sanctions will provide a new perspective within the framework of transnationalism on the effects of economic sanctions within diasporas.

I based the questions on my expectations and assumptions on transnationalism theory. For instance, transnational theory explains that transmigrants maintain ties with their countries of origin; therefore, I asked my participants about the ties they have maintained with Iran.

This study is also significant in the realm of international development studies. To elaborate, I believe that any kind of development starts from individuals and reaches to organizations and communities. The sanctions and similar policies restrict people's opportunities in market and social environments, which altogether counter or at least constrain development in many aspects. Some of these opportunities are employment, purchasing power etc. Restricting people from market opportunities has some negative effects on people's social lives. Any conflict in the lives and social well-being of people would affect the socioeconomic development of those nations that they live in, and their homeland through restrictions on trade, remittances, gift-giving, etc. When people's purchasing powers decrease, their socio-economic contributions to the new home

countries would also decrease. For example, immigrants whose income decreases and assets devalue in their country of origin, have less capital available to do business or invest and contribute to the economy of their host country. As a result, the concept of economic sanctions, as well as transnationalism and diasporas, are important and understudied in the realm of development studies.

Canada has been one of the number one destinations for Iranian immigrants for quite a long time for the following reasons: Canada has a multicultural landscape, relatively open immigration policies in comparison with other countries, and good universities at which immigrant youth can pursue their studies and career. In addition, Canada has been known to Iranians as a peaceful country. Based on the Statistics Canada census in 2011, of about 163,290 Iranians in Canada, about 76,256 live in Ontario. The majority of them live in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area), which has led to Toronto being referred to as “Tehranto” by Iranians, because of its significant Iranian population and businesses. Iranians also live in other cities of Canada such as Halifax, which has an Iranian population of about 2500 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Moreover, based on a report by the Library of Parliament (2008) on Canada’s immigration program, Canada wishes to attract skilled workers and business class immigrants who are able to contribute to the economy and labor markets of the country. Moreover, immigrants can contribute significantly to the development of the physical infrastructure of cities and the enrichment of the urban cultural life (2008). It is worth noting that about 41,000 Iranian immigrants in Canada hold a post-secondary certificate, diploma or undergraduate degree (Statistics Canada, 2006). This statistic shows the significant potential that these Iranians have to contribute to Canadian society. Despite this significant Iranian population in

Canada and their contributions to Canadian society, Canada has imposed unilateral sanctions on Iran, in addition to the international sanctions. The Canadian sanctions against Iran began on July 26, 2010 under the Special Economic Measure Act known as SEMA (Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, 2013a). The reason given for Canada to do so was Iran's failure to comply with the UN Security Council resolution 1929 that directed Iran to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Agency to stop its nuclear proliferation and related activities. Since then, Canada has imposed three new sets of stricter sanctions on Iran (Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada, 2013b). The Canadian sanctions as well as international sanctions against Iran have resulted in some difficulties for Iranians in Canada including currency devaluation, decrease in their purchasing powers etc. Along with these effects, the sanctions have had an impact on their families and friends who live in Iran.

To conduct this research, I used a qualitative method with semi-structured interviews among Iranians in Toronto and Halifax. I interviewed 11 Iranians (6 in Halifax, as a city with minor Iranian population and 5 in Toronto, as a city with major Iranian population). I excluded second and third generation Iranian immigrants as their ties with Iran are not as strong compared to the first generation. I have interviewed Iranian international students, permanent residents as well as Iranians with Canadian citizenship in both Toronto and Halifax; I did not put any limitations in the matter of the participants' gender; I approached both men and women randomly. Among the conducted interviews, I approached seven males and four females. Iranian diasporas consist of a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds, as well as socioeconomic classes. Beside the upper classes, or well-established communities, the vast majority of the Iranians in

Canada are from middle-class backgrounds (Moghissi, 1999). Therefore, it is normal that they might have different experiences and perspectives regarding the sanctions. Based on my preliminary research findings, socioeconomic class has had a significant impact on the participants' experiences and interpretations of the sanctions. For example, one upper-middle class participant believed that sanctions had a positive consequence, as they made his wife think about being financially independent; but another participant, from the middle-class, was worried how she could afford her living expenses in this situation. One of the difficulties Iranians in Canada have faced due to the unilateral Canadian sanctions on Iran was the closing of some of their bank accounts by TD Canada in July 2012 (Woods, 2012). Two other measures taken by the Canadian government were to close the Iranian embassy in Canada and to close the Canadian embassy in Iran, which led to many troubles for Iranian Canadians and Iranian international students in Canada.

In a nutshell, Iranians have been among the top rated expatriates and immigrants to Canada in the sense of the considerable number of their associations and communities, as well as increasing number of their contributions to Canadian society (Moghissi, 1999). Therefore, their experiences and perspectives of the sanctions should be important to policy makers in order to reconsider the ways that they impose sanctions, and the effects of those sanctions. In addition, despite all their failures, economic sanctions are a growing punitive policy against wrong doers, imposed by the UN, the US and other states. Economic sanctions have some human consequences that are worth examining not only from inside but also from outside the target state's borders. Finally, in the world of globalization and multiculturalism the theory of transnationalism is a valued approach to frame this research. This study asks about the connections of the participants with their

homeland, Iran, as well as their transnational activities across the borders. Moreover, it analyzes the extent to which the economic sanctions against Iran have had an impact on these connections, activities and the lives of participants in general.

1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

My research is primarily concerned with understanding the experiences of Iranians in Canada, who are dealing with the effects of the economic sanctions against Iran. Therefore, it seemed appropriate to use qualitative methodology to conduct such a study. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) state, “there are many reasons for choosing to do qualitative research, but perhaps the most important is the desire to step beyond the known and enter into the world of participants, to see the world from their perspective and in doing so make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge” (p.16). Therefore, through qualitative research, I had a chance to enter the participants' world, experiences and ideas. Furthermore, in qualitative research, researchers are not afraid of using subjectivity; interpreting participants' responses and using his/her own experiences, background, and ideas (See Corbin and Strauss, 2008, p.13). This study aims to understand Iranians' experiences regarding the forms and degree of the economic sanctions' impact on their lives. Qualitative methods allowed me to present a holistic picture of the human consequences of economic sanctions across borders, and to reveal areas for further discussions and studies (See Creswell, 2009). Because I was discovering people's experiences in detail, being inductive, and striving for a holistic view, I used qualitative methodology in the study.

1.2.1 RESEARCH METHODS

It is believed that through interaction with participants, direct and face-to-face interviews, researchers learn about participants' experiences, perspectives, hopes and dreams (Neuman, 1994; see also Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.13). Therefore, I chose to do open-ended interviews with the participants in order to collect data for this study. I conducted 11 semi-structured interviews with four Iranian women and seven Iranian men. Six interviews were conducted in Halifax and five in Toronto. Toronto has a larger population of Iranians compared to Halifax. The purpose of interviewing in these two cities was to get a diverse sample, not to compare the two. Still, the findings revealed that there are interesting similarities and differences between the participants in Toronto and Halifax.

I wanted to have roughly an equal number of participants in each city, but one of the interviews was not comprehensive enough, so I conducted an additional interview in Halifax. Moreover, I am aware that this study is not representative of the experiences of all Iranians residing in Canada. However, through interviews, I had a good opportunity to dig deep in their responses and concerns. To complete my data collection, I looked for scholarly works related to my research question and I read relevant publications by Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) as well as online news articles, Iranian local magazines and newspapers in Halifax and Toronto.

1.2.2 DESCRIPTION OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA

I aimed to capture a broad range of ideas and experiences in the research findings; this is why I was not strict about participants' characteristics such as sex, gender and social status. However, it was necessary for all participants to be within certain age range

(approximately 20 years or older), because they had to meet certain criteria such as having ties with their home country, being involved in the economy of both host country and their country of origin and being mature enough to understand the fundamentals of the sanctions and their consequences. Therefore, the study population has a reasonable diversity. For instance, the participants of this study consisted of Iranians who immigrated to Canada through different immigration programs as well as Iranians who came to Canada as international students and were on their student visas or postgraduate work permits. These Iranians came from two social classes, some from upper middle classes and some from middle classes. I tried to interview an Iranian from a lower, or lower middle class identity but I could not find any fitting these categories through my connections. The participants were in Canada for one year or more; I had one interviewee who was in Canada for more than 12 years and another interviewee who was in Halifax for one year.

Second and third generation Iranians were excluded from the study population because first, it is less likely that they consider Iran as their homeland and second, they have relatively minor ties and relations with Iran. In addition, Iranians 20 years old or younger were excluded. The rationale for this exclusion was that, at this age, they are not socially and economically independent enough to be affected by the sanctions. Among family members, fathers and mothers were recruited because they have greater financial and social responsibilities in the family. The participants had a variety of ties —social, economic, political—with their country of origin (Iran) or were involved in transnational activities. Furthermore, the participants had all been in Canada more than one year at the

time they were interviewed. Finally, the participants were socially active, which means they study, work, and volunteer in their communities.

1.2.3 RESEARCHER'S ROLE

This research project is driven by a keen interest in a human rights agenda, and an interest in the socio-economic wellbeing of people, particularly migrants. I also have personal reasons for wanting to explore how other Iranians residing in Canada have experienced the impact of economic sanctions against Iran. As the principal investigator of this research, I am an Iranian student who has been living in Halifax, Canada for almost two years, since August 2011. During these two years, I have had a chance to get to know Iranians residing in Canada. I have also experienced challenges because of the economic sanctions on my homeland. These facts had their own advantages and disadvantages. Being an Iranian myself, I am genuinely passionate about my country and my people and have followed this topic closely. I would like to do anything in my power to improve this situation or help prevent similar outcomes in the future. Moreover, I used my personal insight in analyzing the participants' experiences and points of view.

However, I am well aware that my analysis might not be fully impartial due to this same fact, which could potentially affect the validity of my data. Therefore, I have tried to take this into consideration and distance my personal experiences from those expressed by the participants as much as possible.

Having been in Halifax for two years, I have become involved enough in the Iranian society to be perceived as trustworthy to Iranians in Halifax. Furthermore, I have a sound understanding of the participants' cultural, social, and safety concerns. These factors have allowed me to get close to the participants in order to interview them. Also,

sharing the same language with my participants allowed those less comfortable with English to do their interview in Farsi and enabled me to translate their interviews into English. I was also able to explain the consent form in Farsi, if needed. On the other hand, having personally experienced sanctions and being an active member of the Iranian community in Halifax, I was familiar with some of my participants beforehand. Therefore, I may have been subconsciously drawn towards those with similar experiences and viewpoints as myself to validate my pre-assumptions. As a result, this could have affected the diversity of my participants and findings.

Being a female interviewer in a culture mostly dominated by men, some of the male participants may have been less comfortable opening up to a young female regarding their experiences and financial problems. Nevertheless, the younger participants and female participants were more open in discussing their stories. In addition, in the matter of recruitment, being a young female definitely helped me approach some of my interviewees with more ease and persuade them to participate in my research. This might have been due to the fact that, generally speaking, people have less reservation towards females and could trust them more easily.

1.2.4 RECRUITMENT

I chose Toronto because it is Canada's most populous city, with high numbers of Iranian residents and Halifax, a small Canadian city with a small number of Iranian residents. Interviewing Iranians residing in Toronto and Halifax, I was curious to know how the experiences of the Iranians who live in Halifax differ from those in Toronto. Besides knowing a couple of Iranian families in Toronto, I consulted an Iranian business directory for Toronto and randomly contacted a businessperson in that directory. This

person assured me that I could do other interviews through snowball sampling, and I did so. I traveled to Toronto and I stayed with one of my relatives'. He also had the qualifications to be a participant for my study and he agreed to be interviewed. After arriving, I called the potential participant I had spoken with and met her in her office the next day. As she promised, she introduced her co-workers, who met the qualifications of the study participants. She introduced me to them; I asked if they were interested in participating in this study and then I interviewed them at the same office, the same day. Altogether, I interviewed three of them at the office. It was a slight probability that they had talked about their problems regarding the sanctions and would have similar ideas and stories. However, their responses were diverse enough to support my research findings. The fifth participant in Toronto was interviewed at his dwelling.

The initial contacts in Halifax were established through the Iranian community in Halifax, and the Dalhousie Iranian Student Society, where I am a member. In the first year of my studies in Halifax, I participated in the Iranian Business Trade Show in Halifax. At that time, I developed the idea of my research topic. Therefore, I looked for those business people to potentially participate in my study. Then, I discussed my ideas related to this research with a couple of them, and they showed an interest in participating in this study. I did not have any problem recruiting them for interviews. I contacted the above mentioned business people as well as a couple of other Iranians who I knew from Iranian events in Halifax. I made appointments with them. I gave them the option to choose where they wanted to be interviewed. The majority of interviews in Halifax took place in coffee shops; two took place at participants' homes. One of the participants preferred to write down the answers to the interview questions. All the participants, both

in Toronto and Halifax, were given a copy of a consent form and they were given enough time to review the form and ask any questions related to my research, its nature and purpose, and their roles in this study. All the participants were given a pseudonym in order to protect their actual identity. With their consent, participants were audio recorded. Moreover, the interviews were conducted in both Farsi or in English, based on the participants' preference. Three out of 11 interviews were in English. The interviews took approximately one hour. I conducted follow up interviews if I needed clarification or found a new theme or idea.

1.2.5 THEMES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND DATA ANALYSIS

The interview questions focused on uncovering participants' personal, social, cultural, and economic experiences, and perspectives on economic sanctions on Iran. The first set of questions is about the participants' backgrounds and their status in Canada, as well as their motivations for leaving Iran and choosing to settle in Canada. The second set asks about their ties with their homeland and how these ties have been affected by the economic sanctions. The next set of questions focuses on their understandings of international sanctions on Iran, and asks about their friends' and family's experiences in Iran. (See Appendix A)

Through the whole process of coding and analyzing the collected data, I used Microsoft Office Word 2007. To analyze the obtained data, first I simultaneously translated and transcribed the interviews. Next, I started to scan the translated transcripts and read them to get a general idea of the participants' responses. Then, I started to find and highlight the key words related to the research questions as well as the similarities and differences in the participants' responses. Finally, I wrote down and arranged the

codes (See Cresswell, 2003). Through this process, I identified the major and minor themes and formed my research findings chapter.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Transnationalism provides a theoretical lens for this study. In 1916, Randolph Bourn coined the phrase “trans-national America”; this is where transnationalism got its roots (Nicholas, 2009). By inventing the idea of “trans-national America”, Bourn meant that America has to become a nation, more open to multiple cultures and ethnic groups, seeking peace and social justice inside and abroad (Nicholas, 2009). I use transnationalism primarily based on Lloyd Wong’s (2007) perception of this theory, to formulate my research questions, analyze the data and study findings. To elaborate, Wong (2007) states that the popularization of the term transnationalism started in 1992 with the publication of the book *Toward a Transnational Perspective on Migration* by Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Christina Blanc-szantons. Transnational, as a term in social and political thought, refers to 'human activities and social institutions that extend across national borders' (Baubock, 2003, p.701). In transnational relations, not only states but also people, NGOs and organizations are considered as actors. Although actors in transnational relations are not necessarily states, they are exposed to the policies and institutional arrangements associated with states (Levitt, 2001). Transnationalism runs in parallel with transnational migration. According to Glick Schiller, who is a scholar associated with transnationalism, (as cited in Portes et al., 2008, p.118), transnational migration is a process in which people move across borders, and settle in a new place while maintaining social, economic and political ties with the polity of their

country of origin; these people are called transmigrants. Therefore, transmigrants are the new immigrants of our global age who develop and sustain transnational communities (Portes et al., 2008). In other words, transnational communities can be expanded via their members' political, economic, social, and cultural practices. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions and feel concerns that can relate their home and host societies together (2008). It is worth noting that diaspora is a similar term to transnational migration/ community because it refers to a population dispersed from home, with a continuing presence abroad, and holding social, political, economic exchanges with each other or with their homeland and host land (Wong & Satzewich, 2006). However, these two terms, transnational community and diaspora, might have more detailed implications based on the characteristics of a community, its members, and its socio-political situations. However, the detailed implications of them are beyond the scope of this research to be explored. Wong (2007, p.83) believes that transnationalism, multiculturalism and the existence of diasporic communities are tightly connected to one another.

According to Wong & Satzewich (2006), transnationalism is not a new phenomenon, but the developments in technology, media and transportation in the context of globalization have increased its practice and principals. Some examples are better and quicker airlines, wire transfer for money, video chat software etc. Portes (as cited in Wong & Satzewich, 2006, p.3) states that there are three arenas of transnationalism: political, economic and socio-cultural.

Baubock (2003) admits that transnationalism applies to bounded states, or generally to the idea of a political community whose borders are extended by different

factors such as people, money, information and ideas to form social fields, networks and organizations. Similarly, Wong & Satzewich (2006) refer to political transnationalism as the indirect and direct involvement of diaspora in the politics of their country of origin. However, the individuals who live across borders and within transnational social fields are exposed to more than one social, economic and political system (Levitt, 2001). Therefore, the bilateral relations between their homeland and host land, the economic and social conditions of home/host land, and/or any conflict between the home and host land will affect diasporic communities and their transnational practices (Schiller et al., 2008). This is an important point that frames my research question as well as my research findings. To elaborate, the economic sanctions against Iran have resulted in an socioeconomic instability in Iran that have an impact on the lives of Iranians in Toronto and Halifax, including their transnational activities between Iran, Canada or other nations.

There is a multifaceted interrelation in political transnationalism among homeland, host land, and individuals, including members of a diaspora and their compatriots back home. In addition, as mentioned before, “[t]ransnationalism is a process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (Basch cited in Amersfoort & Doornik, 2002, p.58). The involvement of a transnational community is extended from their country of origin, and their friends/relatives living there, to the country of settlement. Diasporas have political, economic and social advantages such as human capital upgrades, remittances and political activism for the homeland, and their voting rights and skills for the host land. As an example of the latter, immigrants can affect the host country’s

foreign policy regarding their homeland through different aspects, for instance by emphasizing pluralism, democracy and human rights (Wayland, 2006). In addition, Wong (2006) points to transnational political activities of diasporas in Canada such as their assistance with relief in a country in crisis, contributions to political campaigns in their country of origins, and support for independent movements.

In Wayland's view (2006), the receiving state's policies and practices, such as immigration policy, dual nationality and voting rights, play key roles in the lives of individuals in a diaspora. For example, Canadian policy on multiculturalism has encouraged immigrants' transnational social practices and involvement in society (Wong & Satzewich, 2006). However, it is not only the policies of the host country but also the country of origin that have an impact on transnationalism, the experiences and perspectives of transmigrants; for instance, an authoritarian regime provides fewer opportunities for its people in diasporas, especially transmigrants, to get involved in politics (Wong & Satzewich, 2006). On the other side, some states are eager to promote their relations with their citizens who are in diasporas by incorporating a dual nationality policy, for instance (Wayland, 2006, p.23). It is worth noting that the sustainability and development of migrant transnationalisms are important, and dependent on variables such as the characteristics of transmigrants, the policies of their home and host lands, and the political relations between governments.

Transnational economic practices include forming multinational corporations, sending remittances and investing in homelands, running businesses and donations to civil societies and grassroots organizations (Wong, 2008). There are a number of the positive economic contributions of immigrants and people in a diaspora. For instance,

many immigrants, especially in Canada, apply as skilled workers. This means that they provide their host society and its economy with their perspectives and skills, which are a great contribution to the economy of the host society. Moreover, international students, bring a lot of money to the receiving state in order to pay for their tuition and accommodation. Finally, some of the economic activities among diaspora groups may result in the deepening integration of their homeland in the global economy (Orozco, 2005); some of these activities and exchanges consist of importing products from their homeland, sharing businesses with people back home or sending donations and remittances.

As mentioned before, transmigrants and members of a diaspora are exposed to and directly influenced by more than one state or a social environment. Besides, transnationalism, more than being about states and economic development (via transferring money and goods), is about people, the social environment and networks they inhabit as well as their contributions to societies and states, which all together form socio-cultural aspects of transnationalism (Clavin, 2005). Relatively, there are two basic kinds of transnationalism: Transnationalism from above and transnationalism from below. Transnationalism from below is about the daily lives of non-elites and ordinary people; transnationalism from above is focused on the capitalist class and international elites (Wong & Satzewich, 2006). The current study is more focused on transnationalism from below because it studies the impact of the sanctions on the daily lives of ordinary members of the Iranian diaspora in Canada.

Based on transnationalism, different ties that people in diasporas, as transmigrants, hold with their homeland take on an enduring part in their lives (Wong&

Satzewich, 2006). Migrants' and their compatriots' interactions can be political, economic, social, emotional and so on. To be more specific, for instance, immigrants have non-immigrant counterparts back home who are highly dependent on remittances, while in some cases immigrants are dependent on their families back home for financial support. Levitt (2001) asserts that in some cases, these ties and relations are so deep that they change individuals' livelihoods such as the ways they raise their families, practice religious rituals and take political sides, which are important factors in the life of an individual.

Members of a diaspora might share specific experiences and interests. For instance, they might have common points of reference in their nation of origin, family ties and their current location (Kennedy & Roudometef, 2002). Despite these common interests and characteristics, their roles and agency in a transnational community might be different; a shopkeeper, for example, could be a cultural reproducer by gathering the members of a diaspora to cheer their national football team together. Sometimes immigrants transform the urban landscape of their host society by making it similar to their homeland in order to maintain social links; Toronto is a city where this fact is significantly visible, for example in China Town (an area full of Chinese stores and restaurants) (Preston et al., 2006). Moreover, the new perspectives and cultures that they bring to the country of settlement are ways to contribute to the new society and its vibrancy. However, members of a diaspora also have negative contributions; they can also reproduce or even intensify the divisions of their homelands culturally, politically etc.

The degree to which transnationalism is related to development, in general, is important in this study. Orozco (2005) asserts that there are ‘5Ts’ in transnational migration that influence the relations among transnationalism, people and development (p.308). These ‘5Ts’ are “[m]oney transfer, tourism, transportation, telecommunication, and nostalgic trade “(Orozco, 2005, p.308). Each of these Ts is a possible way to contribute to political, economic and socio-cultural development. Money transfer, in the form of remittances, is a good financial resource for families. These remittances in higher amounts might have an impact on the homeland’s economy. There is a high frequency in immigrants who travel to their homeland as tourists and inject money into the local market. Moreover, telecommunication, via phone calls would develop the economic infrastructure of telecommunication networks and organizations such as Bell or AT&T in the host country (Orozco, 2005). The trade of home products among transmigrants is popular; Orozco (2005) calls this trade “nostalgic trade” by which immigrants receive home products (sweets, clothes etc.) that can generate revenue for the home country. In other words, demand of members of a diaspora for nostalgic goods of their homeland lead to their investment in importing those products, either for consuming or selling, and a flow of money to the economic system of their country of origin. In addition to the 5 Ts that Orozco (2005) mentions, there is another aspect of transnationalism which is directly related to international development. Transnationalism is an efficient way to transfer knowledge and skills. To be specific, science and technology talented scholars move to a country as brain drain, or brain exchange; they can also go back home and contribute their knowledge and professions in order to develop education, health, wellbeing etc (Patterson, 2006).

Many scholars, such as Kim C. Matthews and Alan O' Connor (2002), have applied transnationalism theory to different case studies in Canada. Wong & Satzewich (2006) mention two factors that make Canada a site for significant and unique transnational practices: its high population of immigrants and its policy of multiculturalism. As a concrete example, Toronto (Ontario, Canada) has a large and diverse immigration population, with a commitment to multiculturalism and fairness to diverse individuals and groups; this city provides a well-developed "infrastructure of settlement services" and "ethno-cultural organization to preserve transnational ties (Preston et al., 2006, p.92). Contrarily, despite these characteristics owned by Canada, several transnational communities have faced and/or been affected by strict policies on the part of the Canadian government. For instance, during and after World War II, Canadians of Japanese descent were deported by the Canadian government due to Canada's fear that these Japanese would endanger national security (Wong, 2006).

In Boccagnis's (2012), transnationalism is a useful theoretical framework for studying of the trajectories of migrant lives. Therefore, the lives and experiences of any individual and/or transmigrant in diaspora can be examined through the lens of transnationalism. Comparatively, this research employs transnationalism to examine the extent to which a punitive international policy such as economic sanctions, imposed on a particular country, or a political conflict between a home and a host land would affect the lives and perspectives of members of a diaspora across borders. To be specific, this study looks at the experiences of Iranian diaspora in Canada regarding the imposed economic sanctions against their homeland (Iran) from different states, particularly Canada. Like any other diasporas, Iranians in Toronto and Halifax, are connected with their homeland

and the economic sanctions imposed on Iran have an impact on their lives and maintained ties with Iran as well as their families and relatives. As a result, transnationalism provides a useful framework for the current study in order to analyze the ties that these Iranians maintain with Iran. This study demonstrates that a political measure (economic sanctions) against their homeland affects them directly and indirectly—even across the borders.

CHAPTER 2 BACKGROUND

In this background chapter, I will examine the various definitions of sanctions globally, with a brief overview of their historical application. I will also consider the effects and human costs of sanctions in some select cases, before focusing on the case of Iran. The impact of sanctions across borders will be introduced, and a detailed examination of the scope and type of Canadian sanctions against Iran will be offered.

2.1 ECONOMIC SANCTIONS: HISTORY AND DEFINITION

The majority of the literature on sanctions is focused on their definition, effectiveness, and consequences for civilian society in a targeted country. Regarding the background and concept of economic sanctions, it is said that economic sanctions although used ineffectually in the interwar period, were implemented in the Cold War when economic statecraft was increasingly used as a coercive political instrument in foreign policy (Andreas, 2005). The extant literature reveals that economic sanctions come in the form of embargoes, boycotts, freezing of assets, travel bans on a country, or any kind of intervention or/and interruption in the normal economic relations between the imposers, the targeted country, and border states (Koempfer & Lowenberg, 2000). In addition to economic sanctions, there are also various symbolic, social, and diplomatic sanctions, such as the mutual closure of embassies and removal of diplomatic personnel. The United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) the United States (US) and Canada are the entities that most frequently impose economic sanctions. It is worth noting that under

Chapter VII of the UN Charter, “[t]he Security Council can take enforcement measures to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such measures range from economic and/or other sanctions not involving the use of armed force to international military action” (United Nations Security Sanctions Committee, 2013, p.1). By imposing economic sanctions on a targeted country, imposers aim to either change the leader’s behavior or persuade the adversarial government to conform to international conventions, agreements and laws, or induce the country’s people to overthrow a regime. According to Margaret Doxey (2009), the intention of sanctions is to cause deprivation, making life more difficult for the target's decision makers. It is also believed that sanctions are imposed for other reasons such as deterrence as well as international and domestic symbolism (Ang & Peksen, 2007). In other words, powerful states and international entities adopt economic sanctions for their own benefit; in some cases, the imposers would gain power by controlling the trade and commercial activities of the sanctioned country (Askari et al., 2003).

Economic sanctions are categorized as multilateral, imposed by several states and institutions simultaneously, or unilateral, one-way sanctions imposed by a single state. Both multilateral and unilateral sanctions can be either comprehensive or targeted, "smart" sanctions. While targeted sanctions are limited and restricted to particular institutes and individuals, comprehensive sanctions, as can be understood from the word *comprehensive*, are extensive. International relations scholar, Peter Andreas (2005), states that the main goal of targeted sanctions is to minimize the humanitarian damage while maintaining effective pressure on the targeted country. Similarly, Cortright and Lopez (2004) point out that targeted sanctions “[f]ocus on the system more narrowly, blocking

weapons and military supplies [or other targeted goods] without preventing civilian trade” (P. 100). Likewise, Drenzer (2011) asserts that the targeted sanctions “[a]re designed to hurt elite supporters of the targeted regime, while imposing minimal hardship on the mass public” (p.96). In other words, with smart sanctions, international trade and financial transactions are banned for designated people and institutions that are associated with harmful policies and practices (2011). Although targeted sanctions are considered the humanitarian way of implementing sanctions, comprehensive sanctions are applied far more often. However, as Drenzer (2011) reports, during the last thirty years, about 80% of all multi and unilateral sanctions were comprehensive.

2.1.1 ECONOMIC SANCTIONS: SUCCESS, FAILURE, SUGGESTIONS

Whether or not sanctions work to achieve their objectives has been an ongoing debate among scholars and experts. Ideas regarding the utility and efficacy of sanctions are extensive and a few are discussed here. On one side of the debate people like Drenzer (2011) argue that comprehensive sanctions are more effective while some scholars like Pape (1998) consider the significant humanitarian costs attached to comprehensive economic sanctions. Some scholars maintain that sanctions would be effective if they are highly targeted, and applied for a limited amount of time (Koempfer & Lowenberg, 2000; Nossal, 1999). Koempfer & Lowenberg (2000) deem that if comprehensive sanctions were going to be successful, they would not end up with military intervention as in cases such as Iraq. Therefore, policy makers in the economic sanctions regime should take these two lessons: first, to know their objectives, and second, to know their target (p.18). The authors (2000) indicate that when the target is not known, comprehensive sanctions might be a good option; however, it is better to examine the background of political

leaders and socio-economic structure of the target state, imposing targeted sanctions based on this examination.

Some scholars and experts in international affairs have explored those domestic features of targeted states that increase the likelihood of sanctions success. For example, Peksen (2009) found that economic sanctions are more likely to bring change and concessions when the sanctioned sources are important to the target; the imposer has more power compared to the target; the target is economically or politically dependent on the sender; the target is not expecting economic sanctions; and when the target state is democratic. Regarding the last condition, Nossal (1999) concurs that illiberal states can perfectly withstand the effects of sanctions— this has been approved in the cases of Cuba and North Korea. Other factors have been considered related to the efficacy of economic sanctions. Time is an important factor (Daoudi and Dajani, 1983, Brady, 1987); it is believed that the longer the sanctions are kept in place, the higher the chance of achieving their goals. In addition, international cooperation is important for promoting the effectiveness of sanctions - for instance, in the case of Yugoslavia (Cortright & Lopez, 2000). International cooperation makes sanctions more effective because it results in more pressure on the targeted country. As an example, the targeted country would have no chance in the international market because all the channels for trade are closed to this country through the international cooperation. Finally, Cortright and Lopez (2000) state that there should be a stronger institutional capacity and monitoring within the UN in implying sanctions.

The minimal success rate of imposed sanctions in history is widely reported (Hufbauer & Scotch, 1990, Cortright & Lopez, 2000). With few exceptions, sanctions

have not fully worked or if they have worked, their human consequences have been dire (Cortright & Lopez, 2000). Moreover, it is shown that sanctions often lead to unpredictable and undesirable outcomes. For example, U.S. sanctions against Cuba resulted in Cuba's isolation from the US and not necessarily to significant political changes in Cuban government (Peksen, 2009). Another example is that the Military sanctions against Pakistan pushed the government to pursue a nuclear strategy due to the lack of access to U.S. weaponry. According to Kaempfer & Lowenberg (2000), "[i]t is a reasonable generalization to characterize international economic sanctions as overused, ineffective and unfair" (p.2). To elaborate on this idea, one might assert that because governments have been overly exposed to economic sanctions, they become familiar with the impact of economic sanctions and the possible ways to bypass or decrease their impact. To sum up, some scholars believe that sanctions do not work (Pape, 1998, Askari et al 2003) and some believe that they work under special conditions and circumstances (Baldwin, 1998). In fact, economic sanctions seldom work and even if they had any impact on the targeted government to comply with the laws and the rules, their human consequences are typically unjustifiable (Peksen, 2009). However, there are some examples where sanctions, combined with other factors, seemed to have had positive outcomes, such as the sanctions against South Africa that indeed worked to cause the collapse of the apartheid regime (Nossal, 1999) and the sanctions in the case of Yugoslavia which made a positive contribution to the Dayton peace accord. Even these cases had some human costs such as unemployment in Yugoslavia (Lopez & Cortright, 2000).

2.1.2 ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST IRAN: HISTORY AND OBJECTIVES

Sanctions have been imposed on Iran since 1979, coinciding with the Islamic revolution (Katzman, 2012). Sadegh (2012) states that these sanctions were imposed by the US because of a group of Iranian students who took 52 American citizens hostage at the US embassy in Iran. Sanctions on Iran began as smart sanctions, but are now some of the most comprehensive sanctions ever imposed (p.8). In 1996, the US-imposed the second level of sanctions against Iran, known as the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) (2012). Under ISA, importing from and exporting to Iran, giving bank loans to designated Iranian companies and entities, and providing credit or credit guarantees for American exports to Iran were all sanctioned (Karshenas & Rahimian, 2005). Freezing of Iran's assets, as a part of these sanctions, stopped international firms from doing business and trade with Iran. Through these sanctions, the US placed a financial penalty on any business entity that invested in Iran (Katzman, 2011). Two years later, in 1998, the UN began to change its approach toward Iran since Iran was considered an important source of oil and gas in the Middle East. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) started to form a dialogue with Iran and increase consultation with the Iranian government. However, this diplomacy did not last long because, near the end of 2002, the Iranian government reported that it had been developing a nuclear program over the past two decades (Sadegh, 2012). Although Iran claimed that the enrichment was for peaceful purposes, the UN was unsure whether this nuclear program follows a peaceful objective or not (Global Policy Forum, 2005). Moreover, the Iranian government could not provide sufficient information to prove its peaceful nuclear program in 2006 (2012). This led to the first round of international sanctions against Iran by the UN (Jacobson, 2008).

Resolution 1737 demanded that “[a]ll states should prevent the supply, sale or transfer, for the use by or benefit of Iran, of related equipment and technology, if the state determined that such items would contribute to enrichment-related, reprocessing or heavy water related activities, for the development of a nuclear delivery system” (United Nation Security Council, 2006). This set of sanctions has been followed by the three additional sets (1747, 1803, and 1929), increasing in scope and severity. Since 2007, the European Union has complied with the U.S. sanctions regarding its financial relations with Iran (Jacobson, 2008). In addition, since 2010, other nations joined the sanctions regime against Iran, such as Canada and Japan (Sadegh, 2012). Development projects have also stopped or been scaled back because of the sanctions. Having nine active projects in Iran, the World Bank also joined the US-led sanctions team and suspended 4 projects worth \$ 5,400,000 (Zahrani, 2008). These projects included earthquake relief, water and sanitation, environment management and urban housing (2008).

In 2012, the ISA developed into the comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act (CISADA) (Sadegh, 2012). CISADA expanded the banned energy-related activities, and added new types of sanctions against Iran (Diplomacy in action fact sheet). In March 2012, the US started to blacklist nearly all Iranian banks and put penalties against European or other companies abroad that deal with the sanctioned Iranian banks (Cordesman et al, 2012). In March 2012, EU foreign ministers approved this list of sanctions against Iran, and included attempts to limit Iran’s ability to export its oil to other countries, and to freeze assets of Iranian banks, including the Central Bank (Woods, 2012). Following such interventions, on March 15, 2012, the Society of World Wide Interbank Telecommunication (SWIFT), started imposing the

sanctions against Iran, reflecting the force of EU sanctions (Cordesman et al., 2012). SWIFT released statistics showing that, in 2010, the network was used 2000 million times by Iranian banks (2012). SWIFT is a significant network for international banking; therefore, in applying sanctions against Iran, SWIFT has had an impact on the transnational financial activities of both the Iranian government and Iranians. It is worth noting that prior to the EU action, Canada and Britain had already prohibited their banks from any transaction with the Central Bank of Iran (Sadegh, 2012). “[T]he series of sanctions on Iran's banking sector as well as the oil embargoes have been the most comprehensive and arguably harshest set of sanctions” (Sadegh, 2012, p.19). Even countries in which genocide has been perpetuated are allowed to stay in the SWIFT network (CICS, 2013, p.6). All in all, economic sanctions against Iran have existed for about 34 years, but since 2006 they have been increasingly widespread, to the point that they are almost, but not fully comprehensive. The sanctions on Iran's Central Bank, for instance, have caused alarming consequences; the governor of this bank has been forced to obtain gold and the national currencies of customers in order to sell oil (Katzman, 2012).

Whether or not sanctions are effective remains to be seen but the objectives of the international sanctions against Iran are worth noting. First, the US and its allies have tried to isolate Iran to weaken its government by placing sanctions on its oil and petrochemical industry, which are two main sources of Iran's revenue. Second, Zahrani (2008) believes that there is a hidden goal for the U.S. sanctions against Iran, which is to target the growth and development of the country. These arguments should be assessed critically and evaluated in an objective manner-whether true or not, they indicate the negative

perception of sanctions and their effectiveness in Iran amongst the academic community. Third, the overthrowing of the current regime (Islamic Republic of Iran) could be another objective for the US led sanctions (Sadeghi-Broujerdi, 2012). Whatever the exact objective, the Iranian government is still developing its nuclear program, even though “[t]he economy of the country is collapsing both as a result of sanctions and internal economic mismanagement” (Sadegh, 2012, p.3). Thus, it can be concluded that in the short term, the sanctions against Iran have not achieved their stated objectives (2012), and instead, aroused hostile criticism from onlookers and academia.

As mentioned earlier, one of the important factors in enabling economic sanctions to achieve their goals is international cooperation. This factor appears to be present in the Iranian case; it is believed that numerous major international corporations have followed the US led sanctions against Iran, in order to maintain a secure position in the U.S. market (Katzman, 2010). The current economic sanctions against Iran have both proponents and opponents among politicians and scholars, for different reasons. Russian Ambassador, Andrei Denisov, in 2006, emphasized that sanctions against Iran would be a failure because of Iran’s role as a major global supplier of oil and gas (Jacobson, 2008). Moreover, no available data suggest that Iran's nuclear program slowed down due to the pressure of the sanctions (Khajehpour et al., 2013). On the other side of the debate, Jacobson (2008) believes that imposing sanctions against Iran are likely to force Iran to change its behaviour regarding the nuclear program. Lacourt (2013) has a similar view. She believes that the sanctions against Iran are having a visible impact on Iran’s foreign policy; they are forcing Iranians to be more forthcoming about their nuclear program. Journalist Juan Cole looks at this matter differently; he believes that economic sanctions

are the best option as a punitive foreign policy because of the fact that military intervention in Iran would create chaos, given Iran's significant geopolitical status, located between Iraq and Afghanistan (Cole, 2010). Some other scholars (Zahrani, 2008; Marashi, Khajehpour, Parsi, 2013) predict the failure of sanctions due to the particular socio-cultural and political climate of Iran, in which the state controls economic and political activity very closely. In other words, they can justify the negative consequences of sanctions with their religious and nationalistic beliefs.

“[I]ran is maintaining a positive balance of trade through import controls and a positive balance of payments through utilizing domestic financial resources in funding projects; relying on foreign-exchange reserve; reducing the state budget's reliance on oil revenue while boosting revenue from taxes and privatization ...”. (Zahrani, 2008, p.8)

2.1.3 CONSEQUENCES OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS

Cortright and Lopez (2000) called the 1990s the “sanctions decade” because the UN imposed more sanctions in those ten years than were imposed in the previous 45. Nossal (1989) argues that sanctions distort the economic lives of communities by promoting black markets as well as causing deprivation, shortages, and disruption. Moreover, he argues many social and familial dysfunctions accompany these distortions. In a similar vein, Peksen (2009) points out that drastic inflation, decreased personal income, and increased unemployment are legacies of economic sanctions. Peksen (2009) claims that “[o]wing to the disproportionate economic impact on citizens, economic coercion inadvertently worsens public health, economic conditions, the development of civil society, and education in targeted countries” (p.60). Nossal (1999) considers sanctions as morally questionable actions. To be sure, whether sanctions work or not,

they put pressure on the civilians of the targeted country (Nossal, 1994). Although there is an assumption that sanctions are an humane alternative to military force and war, in some cases such as Iraq, the human costs reported are in some cases equal to possible harms by a serious military action or war (Askari et al, 2003).

A substantial body of literature has been devoted to the negative impacts of sanctions on civilians, often the poorest and the most vulnerable of the population. For example, Iraq experienced the most comprehensive sanctions imposed by the UN. These sanctions have had profound consequences; malnutrition, maternal mortality and deaths of over 200,000 children can be attributed to the sanctions during the period they were in place (Lopez & Cortright, 2000). Comparatively, Santisteban (2005) mentions the de-development of education caused by inadequate teaching aids and educational technologies due to the imposed sanctions against Iraq. Although some targeted states such as Yugoslavia did not experience malnutrition, they struggled with the socio-cultural side effects of the sanctions - smuggling, criminality and so on; isolation of intellectuals, artists and academic elites were other negative impact of the sanctions in both Yugoslavia and Rhodesia (Cortright & Lopez, 2000, Andreas, 2005). Haiti under the impact of UN sanctions, was faced with a loss of almost 30,000 job opportunities; moreover, the price of basic food such as rice and corn increased by 137 and 187 percent between 1991 to 1994, respectively (Cortright & Lopez, 2000).

Some scholars have analyzed the different impacts on a society based on such variables as class, occupation, gender and age. The literature shows that different social classes have different experiences of economic sanctions. In Iraq, the situations of elites and the rich were different: they could easily overcome the barriers during the sanctions.

However, the middle class and the poor carried the major load of the economic sanctions. Some skilled Iraqi workers and professionals left the country as economic refugees in search of better economic conditions (Lopez, 2004). In the case of Yugoslavia, the sanctions resulted in a crisis for middle class households and pushed them into poverty; moreover, the situation of the lower class deteriorated as well (Cortright & Lopez, 2000). Likewise, Peter Andreas (2005) studied the case of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) where, because of the sanctions throughout the 1970s, the large middle class of engineers, teachers and government bureaucrats lost their income, status and employment opportunities. Regarding gender and age, Doxey (2009) believes that women and children are more vulnerable to the impact of economic sanctions than men are. More to this point, Lori, Nicole and Nossal (1998) maintain women are under greater pressure than usual to play a double role in such crises. While holding gainful employment, they are also responsible for domestic care work (see also Buck et al., 1998). Drenzer (2011) concurs that women, as well as children, suffer more under sanctions against their countries because they are the most powerless political actors within a society.

In this study the consequences of economic sanctions in Iran are important to be examined. As Jacobson (2008) reports, the U.S. sanctions have affected the key economic sectors in Iran such as international trade, the banking system, as well as petroleum and petrochemical production. To elaborate on the last point, the petroleum sector used to provide 20% of Iran's GDP and 80% of the government revenue (Katzman, 2010). However, Iranian energy sectors rely heavily on foreign help in order to rejuvenate and maintain the country's mature fields. Because many major foreign firms ceased dealing with Iran due to the sanctions, Iran has been deprived of modern technology and outside

investment and has lost almost \$60 billion investment in the energy sector since 2011 (Katzman, 2013). The export of oil makes up 80% of Iran's foreign income, which is distributed to infrastructure, social and welfare services, hospitals and schools (Shahabi, 2012). Nevertheless, Iran's oil export has decreased to about 1.25 million barrels which is a significant decrease compared to 2011 (Katzman, 2013, p.2). Therefore, development of Iran's oil industry and trade has been negatively affected by the sanctions, which has resulted in a decline in social and health care services etc (Jacobson, 2008). It is nearly impossible to determine what proportion of these declines is due to the sanctions alone and not because of government economic mismanagement and/or the global financial crisis. However, the sanctions played a significant role in these socioeconomic trends in Iran.

Inflation is another consequence of the sanctions in Iran, creating higher prices in properties, food and medicine. Many families in Iran have decided to rent a smaller place or move to a smaller town in order to pay lower expenses for accommodation (George and Hosseinian, 2013). In addition, in June 2012, "the price of chicken was up 30%, grains up 55.8%, fruits up 66.6%, and vegetables up 99.5%" (Hallinan, July 2012). Although factors such as the global financial and food crises, government mismanagement, etc have contributed to the dramatic price changes, experts such as Hallinan (2012) and Katzman (2013) believe that sanctions had played a major role in this drastic increase in the food prices and basic needs. [Figure 1]

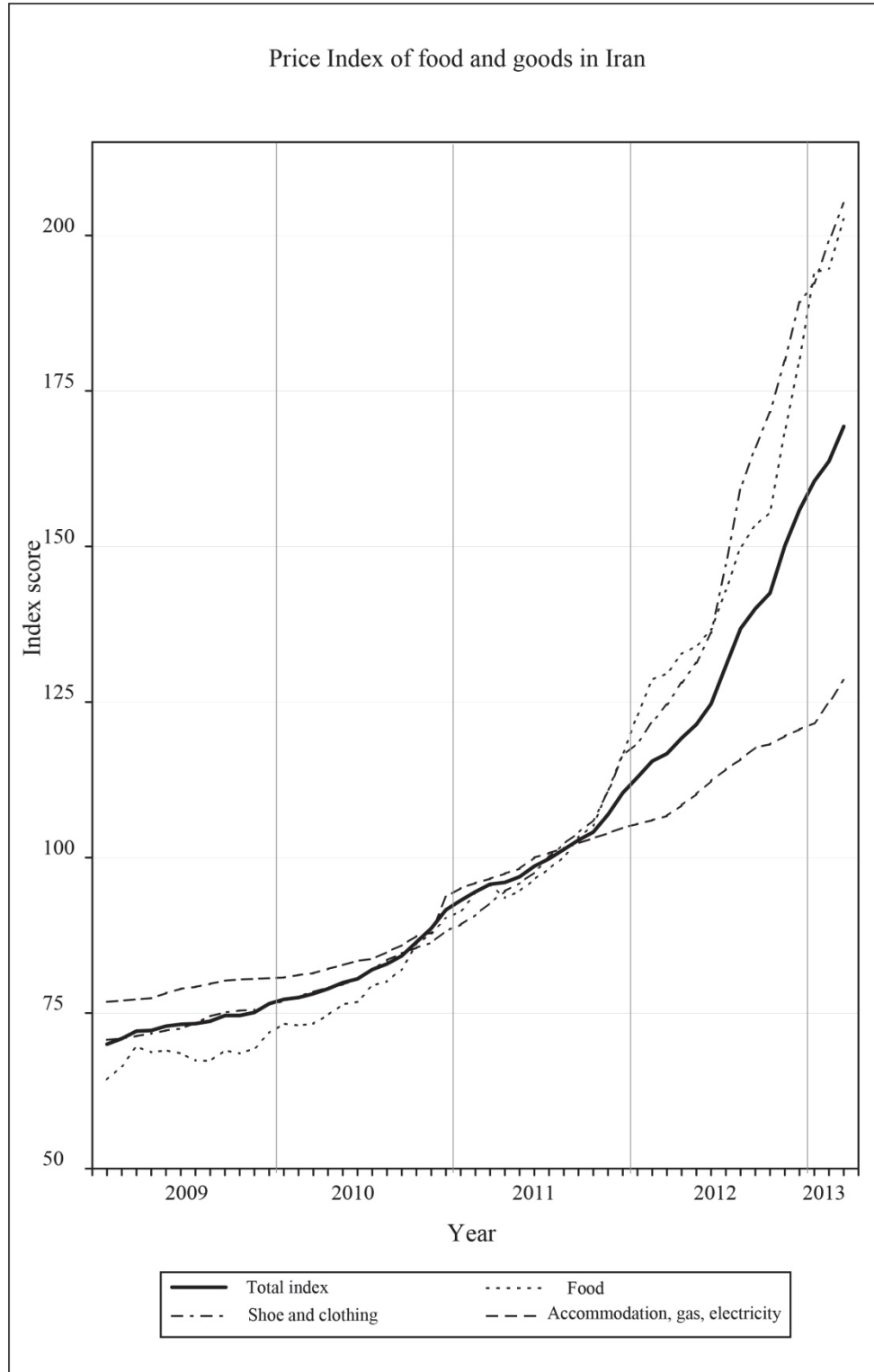


Figure 1
 [Source: CBI (Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran)]

Besides food, the availability and prices of medication have been affected by the sanctions. Although food and pharmaceuticals are exempt from the international sanctions, the fact that banking procedures were severely disrupted has made the export of pharmaceuticals to Iran from foreign countries complicated and impractical, hence as the supply decreased, the prices of such goods increased. Moreover, because the Iranian currency lost about 80% of its value from 2011 and 2012 (2012), prices of the imported goods have skyrocketed, including medicine. Although Iran makes about 97% of its needed medications domestically, the drug manufacturers need to import raw materials (Shahabi, 2012). In October 2012, two major drug manufacturers closed in Iran (Kamali Dehghan, 2012), which resulted in both lack of affordable medication and unemployment. Iran's Haemophilia Society and the Charity Foundation for Special Diseases have blamed the sanctions for endangering the lives of Iranian patients (2012).

Unemployment and work force dislocation are other negative outcomes of the sanctions. Many companies and firms have shut down for different reasons, such as insufficient and expensive imported goods, or lack of international and domestic customers. In addition, Iranian firms, after being sanctioned by global banks, have tried to manage their trade through the banks in non-committed nations such as Pakistan (Jacobson, 2008). Those who were not successful have relocated their businesses to neighboring countries such as Dubai, especially when China and UAE trade and commercial ties increased between 2006 and 2007 (2008). Both closing and dislocating the businesses have resulted in unemployment in Iran. Other problems that Iranian firms and businesspersons have been facing are a lack of foreign currency in Iran to pay for the imported goods they require as well as bans on importing products. In some cases, they

have had to carry cash to pay for the products because of the difficulties in opening of international bank accounts and credits as well as making an international transaction from Iran (Jacobson, 2008, Sadegh, 2012).

Economic sanctions on aircraft and their spare parts have also been noted. Aging Iranian airlines and used spare parts are endangering the lives of many Iranians (Shahabi, 2012). It can be concluded that the economic sanctions have affected many aspects of the Iranian society. Paper is a remarkable example. The sanctions on paper have been another concern for the Iranian society both economically and culturally. Alongside the economic aspects of the sanctions on paper, including unemployment and high prices in the publishing industry, writers, poets and translators do not benefit from publishing; therefore, Iranians are culturally affected as there would be less publication including books, newspaper etc (Shahabi,2012).

As discussed above, the sanctions have been making the life of Iranians hard in many respects. It is worth considering that the sanctions affect different people differently. For instance, regarding social classes, the middle class of the society are more exposed by the negative impact of sanctions than the upper middle class (Sadegh, 2012).

2.2 THE GAP IN LITERATURE

Although only a selected number of experts and scholars in the fields of economic sanctions and international affairs have been discussed here, a gap is visible. As explained in the introduction, there is a need for studying the human impact of economic sanctions *outside* of a targeted place, among diasporas. Often when people move from their homeland to another country, they maintain social, economic or cultural of ties with

their homeland. It can therefore be expected that their lives might be affected by the sanctions on their targeted homelands. This thesis hopes to contribute to the literature on the human consequences of economic sanctions by analyzing the experiences of Iranian residents in Canada regarding international economic sanctions on their homeland, Iran. Economic sanctions on Iran have been a relevant topic over a number of years in the realm of international relations and foreign policy. Moreover, the Iranian diaspora in Canada has been under study in different fields such as sociology, immigration policy etc. Iranians in Canada are one of the nation's important minorities because of their high education levels, wealth and entrepreneurial abilities (Nasri, 2012). This research would help to fill the gap in the literature regarding the effects of sanctions on people who live outside of their homeland, as immigrants, skilled workers or international students. This research therefore explores the social and political impact of sanctions in the lives of Iranians residing in Canada. Among other things it seeks to investigate how sanctions affect the ability of Iranians living in Canada to sustain ties with loved ones in Iran. Due to the fact that Iranians in Canada typically have strong social, cultural, economic and political ties to their homeland, understanding how they are adversely affected by sanctions can expand our knowledge of the human costs of sanctions, by providing a more holistic view of the effects of sanctions.

2.2.1 THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ACROSS BORDERS

It was not until May 2011 that foreign policy and immigration scholars and experts got interested in the issue of the impact of sanctions on civilians outside a targeted country (see, for example, Makarechi, 2011). Most studies that have been done on this subject are by NGOs and news media and not by academics. Moreover, there is no

significant literature associated with the diasporas of the sanctioned countries. As a result, the literature related to this study is limited to two projects and one article. The Asian Law Caucus (ALC, 2011) published the first report titled, "The Impact of U.S. Sanctions against Iran on You". This project was published, with the aim of providing "[a] general discussion of the Iran Sanctions, the scope of the prohibited and allowed transactions under the Iran Sanctions, and the serious impact the Iran Sanctions pose on people's lives, especially United States citizens and residents of Iranian descent" (p.1). This report claimed that U.S. sanctions, especially the Iranian Transactions Regulations, have been negatively affecting Iranians in the US, and especially their commercial and financial dealings with Iran. The ALC report is highly relevant to the present study because it sheds light on the practice of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of the Treasury, which is responsible for administering, and enforcing economic and trade sanctions against targeted countries. It also has practical importance because it educates those who might need to comply with the U.S. sanctions by providing them with the stipulations and exceptions concerning the imposed sanctions. In other words, this study can be a guide for Iranians in the US who have ties with Iran and Iranians back home.

The other significant study is, "Unintended Victims" which is a joint project that portrays the impact of the economic sanctions against Iran on Iranian-Americans (Asian Law Caucus, the Iranian American Bar Association, the National Iranian American Council and the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans, 2012). "Unintended Victims" concurs that the Iran sanctions have both anticipated and collateral/unintended effects. One of the collateral effects of these sanctions is hardship for the Iranian

American community in the US (2012). Being a relatively new community to the US, a vast majority of Iranian Americans have social and financial ties with Iran. To elaborate, many of them have family still in Iran, or they have assets or businesses back home (2012). Therefore, this community “[o]ften must engage into assist or support family or friends in Iran or manage their or their family's assets in Iran” (2012, p.5). There are many reasons the sanctions unfairly burden Iranian-Americans and their activities. The regulations are too unwieldy for the average people to access and understand. To elaborate, U.S. banks, mail carriers and retailers are confused or not well-informed about the legal transactions involving Iran (Unintended, 2012). There is a variety of interpretations among these groups of the sanctions. Moreover, in some cases the customer services are aware that a particular activity/transaction is legal under the sanctions but they refuse to complete the transaction because they are afraid to take any chances in case of possible repercussions (2012). One example is the case of an Apple retail branch in the US that refused to sell a product to a young Iranian woman, named Sahar Sabet, when they found out that she spoke Farsi (2012). The Apple employee said that the policy is not to sell a product to any one from Iran (Shirazi, 2013). Likewise, many U.S. banks have been refusing to process legally authorized transactions dealing with Iran. Moreover, the bank accounts of many Iranian Americans were closed or their assets were frozen—even for receiving funds from Iran legally (2012). For example, in December 2012, TCF Bank sent a notice of account closure to twenty-two Iranian students at the University of Minnesota (Shirazi, 2013). As a result, these financial institutions and private sectors limit the activities of the community. In addition, within the US borders, there is a general suspicion towards Middle Eastern people, including

Iranians. For example, when entering the US, they will be asked about their religion, family details, and luggage (2012). This joint project concludes, "U.S. persons should not be unfairly targeted by a set of laws and regulations simply because of their nationality or country" (p.24)². This study recommends that the federal government should take several steps to avoid the collateral impact of sanctions on the Iranian diaspora in the US. For instance, the federal government should talk with both the community members, and sanctions administrators, and community organizations to understand their problems and concerns regarding the sanctions (2012). Another suggestion is providing mail carriers, technology retailers, and banks with enough clear information about practicing and applying the sanctions in a correct way. Many of the collateral consequences outlined in these reports were also found to be relevant in the Canadian context through my thesis.

The news media has also published articles that offer insight into the experiences of Iranians abroad, especially in the US and Canada. I found one of the articles worth discussing in the literature review because it was cited in "Unintended Victims". "Who Iran Sanctions are really affecting", is written by Kia Makarechi in the *Huffington Post* in 2011. To write this informative article, Makarechi (2011) interviewed Farhad Alavi, founder of Acrivis Law Group (formerly named BHFA Law Group), a firm that focuses on sophisticated trade issues including sanctions and trade regulations, Babak Houghooghi, the managing partner of the Law Group, as well as Ali Mojdehi, the chair of the Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian-Americans (PAAIA). Similar to the sources already mentioned, Makarechi explored the unintended consequences of the economic sanctions

² "U.S. persons" as a term refers to a United States citizen, or a foreigner who has a legal permanent residency, or any corporation and organization that organized under the laws of the United States (Makarechi, 2011).

on Iran that are “[w]reaking havoc on the lives of many Iranian-American and other U.S persons”, by interviewing Iranian American advocacy organization and attorneys, who practice in trade regulations and sanctions (Makarechi,2011).

Makarechi (2011) concluded that the current set of U.S. sanctions against Iran is creating great difficulties for Iranian-American citizens and residents who have relative or financial ties to their country of origin. The sanctions regulations are so comprehensive and complicated that Makarechi (2011, pa.1) believes that “[m]any Iranian-Americans may be unknowingly violating those regulations”. Makarechi (2011) declares that the Iranian Transactions Regulations, or ITR, are the most relevant side of the sanctions to the majority of private Iranian citizens and residents of the US. The sanctions enforced by the Office of Foreign Assets (OFAC) on Iran prohibit several activities by a US person. Some of these prohibited activities are sale of inherited property, movement of gifts over \$100 out of Iran, purchase of any item that was produced in Iran, transfer of funds from Iran to the US, and using a proxy to do business in Iran (Makarechi, 2011).

It is worth noting that if a subject (a U.S. person or whoever is included in these prohibitions) bypasses the regulations or violates them, he/she will be punished. According to Alavi (interviewed by Makarechi), in late 2010, an Iranian-American was fined \$3000. This penalty was due to a fact that he had invested in a family catering business in Iran (2011). This financial penalty could be higher, if the person violated the regulations intentionally (2011). Another case mentioned by Alavi is that of Mohammad Reza Vaghari who received 33 months in prison because he violated the sanctions by selling products to Iran through connections in Dubai (Makarechi, 2011). An extreme case is that of Shakir Hamoodi, an Iraqi-American doctor and head of a family. He was

arrested in 2012, when the sanctions against Iraq were no longer in place, to begin his three-year sentence in prison because of violating the US sanctions regulations on Iraq, although it was in 1990 that the prohibited money transactions to Iraq took place (Boyco-Weyrauch, 2012). Mr. Hamoodi had sent money to Iraq in order to help his family who were in need under the pressure of the economic sanctions on Iraq (2012).

Babak Hoghooghi states that policy makers fail to realize that “[t]he Iranian-American community is a new community to the US. Therefore, they still have social ties in Iran, including their families” (Makarechi, 2011, para. 13). Hoghooghi added that many of them have economic ties to Iran; they still work in Iran while living in the US or might live in Iran while being a U.S. citizen (as cited in Makarechi, 2011). Likewise, Ali Mojdeh points to the communications of the diasporic communities with their families and relatives who still are living back home (Makarechi, 2011). Hoghooghi highlights the role of Iranian-Americans, including himself, in such a condition; he asserts, “[w]e should view it as a challenge for us, and a part of our responsibility and civic duty to advance our self-interest and to be at the table and make sure policymakers and legislators are well-informed” (Makarechi, 2011).

2.2.2 THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON IRANIAN DIASPORA IN CANADA

My study analyzes the experiences of Iranians residing in Halifax and Toronto, Canada. Therefore, it is important to shed light on the history of bilateral relations between Iran and Canada as well as Canada’s role in the sanctions regime against Iran. Whatever the approach of Canada toward Iran is in this situation, it has an impact on the lives and perspectives of Iranians who are residing in this country. Before examining the

impact of sanctions on Iranians residing in Canada, this section elaborates on the general relations between Canada, as the Iranians' host land, and Iran as their homeland.

Until 1955, the British embassy handled Canadian interests in Iran. Then, in 1959, Canada established a diplomatic agency in Iran, and this agency became an embassy in 1961 without exchanging any ambassadors (Iranto, 2012). Later on, in the history of Iran-Canada bilateral relations, on 7 January 1972, the Government of Canada and the Imperial Government of Iran made an official agreement to cooperate on the peaceful uses of atomic energy (Agreement between Canada and Iran, 2011). In 1979, during the internal conflicts in Iran following the Islamic Revolution, Ken Taylor, the Canadian Ambassador in Iran at that time, had to evacuate 850 Canadian workers while processing thousands of applications for Iranians who intended to leave the country (Hillmer, 2012). On the other hand, Iranian revolutionary students attacked the American embassy on November 4, 1979, taking more than 50 American diplomats and embassy staffs hostage. The hostage crises lasted for 444 days and during the crisis six American diplomats managed to escape and take refuge at the Canadian embassy in Tehran. Finally, with Canadian ambassador Taylor's help, on January 27, 1980, these six Americans managed to get on an early morning flight to Frankfurt (2012). After they safely arrived at Frankfurt, Taylor closed the embassy and left Iran with his Canadian colleagues. The 'Canadian Caper' is a popular name for this secret rescue. Consequently, Canada and Iran did not maintain normal diplomatic relations for 8 years after the Canadian Caper (2012). It is worth noting that the Canadian Caper caused suspicion and strained relations between the two countries, creating a lack of trust not only then but which continued throughout the years. History shows that such events result in mistrust, and rarely can be

forgiven by states, particularly those states who feel betrayed. It can therefore be expected that the Iranian government and Iranians perceive Canada as a strong and persistent supporter of the US.

In the matter of implementing sanctions against Iran during the last years, Canada has been one the major followers of the UN—and more specifically, the US. In 2006, Canada warned Iran to suspend all its Uranium-related activities in order to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Then, on 29 March 2006, the Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister, Peter Mackay, asserted that Iran should take several steps to restore international trust (Iran Watch, 2012). Iran needed to suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities, and fully cooperate with the IAEA. Finally, Canada implemented UN SCR 1737 concerning Iran in 2007. Under the targeted sanctions included in this resolution, Iran had to suspend nuclear activities, including uranium production and research, reactor construction and work on heavy water (UN, 2006). Canada also supported UN SCR 1803, and imposed tougher sanctions against Iran. The sanctions under resolution 1803 included a travel ban for targeted Iranians, particularly those who were considered international security threats and were connected to political leaders. These sanctions also included freezing the assets of newly designated Iranian officials and companies, restrictions on the sale of dual-use items to Iran, and cargo inspection going in or out of Iran (Iran Watch, 2012). In 2009, the Prime Minister of Canada Stephan Harper maintained that Iran's covert uranium enrichment threatens regional stability and international security. Moreover, Lawrence Cannon, then the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, considered Iran's launch of the Omid telecommunication satellite, in 2009, a threat. Along with some other governments,

Canada assumed that Iran is able to carry weapons with such a satellite (Iran Watch, 2012). Based on these assumptions, Canada decided to follow the Security Council lead and toughen its own new set of sanctions against Iran. The new "broad-based" sanctions (CICS, 2012b, para.3), under the Special Economic Measures Act (SEMA), have targeted the export of essential goods, items for refining oil, gas, and related technologies, and have been continued until now (Iran Watch, 2012). Contrary to the above mentioned claims, Sheikh-Hassani (Hard Talk, 2012) states that the Canadian Prime Minister's idea regarding Iran's nuclear power and launching satellite is wrong. He argues that in the last 250 years, Iran has never attacked or threatened its neighbors while it has been invaded twice by Russia and Twice during World War I and II. According to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (2011), Canada implemented additional sanctions against Iran under the SEMA and these sanctions were additional to the existing sanctions passed under the UN Act in July 2010. These expanded sanctions prohibited almost all financial transactions of the Iranian government and designated individuals; these sanctions also expanded the list of prohibited firms and goods (Iran Watch, 2012). Some exceptions to the imposed sanctions included pension payments to any one in Canada or Canadians abroad, pension payments to any one in Iran, and remittances of \$40,000 or less which were sent to or from any person in Iran (Foreign Affairs, 2013b). As long as remittances are under 40,000, not commercial and between family members, or to pay for a contract signed before November 2012, the transactions can be done. As of yet, I have not been able to find specific policies which govern these exceptions, i.e., how often and through what means such remittances can be made. However, it seems that there is no frequency limit or a maximum number of transactions.

Although these sanctions are not targeting civilians, the closing of Iranian bank accounts by TD bank of Canada and the closing of the Visa and Immigration Section at the Embassy of Canada in Iran on April 2012 most certainly affected Iranians (CICS, 2012b). Generally, Canada used to be considered liberal and peace-seeking country by both the Iranian government and the Iranian people, in contrast with the countries such as the US. Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ramin MehmanParast, asserted that Canada's action toward Iran is undiplomatic and extremist, which its direct impact is on Iranian civilians and the Iranian diaspora (Vakonesh e Iran, 2013).

Based on the Canadian sanctions on Iran any hard currency from any country exceeding 40,000 cannot be sold, exported or transferred, and Canadians cannot create or invest in any Iranian financial institutions (Special Economic, 2010). Exceptions include funds for safeguarding of human life and disaster relief, including the provision of food, medicine or medical supplies. Canada's sanctions regulation also does allow the Minister of Foreign Affairs to issue a permit to allow any transaction that it deems lawful³.

As a result, apart from the individual problems, the Iranian diaspora has to deal with the conflicts between the host country (Canada) and the home country (Iran) as well as the impact of economic sanctions. To elaborate, many Iranians in Canada have owned businesses in Iran, and due to the international sanctions they are often unable to transfer money from Iran to their Canadian bank accounts source. Moreover, Iranian international students who do not receive funding from Canadian universities are highly affected by the blocking of the bank assets and decrease in the value of Rial (the Iranian national

³ Moreover, some of the Iranian universities are under the sanctions such as Tehran University of Medical Sciences and Shahid Beheshti University as well as some of the major pharmaceutical factories like Loghman (Special Economic Measures, 2012).

currency). Moreover, as Iranians are ejected from the SWIFT network, many Iranian students in Canada are unable to receive money from their parents through Iranian banks (CICS, 2013). In addition, their expenses in Canada have increased significantly, as they have to exchange the devalued Rial to the Canadian dollar (CAD). Some specific cases of adverse effect on members of the Iranian diaspora are explained below.

Canadian financial institutions and the private sector have interpreted and practiced the sanctions in various ways (CICS, 2013). For instance, on July 6, 2012, the Ottawa Citizen reported that the TD bank of Canada had begun to send letters to its Iranian clients whose accounts had been closed by the bank. TD bank asserted, “Canadian financial institutions are forbidden from providing financial services to anyone in Iran or for the benefit of Iran” (Zillio, 2012). According to Miller (2012), the Iranian embassy in Canada called this act by TD bank discriminatory and many Iranians were angry after TD bank abruptly closed their accounts. Some of them maintained that the closures were unjust because they were permanent residents of Canada. Furthermore, in September 2012, the Canadian government severed its political ties with Iran when it shut down both its embassy in Iran and Iran's embassy in Canada (Government of Canada, 2013). Iranians residing both inside and outside Iran have faced difficulties because of these closures. Moreover, Iranians in Canada are having problems accessing consular services. Since September 2012, the Canadian visa office in Ankara has been responsible for dealing with Iranians and citizens of other countries in the region. The Canadian government maintained that shifting visa services is common, and that it increases efficiency. However, Ali Asghar Khaji, Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister, accuses Ottawa of lying about the need to save money and to streamline operations (Koring, 2012).

Asghar Khaji maintained that this would be a burden for the Iranian diaspora in Canada and assumed that Harper's goal is to separate the diaspora from their home country (Koring, 2012). Shutting down the visa and immigration section is not a friendly response to the Iranian community who has made significant contributions to the economy, science, culture and social fabric of Canada (Kambiz Sheikh-Hassani, 2012). As an example of contributions by Iranian immigrants to Canadian economy, we can point to the number of Iranian investors who are involved in the Canadian real estate market, and existence of several significant developers in Toronto and Vancouver (Rahnema, 2012).

Apart from financial transactions, Canadian political and economic relations with Iran have been managed through the Controlled Engagement Policy. This policy prevents direct flights between Iran and Canada, the majority of which connect through Germany or London. Additionally, Canada refused Iran's request to have consulates in other cities in Canada, such as Vancouver (Iranto, 2012). Even if many Iranians benefit from community-based organizations and associations in Canada, their ties to their home country and the bilateral relations between their home and host land are always important to their socioeconomic wellbeing. It is worth noting that those Iranians who are in the process of applying for Canadian immigration have been affected to some extent. To elaborate, they are strictly screened by the Canadian government to make sure that they are not linked to the political leadership (CICS, 2012a). It is also reported that many Iranian applicants, without having any relationship to the Iranian government, have been rejected; the given reason for these rejections has been their employment history included a position in a company currently under sanctions (CICS, 2012a). Under such circumstances, many of the Iran's best and smartest people, who are seeking a better

career and/or educational system, could lose valuable opportunities (CICS, 2013). It is obvious that neither Canada nor Iran has backed out from their entrenchment. The Canadian Government claims that the sanctions have nothing to do with Iranian civilians but rather the Iranian government; however, the opposite is in fact true. Iran on the other side believes that the nuclear power enrichment is a right and has not halted its proliferation.

2.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF IRANIAN DIASPORA IN CANADA

“[I]ranians comprise an immigrant group that has a very different cultural background from that of the mainstream Canadian population and speaks a language other than English or French; in this case mainly Farsi (Persian)”

(Dastjerdi, 2012, p.1)

Nowadays the number one destination for Iranian immigrants is Canada, the largest country in North America. The Iranian diaspora in Canada is significant and its population is expanding. Apart from immigrants, many Iranians come to Canada as International Students to continue their education. Moreover, the flow of migrants from Iran has included large number of refugees. The main destination of Iranian immigrants is Ontario and specifically the GTA (Greater Toronto Area). The majority of Iranian-Canadians live in Ontario and then in British Columbia and Quebec, in that order. The members of the Iranian diaspora come from different social classes, cultural and religious backgrounds. Therefore, there is an internal diversity in the Iranian diaspora. This diversity makes for an interesting history of Iranian diaspora and the way they have been forming in Canada.

Entezarkheir (2005) states that over the period 1970 to 2000, Iran faced three phases: a revolution in 1978, the 9 years of Iraq- Iran war after 1980, and a change in the conservative regime to the liberals after Iranian legislative election in 1996. Entezarkheir (2005) believes that every one of these three events was a reason leading to Iranian migration to the West, particularly Canada because of its immigration rules (point system and immigration through investment). Statistics show that the rate of Iranian immigration accelerated following the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1978 (Garousi, 2005 & McAuliffe, 2008). In addition to the Islamic revolution, the horror of the Iran-Iraq war was another reason for Iranians to immigrate. It tends to be normal that in a conflict, such as war, people become afraid of the well-beings of their own and therefore, they move to other countries to survive.

Kazemiour (2004) indicates that the majority of Iranian immigrants to Canada in the late 1980 and early 1990s were refugees. However, the number of economic immigrants, including entrepreneurs, investors and skill workers increased in the early 1990s, during the economic recession in Canada where there was a demand for immigrants with financial and occupational resources than refugees (2004). Generally, a major reason for their immigration has been the welfare and future of their family members with the centrality of a better and higher education (2004). Furthermore, they immigrate with the idea of being a mobile individual to benefit from both the host and home countries, not to stay only in Canada for good (2004).

Iranians in diaspora maintain different ties with their homeland. Family is the most important element in the lives of Iranians (behjati-Sabet, 1990) that goes further than mother, father, siblings, and reaches to grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Therefore, family is a strong tie that the Iranians in diaspora hold on to while living in Canada. They talk to their families back home, send gifts and remittances to them, travel back to Iran to visit them etc. Culture and nationality are two other ties that Iranians maintain in the diaspora. Garousi's study (2005) is based on a survey among a certain number of Iranian-Canadians, in which the different aspects of Iranian-Canadians' ties with Iran are explored. These aspects include Iranian immigrants' interest in the home culture, preserving the home culture, following news related to Iran, contributing to charity organizations in Iran, and investment in Iran (Garousi, 2005, p.21). Iranians in Canada are highly connected to the culture of Iran including traditions, language, literature, movies and food (2005). The high number of travels to Iran by these immigrants show the attachment of Iranian-Canadians' to their roots back home. Garousi (2005) reports that most of the Iranian-Canadians first generation have visited Iran two or three times in the last two decades. Moreover, there are a significant number of charity contributions by Iranian diaspora in Canada to the organizations in Iran; the majority of the participants in Garousi's study (2005) have donated contributions (at least once) to different charity organizations/events in Iran. Sadaf Safdar (2003) states that “[b]eyond the ultimate goals of improving their economic and political status and life satisfaction, immigrants strive to maintain their heritage culture (particularly in multicultural societies such as Canada), to participate in the new society, and to maintain psychological and physical stability in the face of acculturation-specific and non-specific sources of stress” (p.556). It is important to note that the first generation of Iranian-Canadians holds more and stronger ties with Iran than the second generation (Garousi, 2005).

Garousi (2005) maintains that the Iranian-Canadian community is a young population; the majority of the population is aged between 25 and 44. This young community comes from the latest flow of immigration to Canada for education. Education is an important reason for Iranians immigrating to Canada that also differentiates Iranian immigrants with other groups of immigrants (Kazemipour, 2004). Many of them apply for graduate and post graduate programs in Canadian universities for several reasons: first because of available scholarships and funding for graduate students, second because of better research and educational infrastructure (2003); and third, because there is a difficulty in passing the university entrance exam in Iran in order to study in a good university in one's favourite major (Kazemipour, 2004). For instance, just in 2002, Garousi (2005) says, 200,000 educated Iranian professionals immigrated mainly to Canada, Australia and Eastern Europe. Iranian youngsters get encouraged to immigrate to a western country for other personal reasons such as economic, social, educational and cultural/religious reasons (Garousi, 2003). For instance, the average income for an educated and talented person is low in Iran compared with the US and Canada (2003). Therefore, many youngsters choose to immigrate in order to be financially independent and have a better life. On the other side, Kazemipour (2004) realized that economic instability and uncertainty in Iran is more like a reason for people to immigrate than low income and poverty. To elaborate, many who decide to immigrate are unsure about the future of their businesses, jobs and properties.

All types of individuals have immigrated and are living in Canada, including singles and members of a family who all come to Canada together (Garousi, 2005). Usually, they sell all or part of their belongings in Iran and transfer the money to Canada

in order to build a new life (2005). Some of them still maintain their businesses in Iran. Some of them have businesses both in Canada in Iran. For instance, they are investors in real estate in both countries. Based on the census 2011, there are 163,290 Iranians in Canada; Garousi (2005) claims that a variety of ethnicity in Iran as well as the number of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers have lowered this number. For instance, many Azari, Kurds or Turks who were born in Iran might not present themselves as an Iranian.

Iranian diasporas are diverse, not only in Canada but in other countries abroad. Diversity in religion backgrounds, socio-economic classes and generations are found obviously within the Iranian diaspora, however Iranians in and out of a diaspora share almost the same cultural values and behaviours (Behjati-Sabet, 1990). Regarding religion, there are two main religious groupings among Iranians: Muslims and Baha'is. MacAuliffe (2008) maintains that the Baha'i faith has dominated the migrant and refugee flows out of Iran. The other religious grouping is Muslims. According to McAluliffe (2008), Muslim Iranians in the diaspora are closely connected with their home country, but the Baha'is' focuses are more on their global and transnational connections. However, the current study is on the Iranians who claim they have ties with Iran, regardless of their religion. The variety of class identities among Iranians in the diaspora is another dimension of diversity. In addition to the upper classes, or established community of Iranians in the diaspora, the vast majority of the Iranians in Canada are from middle class backgrounds with secular, non-traditional life experiences and social behaviours (Moghissi, 1999, Behjat-Sadr, 1990). As McAuliff (2008) believes, the concept of *class* for people in the diaspora and especially the second-generation is different from the explicit academic definition of class. The term “[c]lass is used by immigrants and their

children as a means of separation” (p.67). The way of consumption is a way for the established immigrants to differentiate themselves from the new arrivals: driving great cars, having great houses, wearing special brands. The rich Iranians in the diaspora live in particular areas in different cities of Canada. In Vancouver, for instance, they live around North Vancouver. In Toronto, they mostly live in the York and Richmond Hill areas. These differences in people’s socio-economic classes, and their perceptions of class, have affected their internal connections and communications in the diaspora. Among many of the first generation, there is still a concern to maintain class separation between the established and newcomers. The second generation mostly gets a warning from their parents to stay away from new immigrants who are seen as “low class” and more wild in the matter of fighting and drinking (McAuliff, 2008). Therefore, class and religion are two factors, which bring diversity to the Iranian diaspora. Besides diversity, the current study explores that class identities have an impact on the Iranians' experiences of sanctions in the diaspora. However, the definition of class by the current study is different from the definition of class by the mentioned Iranians in the Canadian diaspora. This is explained in the research findings and analysis chapter.

The Iranian diaspora in Canada includes women and men, youngsters and the elderly, single and married. Every one of these categories has their own challenges after leaving their home, immigrating and entering the host country. Some of their problems are acculturation, economic issues, psychological adjustments, social well-being and social status. Although the whole Iranian society started to follow a more traditional and religious stream after the Islamic revolution, during the Pahlavi Regime, between the year 1925 and 1979, Iranians experienced modern education either by attending different

branches of foreign universities in Iran or being sent to universities abroad by the government in order to attain a better education (Behjati-Sabet, 1990). Moreover, many young Iranians are familiar with the Western world because of media, including TV, Satellite, and internet or many of them have family and friends who live abroad. Hence, many Iranians in a diaspora, including Canada, have an idea of a modern society, education, etc. Therefore, they more likely are able to cope with new society, including cultural shocks. However, the process of immigration is not bare of problems for immigrants, and Iranians in Canada are not an exception. Garousi (2005) points to some of the problems facing Iranian-Canadians after their immigration to Canada. Unemployment and underemployment, inadequate language training for new comers and a cultural difference with the host country are such problems (p.25). Moreover, losses of status and language barriers are other problems that Iranians have in Canada (Behjati-Sabet, 1990). In addition, although Iranians might not be identifiable by their skin color as a middle-eastern, ethno-racial minority, other factors such as language, culture and tradition distinguishes them from groups of Western origin (Moghissi, 1999). In Canada, the same as other western countries, exaggerated images of Islam and Muslims exist which come out as a form of racism among Canadians toward Iranians (Moghissi, 1999). The current study also demonstrates that the economic sanctions against Iran distorted the public ideas about Iranians. As an example, one of the participants in this study claimed that she was shopping in a computer exhibition in Halifax and the seller, when he realized that she is originally Iranian, started to question here about why she needs the product or if she is buying it for her personal use or not . When the Iranian immigrants and international students are not accepted in the society and face racism, they prefer to take

refuge in their own culture and communicate with people in their own community. Due to this fact, there are a lot of Iranian associations and societies all over Canada.

Moghissi (1999) believes that maintaining a status quo regarding traditions, culture and gender roles are important to all the diasporic communities such as European, non-European etc. As a normal experience for people in exile, “[s]truggles between men and women and between parents and children emerge and are fought out under the banner of preserving ethnic and racial identity and cultural survival” (1999, p.2). Moghissi (1999) says that Iranian men are reluctant to go for a low-aid, part-time and dead-end job. Culturally, having dead-end jobs has always been embarrassing for Iranian men and they bring this idea with them to the new country. However, Iranian women try to take any reasonable job opportunity to become involved in the host society. Therefore, “[I]ranian women's experience of displacement is relatively more positive than that of men, and women, generally, are more prepared and make more efforts to build a home away from home” (Moghissi, 1999, p.1). On the other side, Torbati (2006) states that Iranian women are less likely to be self-employed in Canada because of several reasons. First, most of them are homemakers so they work at home. Moreover, they are helpers in a family business while their husbands are decision makers. Finally, the patriarchal culture in which Iranians have grown up is determining men as business runners (2006). However, in the current study, couple female participants are self-employed and very active in the Canadian society. Therefore, my research findings regarding gender roles of Iranians in Toronto and Halifax concurs Moghissi's idea rather than Torbati's idea.

The older Iranian-Canadians who are fewer than youngsters are immigrating to Canada mostly because of their children. Haideh Moghissi (2009) shares her experience

regarding her mother's immigration to Canada. She believes that her mother's health, good humor and sense of confidence failed in two years after immigration to Canada. When elderly people come to Canada, they are challenged by the second language that most of them are not good at reading, speaking and communication with. Moreover, they should deal with their impatient and busy children who rarely spend time with their old parents (2009). As a result, they become more dependent on their children both emotionally and financially in the host country. Moghissi (2009) states that Iranian seniors in Toronto are all financially less privileged and dependent on Old Age Security or disability payments as the only sources of income they have. Her findings show that these seniors suffer from loneliness and financial issues the most. They are worried about being a burden on their children's shoulders. It is worth noting here that the economic sanctions are an extra burden on the shoulders of some of these seniors in Canada. In addition, the only communications that most of them have are through their regular associations such as the Iranian Senior's Association and Iranian women's Association (Moghissi, 2009). The same situation for the senior Iranians in diasporas might exist in other cities in Canada. For instance, in Halifax, elderly Iranians are not comfortable to communicate with Canadians because they are afraid of their ability to speak English. They are mostly having their own family gathering and limited ways of communication outside their home. The Iranian woman of Nova Scotia is a community that has a book club for senior Iranians where sometimes they gather and discuss over a book. However, these problems do not belong exclusively to the seniors in Iranian diaspora but also any ethnic community can have the same experiences.

Aside from disadvantages of immigration and new life in Canada, there are some advantages for the Iranian diaspora. As mentioned before, progress in the Iranian women's lives is one of the advantages of immigration to Canada. In a host Country like Canada, they feel themselves more secured; they are aware of their rights and supports by law. The Iranian diaspora and their political advocacy roles would be an advantage. To elaborate, in many cases, the Iranian diaspora movements are in favour of their co-citizens and their rights in Iran. A significant figure is Mrs. Nazanin Afshin Jam, the Iranian born wife of the Defence Minister of Canada, Peter Mackey. Afshin-Jam is the co-founder of Stop Children Execution organization. She is a dedicated human rights activist. For instance, regarding the TD bank act of closing the Iranians bank accounts in July 2012, Afshin jam represented her shock and declared that TD bank should do more investigation rather than harming innocent people, especially Iranian-Canadians (Miller,2012). Such figures in the Iranian-Canadian community might result a great change in the matter of social well being and human rights for Iranians who are living inside the country. Besides being useful for Iran and Iranians, the Iranian diaspora and its members have some roles in Canadian policy. Furthermore, because of multiculturalism in Canada, almost every popular Canadian university has its own Iranian student society, such as University of Toronto, Ryerson University in Toronto and Dalhousie University in Halifax. These societies and their members try to help Iranian students in different ways; also, some of them hold Iranian traditional ceremonies for students and families. Beside student societies, there are many networks for businesses and employment; for instance The Iranian-Canadian Network for Employment and Entrepreneurship Mentoring. This network aims to help Iranian-Canadians to obtain sustainable

employment and provide information to Iranian entrepreneurs in establishing new business. The other example is the annual Iranian Business Trade Show in some cities in Canada such as Halifax. In this show, Iranians promote and advertize their owned or operated businesses. Furthermore, Iranians in almost every city in which they live in Canada, have Iranian restaurants, barbers, lawyers, super markets etc. These businesses are numerous in Toronto. There is nothing from Iran that you want and would not find in Toronto. Iranian community calls Toronto “Tehrantor” because of a lot of Iranian people, associations and restaurants.

Iranian diasporas' contribution to Canadian society is worth mentioning. The countries hosting immigrants, such as Canada, consider immigrants economic assets in which their success or failure is measurable in economic terms (Kazemipour, 2004, p.25). Regarding Iranian-Canadians' potentials and abilities, Torbati (2006) states that Iranian immigrants to Canada, especially in the earlier years of their immigration abroad, before and post revolution from 1951 to 2001, were mostly from the upper middle and elite classes who were wealthy or/and with high educational qualifications. Likewise, Garousi (2005) points to the following characteristics of Iranian immigrants: “[h]igh level of education, tenacity, flexibility, and adaptability, willingness to learn, self-reliance and hard work, secular community and vibrant culture, strong family ties, existence of many Iranian professional associations, and finally, cooperation and goodwill toward the host country” (p.24). As mentioned before, members of the Iranian diaspora in Canada have demonstrated a great desire to pursue a higher level of education; moreover, they hope to provide their children with educational opportunities and this “[s]ignifies them as what may be called a high human capital group” (Kazemipour, 2004, p.37).

There are numerous Iranian professors in the top universities of Canada such as Ramin Jahanbigloo in the University of Toronto. He was one of the best professors in Philosophy in Iran. His classrooms in Tehran University used to be full of students even during the summer. Haideh Moghissi is a professor at York University; she has many written articles and books in sociology. Many Iranians in the diaspora have important roles in Canadian institutions beyond the universities and academic contexts. Reza Moridi, is the liberal Member of Parliament for Richmond Hill. Nikki Jafari, for instance, is a Mobile Mortgage Specialist in RBC bank of Canada. She also is the organizer of Iranian Business Trade Show, which is open to all the communities to present their business and make connection with others. The Trade show is a great socio-economic contributor to the Canadian society both locally and internationally. It can be concluded that Iranian-Canadians are advantages for the host country by bringing knowledge, new culture, integrity and ideas. As mentioned earlier, Iranians are diverse in the matter of socio-economic classes, religious and political ideas and generations. They bring this internal diversity when they come to their new country.

Iranians of Halifax

Iranians became one of the significant groups of immigrants to Nova Scotia between 2005 and 2009; “[b]y 2006, Iranians were the fourth largest immigrant group to the province and the largest non-European immigrant group” (Porter, 2010, p.2). Halifax is the provincial capital of Nova Scotia is home for 1,135 Iranians (Statistics Canada, 2011). Iranians in Halifax consist of immigrants who came to Halifax through different immigration programs, especially provincial nominee program, refugees and students. Iranians in Halifax are not concentrated in one residential area but many Iranian families

live near the Bedford area. This makes it hard to have an ethnic business center, for Iranians, in Halifax, like in Toronto (Porter, 2010). Halifax is a small city; therefore, there are limited facilities for immigrants. As an example, an Iranian with a language barrier can have many problems for shopping, registrations and filling the forms and so on (2010). However, in bigger cities in Canada like Toronto and Vancouver, government documents and information in Farsi are available (Porter, 2010). In addition to many Iranian grocery stores are available with Iranian shopkeepers in Toronto. However, Iranians in Halifax help each other; they are socially and culturally active. For instance, Iranians in Halifax have a Persian radio show, Radio Payam, which broadcasts weekly. This channel connects Iranians in Halifax with other parts of the world by giving out News, advertising events, interviewing people etc (Porter, 2010). They celebrate their national days together such as Norouz and Tirgan. Porter (2010) studied Iranian immigrants in Halifax and their sense of belonging. He indicates that Iranians in Halifax describe Canada as a free country; many of them chose Canada because of its civil and human rights (2010). Although the Iranian community in Halifax is a small one, they are socioeconomically, culturally and politically active in both their home and host land (2010). One major problem that Iranians have in Halifax is a lack of economic opportunities, including finding a job related to their experiences and field of studies; this is why many of them move to other cities in Canada, Toronto for instance (2010).

Iranians in Toronto

The majority of Iranian immigrants to Canada are residing in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Toronto is the provincial capital of Ontario, and the financial capital of Canada (Torbati, 2006). The population of 70,590 Iranians lives in Toronto (Statistics

Canada, 2011). This population is about seven times more than the Iranian population in Halifax. The Iranian population in Toronto, as other Iranians in rest of the Canada, is highly educated, which reflects the Canadian immigration policy, point system (Torbati, 2006). In this system, immigration applicants gain point based on their abilities and capacities, education has the highest number of points. Iranian population in Toronto is concentrates in the North York, Richmond Hill and Markham, in Toronto (2006). In addition, Iranian businesses in Toronto are concentrated on Yonge Street. Many of these businesses are based on the needs of Iranian population in Toronto; for instance, Iranian restaurants, bakeries, grocery store and bookstores (2006). As a result, many Iranians, who have problem with English speaking, rely on these businesses, as the majority of sellers speak Farsi (2006). Another result can be a lower chance of being homesick, because Iranians in Toronto are able to find anything from Iran, including food. Iranians in Toronto have business directories such as Iran Javan, Shahrvand (2006) and Padika. Although there is more employment opportunities, for Iranians, in Toronto, compared to Halifax, there is no guarantee for them to find a promising and related job to their experiences and field of works (2006). Moreover, Iranians in Toronto get paid lower than the average of Torontonians (2006).

In a nutshell, starting from the interwar period, economic sanctions are applied against adverse governments by the UN, US and other individual states. There are different kinds of economic sanctions including multilateral and unilateral sanctions interrupting/distorting the economic system of a government. Moreover, in some cases sanctions are symbolic, social and diplomatic. There is an ongoing debate on whether or not economic sanctions are effective. Although in some cases such as South Africa and

Yugoslavia, they reached their goals; their human costs are high and need deep consideration. Economic sanctions against Iran have been in place since 1979. However, recently because of Iran's "nuclear proliferation", the international sanctions against Iran have been becoming tough and almost comprehensive. From 2011, the economic sanctions against Iran have been deep enough to make their human costs visible, such as unemployment, shortage of medicine, etc. Furthermore, there are many Iranians living outside Iran, such as Canada, and who are being affected by the consequences of sanctions against their homeland. This is a gap in the literature of economic sanctions as it does not address how diasporic communities who maintained ties with their homeland are likely to experience the human costs of the sanctions. The current study interviewed Iranians living in Toronto and Halifax regarding their experiences of the sanctions against Iran. Their responses are explained in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH FINDINGS and ANALYSIS

“Whenever I wanted to open a door, the door shut on me because of the sanctions”
(Setareh, female immigrant in Halifax).

My research findings show that sanctions have deeply affected Iranian immigrants living in Halifax and Toronto, in particular those who wish to maintain and develop their financial ties with their homeland. In this chapter, I will describe the participants' migration to Canada, the types of ties they have with Iran and their opinions about economic sanctions generally and against Iran, while exploring the impacts on their personal and social lives. The following provides a summary of information on the study group at the time of the interviews.

Table 1: Interviewees in Toronto

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Sex	Occupation	Length of residing in Canada	Social Class*	Citizen/Permanent Resident/ International Student
Negin	26	Female	Employee/Student	8 years	Upper middle	Citizen
Aryan	Mid 20s	Male	Employee	12 years	Upper middle	Permanent resident
Farshad	43	Male	Business owner	9 years	Middle	Citizen, skill workers program
Fahim	27	Male	Student	8 years	Middle	International student
Shaya	29	Female	Employee	2 years	Upper middle	Post graduate work permit

Table 2: Interviewees in Halifax

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Sex	Occupation	Length of residing in Canada	Social Class*	Citizen/Permanent Resident/ International Student
Rod	60	Male	Business owner	2 years & 9 months	Upper middle	Permanent resident via nominee program immigration policy
Farhad	51	Male	Business Owner	3 years & 9 months	Upper middle	Permanent resident/nominee program
Setareh	48	Female	Employee	3 years & 1 month	Middle	Permanent resident/nominee program
Parisa	34	Female	Employee	12 years	Upper middle	Citizen
Amir	21	Male	Student	1 year	Upper middle	International student
Ali	55	Male	Business owner/employee	5 years	Upper middle	Permanent resident, nominee program

* These are the social classes that the participants are coming from. However, Farhad, Shaya and Parisa stated that since they came to Canada, their social classes have changed. This is explained in the research findings and analysis chapter.

3.1 COMING TO CANADA

The participants of the current study moved to Canada for different reasons. For instance, Negin and Shahin, two young participants in Toronto, claimed that it was their parents' decision to bring the whole family to Canada. Negin immigrated with his parents and sister in 2005 but their parents returned to Iran after three weeks and never came back to Canada. Since then, Negin and her younger sister have been living in Toronto together. Likewise, Shahin's father went back to Iran after immigration and Shahin remained with his mother and sister in Toronto.

Four of the participants immigrated to Canada with their families and have remained in Canada since arrival. Farhad, Rod, and Setareh immigrated for their children's future, so they could have a better education and career opportunities. They chose Canada for different reasons such as the availability of Canada's immigration programs, multicultural fabric of Canadian society and the stability of Canada's economy. Farshad, who immigrated with his wife and young son nine years ago, has Canadian citizenship. When I asked him why Canada, he asserted, "A positive attitude and background exist among Iranians toward Canada. This might be because of its peaceful nature, its multiculturalism or because immigrants can benefit from social freedom here in Canada. In both social and economic aspects, I have predicted that I can progress here". Setareh, a female immigrant in Halifax, asserted, "Regardless of being a woman, I thought my potentials would flourish more in a developed country like Canada".

Similar to the Iranian immigrants, Iranian international students in Halifax and Toronto highlighted Canada as a safe and multicultural country which, compared to a

European country, gives you a better chance to apply for permanent residency. Amir was an Iranian international student in Halifax; he pointed to the good universities in Canada and their funding for international graduate students as a reason to come. He was pursuing his master's degree in engineering at Dalhousie University, which provided him with a half scholarship and a teaching assistantship.

The permanent immigrants in this study came to Canada through business class and provincial nominee, or skilled workers immigration programs. For instance, Rod, Farhad, and Ali came to Halifax through the provincial nominee program and Farshad applied for skilled worker program and then got his Canadian citizenship. Besides choosing Canada for its good universities and available scholarships, all the Iranian international students who were interviewed declared that they considered staying and applying for their permanent residency. Fahim, an Iranian international student in Toronto, recognized Canada as a safe place to work and raise a family. Two participants, like Fahim and Ali, experienced living in European countries. They compared Canada with countries such as Ukraine and Germany and believed Canada is a much better place to build a life as an immigrant because of its multiculturalism. In addition, Fahim said, “having been in European countries, I realized that getting your residency is much harder compared to Canada”.

3.2 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The participants in this study are educated professionals or/and skilled workers. Ali is an engineer, working as a project manager in Halifax as well as being active in real estate. Rod, holding a master's degree in applied science, is a businessperson. Shaya has graduated with an MBA degree in Toronto. Farshad has a degree from a top university in

Iran and used to work in the energy sector. Other participants have part time jobs while studying in Canadian universities or are active in trade and other businesses. Parisa, for instance, is a successful mortgage broker at a Canadian national bank.

Eight participants identified themselves as upper middle class and three as middle class. Although the number of people participating in this research was limited, their class identities match with the literature regarding the Iranians in Canada. As noted in the background chapter, the Iranian immigrants in Canada are mainly from middle or upper middle classes with sufficient wealth and educational backgrounds (Moghissi, 1999 & Behjat Sadr, 1990). Parisa, self-identified as being from the upper middle class, stated that her class identity changed after immigrating to Canada. Moreover, Shaya, who is on her postgraduate work permit living in Toronto, concurred that her class identity has changed because of the economic issues in Iran, particularly the economic sanctions. All of the participants had a plan to stay in Canada except one. Shahin said that he dreamed of living in Iran every single day, but because of his political activities in the course of a visit back to Iran during the 2009 presidential election, he is not able to go back.

All of the participants expressed loving Canada as their host-land and some of them emphasized being a good citizen in Canada. Ali mentioned his and his family's contributions to Canada such as their skills, investing in Canada, and being a good citizen. "By being good citizens, I mean that we are tax payers and extremely law abiding". Overall, these Iranians chose Canada to build a better life for their children and themselves. Rod also emphasized his young sons as fresh, skilled contributors to the work force in Halifax.

3.3 TRANSNATIONAL TIES AND ACTIVITIES

All except two participants traveled back and forth to Iran during their residency in Canada. Parisa left Iran when she was three years old and moved to Turkey with her family; they immigrated to Canada afterwards and she had not traveled back to Iran since. She defined herself Iranian but without any memories from Iran. Setareh has also not gone back to Iran after immigrating three years ago. However, she invited her family to come and visit her in Halifax. Explaining why she has not visited Iran for 3 years, she said:

“I wanted to stay here and get along with all the difficulties and overcome them, gain power, and then travel to Iran whenever I want. Moreover, I really wanted to get to know Canada sooner to become adapted to the new society and its rules and policies, and also to make connections and relations in the new society out of my comfort zone”.

Negin, Farshad, Farhad and Shaya were in Iran less than one year prior to the time of the interview. Their main reason to travel to Iran was their family ties. Farshad and Farhad added their business affairs as a reason to travel back and forth to Iran. Because of the sanctions against Iran, Farshad explained that he has not maintained any business tie with Iran since 2010, and his family is the only reason for him to travel there. Negin’s parents are still living in Iran, and she travels regularly to visit them; she was in Iran three months prior to the interview. Shahin immigrated with his parents and sister in 2001, and has not traveled to Iran since 2009 because of his political activism against the current Iranian government. Besides their reasons for traveling to Iran, I asked about their connections and attachments to Iran. All of them declared that they are still connected to

their homeland Iran in many aspects. The immigrants still have friends and extended family in the country. For instance, Farshad's mother and siblings are living in Iran. Negin's and Shaya's moms and dads are also residing in Iran. Rod's wife, children and some of his siblings are in Canada but he still considers himself connected to his friends and extended family in Iran.

In addition to social and familial ties, the participants commented on their financial ties. Six participants still have businesses in Iran, and/or related to Iran. Two of them ceased their businesses with Iran because of the sanctions. All the interviewed students are financially dependent on their families back home. As an example, Setareh said, "90% of my income has been from Iran since I immigrated". She further explained that her business in Iran and with Iran shut down as a consequence of the sanctions. Farshad has had the same experience. However, both Farhad and Ali, still have business affairs. Farhad is involved in the jewelry market back in Iran and Ali has properties and investments in Iran. Compared to the aforementioned participants, the Iranian international students participating in this research are financially dependent on their families in Iran. Shaya concurred that although she has a job in Toronto, her family is still supporting her financially. Fahim also mentioned that his father transfers money to help him afford his living expenses in Toronto. Regardless of having a scholarship from Dalhousie, Amir is still dependent on his father's financial support from Iran. Both Shaya and Fahim asserted that their family's financial support has declined because of the consequences of the sanctions, including devaluation of Iranian national currency. Although Parisa has not been in Iran since she was three years old, the majority of her clients in Halifax are Iranians, which means she is indirectly connected to the economy of

Iran and Iranians. She claimed that 80% of her business used to be in the Iranian market, through her Iranian clients. However, she said that this percentage decreased because of the sanctions-related problems that Iranians in Halifax face.

Based on this study, culture, tradition and sense of location are other factors connecting the participants to Iran. Although they are in Canada, they are highly involved in the Iranian cultural events. They are eager to promote and preserve Iranian culture in Canada. As an example, Fahim told me “I always try to keep myself close to the culture of Iran, not to get far. I was always involving in throwing New Year party for Iranian students at the university... or Shab e Yalda⁴ and other traditional events for Iranians just to keep myself, basically, kind of back in Iran and here at the same time”. Negin also realized that she is culturally attached to Iran. She has been volunteering in different Iranian societies in Toronto. In addition, she was a member of the Iranian Students of Ryerson University and a coordinator for the annual festival of Shab e Yalda, in Toronto. Amir, a new Iranian to Canada, also emphasized that since he has resided in Halifax, he has maintained all his social ties with Iran.

Sense of place was something that all the participants discussed but two participants in particular revealed a strong nostalgia for places in Iran. Talking about her main attachment to Iran, Setareh said “Prior to missing my family, I miss every single corner, street and region of Iran. I really miss my people, walking among them without any judgment, just feeling them by my side. My homesickness is beyond missing my

⁴ Shab e Yalda is the Persian winter solstice celebration. It is an ancient traditional celebration for Iranians. Iranian families get together every year at the time of Yalda round (December 20 or 21), mostly at the oldest member of family’s place. They read poems; have fruits, nuts and traditional dinner together.

family, I miss watching Damavand⁵ mountain and its beauty; how pleasant it will be, how pleasant”. Farhad concurred, “I personally cannot forget my homeland and family. I think wherever you go and attain even the highest social status; you cannot forget the value of living and growing up in Iran... I have lived in Iran for 40-45 years”. Both Farhad and Setareh cried when they were talking about Iran.

One of the research questions was about participants’ transnational activities. (For full list of interview questions, please refer to the Appendix A). This reflects the assumptions of transnational theory concerning the essence of the transnational experience. As discussed, transnationalism theory postulates that immigrants maintain ties with their home country, remaining actively involved with its policies. Indeed, they may even seek to develop and strengthen these ties according to their personal circumstances and belief. Thus, my questions were designed to gather information on these types of activities that have involved two or more countries. Their responses were as followed.

Economic

Eight participants reported their money transactions from Iran to Canada as a transnational activity. They either received money from their families to pay for their living expenses (Negin, Amir, Shaya and Fahim) or received money transactions through their investments, assets and properties, which were in Iran (Rod, Ali, Setareh, and Farhad). For instance, Ali indicated, “it has been a pretty long time that I have lived in Canada; I have been doing business in real estate and still like to do so. So, I need to

⁵ Damavand is the highest mount in Iran. You are able to see a large part of it from Tehran, especially northern Tehran.

transfer money from Iran to invest in real estate here in Canada”. Setareh explained that she imported some products from Iran to Canada, increased her profit margins and exported these products to other countries from Canada. Fahim also ran a trading company in 2010. Their exported products were mainly Canadian products to be shipped to the Middle East and particularly Iran. As he mentioned, “Iran is one of the biggest customers in the Middle East”. Farshad's business, same as Fahim, was connected to both Iran's and Canada's market. Besides pointing to his trade between Iranian and Canadian companies, Farshad declared: “being involved in procurement services in the energy sector, I created job opportunities here in Canada, also I provided some Iranian companies with Canadian products, based on their needs. Therefore, that was a great involvement in the economies of both countries and of course to my personal benefit”. Another participant explained that when he lived in Iran, his business was between Iran and parts of Africa but after coming to Halifax, he re-established his business on a smaller scale.

Social and Cultural

Some of the participants in this study further explained their social and cultural activities, particularly between Iran and Canada. Shahin told me about the Tirgan Festival in Toronto, which he states is the biggest Iranian Festival in the world outside Iran that takes place biannually hosting 120,000. As Shahin, who is closely involved with this festival, explained, the focus of the Tirgan festival is on preserving and promoting Iranian art and culture across borders. For this event, they invite Iranian artists to Toronto from all around the world. Shaya and Negin also live in Toronto and cooperate in organizing this event. Shaya concurred that this festival is a “motion for Iranians to preserve and

promote their culture in the Canadian society”. Halifax participants also undertake/participate in cultural activities related to Iran and Iranians. Fahim told me that he was involved in the Iranian festivals in Halifax and even tried to hold Iranian traditional events for Iranian students in Halifax. Setareh also emphasized her effort to present Iran and Iranian culture in Halifax. One example of her efforts was her participation in an event in Halifax relating to four major ethnicities in Canada where she was in charge of presenting Iran and Iranian society. She also mentioned her future transnational plans between Canada and Iran, such as bridging Iranian and Canadian universities in order to exchange knowledge and students. Amir, who has been in Halifax for one year, told me that he has always been open to absorbing the good things about Canadian culture, like being punctual, and depicting the truth about Iran and Iranians for his Canadian class mates. “I always try to explain whatever they misunderstood about Iran and our culture”. Parisa, who identifies herself as an Iranian Canadian, pointed to her transnational activities such as helping new immigrants to become familiar with Canadian society. Moreover, she talked about the Iranian Business Trade Show in which she was significantly involved; “The Trade Show or any other event that I do is all [about] trying to find a way to connect the Iranian community to Halifax and the Haligonian community to Iranian community”.

The participants engaged in political activities too. For instance, Shahin talked about his participation in the Iranian presidential election. He and his friends cooperated and rented a couple of buses to send Iranians who wanted to participate in the election at the Iranian embassy in Ottawa to vote. He said, “We want to participate in the election of our homeland from across the borders”. Parisa also declared that she had approached a

couple of the political parties in Halifax and voiced her opinions to them regarding Canada and Iran's bilateral relations, although it did not go anywhere.

After getting to know the participants, their ongoing ties with Iran and some of their transnational activities, I opened up the questions related to the main focus of this research. First, I will outline their general ideas about economic sanctions.

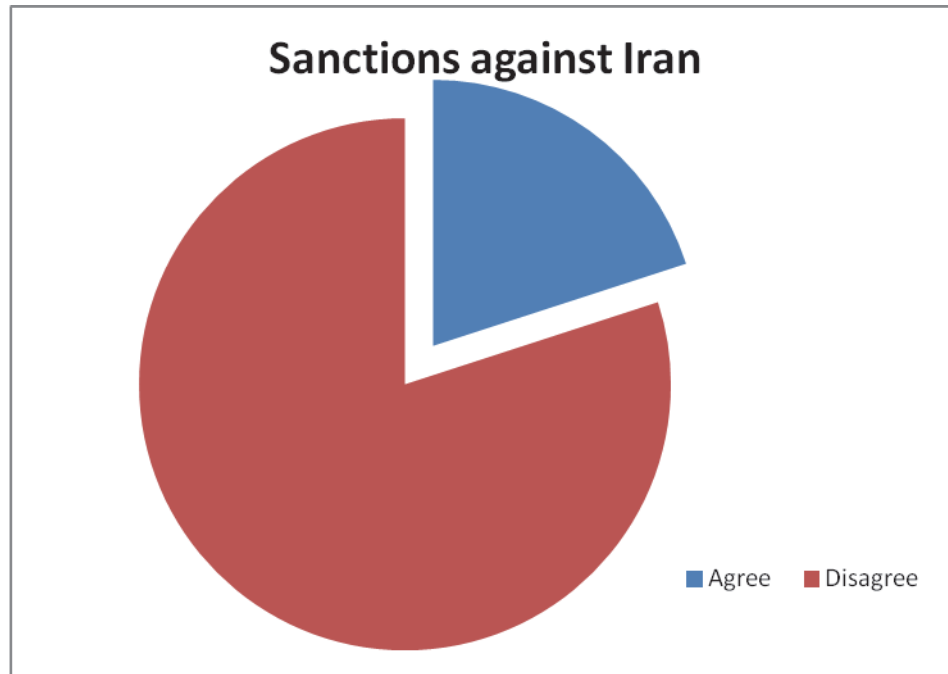


Figure 2: Participants' Consent to Imposition of Economic Sanctions

As it is shown in the above pie chart [Figure 2], the majority of the participants disagreed with the sanctions. Only Farhad and Rod agreed with the sanctions because they believe that economic sanctions have a better consequence than war and military intervention. When I asked them about the negative human consequences of the sanctions, Farhad asserted, "It is the nature of economic sanctions to be strict"; and, Rod argued that, "the economic sanctions have to be more targeted on the governmental institutions".

Other participants generally opposed economic sanctions as an effective policy. Setareh and Amir commented that neither economic sanctions nor war is a practical tool. Moreover, they characterized economic sanctions as an unfair policy that puts more pressure on civilians than the government. Shahin and Fahim compared the case of Iran with the economic sanctions on Iraq, Libya and North Korea. Shahin said that the economic sanctions on Iraq created a chaos for Iraqi civilians; “somebody show me what the sanctions changed during the history; what happened when they sanctioned North Korea, there was a new nuclear experiment yesterday there”. In addition, Shaya asserted that economic sanctions should be context-based and she thought the Iranian government would not change its nuclear program plan because of the sanctions. Other participants, such as Ali, Parisa and Shahin, suggested that the imposers of the sanctions and the Iranian government should pursue diplomatic solutions and peaceful negotiations rather than toughening the economic sanctions and straining their political relations. For instance, Ali suggested that a country like Canada could maintain its diplomatic connections with Iran including holding its embassy in Iran and Iranian embassy in Canada. In this way, both countries had some affairs and interests within each other and some entities to handle these connections. Therefore, they could open a way for discussion and negotiations over the sanctions and their concerns. Although it might be optimistic to think there could be a peaceful solution to the differences between the countries, the majority my participants argued for continued negotiations and toning down the harsh relationship.

Those participants who took the position that economic sanctions are an appropriate punitive policy agreed that Canada, like any other country, should support

any international effort to apply sanctions. Farhad indicated that, “sanctions should be *internationally unified* to obtain their goals”. On the other hand, Setareh, Farshad, Ali, and Shayan were shocked by the strictness of the Canadian approach and sanctions regarding Iran. Ali said, “What is funny is that everybody might think that the US is the leader of imposing sanctions against Iran, but in many aspects Canada is a way ahead compared to the US”. Likewise, Farshad complained: Canada could simply act based on the UN regulations and framework; there was no need to set separate regulations and measures against Iran. Canada made it harder for its citizens regardless of being Iranian Canadian or Canadians to do business. Canada despite being considered as a peaceful country has an approach that is extremist, tight and rigid toward Iran.

Ali and Fahim pointed to the closure of the embassies in Iran and Canada, which resulted in difficulties for Iranians in Canada in the matter of getting consular services such as renewing their Iranian passports. In particular, for Iranian male students who are obliged to do the compulsory military service in Iran, the closure of the embassies has posed difficulties for their travel between the two countries. Prior to the closure, the Embassy of Iran would confirm their student status, so when visiting Iran, they would be exempt from service. However, now there are no possibilities for this confirmation. Some students tried sending their documentation to Washington, in order to receive confirmation of their student status, with no success. Effectively, these students are unable to return without facing the risk of being called up for military service.

Negin told me that she had never been involved in foreign policy but as far as she knew the Canadian sanctions and its restricting relations with the Iranian government reduced the number of people who had a plan to immigrate to Canada. Shahin called the

current Conservative government of Canada a government “full of contrasts”. He claimed:

“You cannot keep the immigration gates open for a long time and close it suddenly; one person transfers 10,000,000 dollars to Canada and nobody even bother to question this person; on the other side, an Iranian international student who wants to transfer 15000 dollars will be asked to bring documents and prove that the money is not related to any designated person or organization”.

After asking about their general understanding and ideas about economic sanctions and particularly the sanctions against their homeland, I asked about their individual experiences of these sanctions.

3.4 PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES OF THE SANCTIONS

All the participants have family and friends back home. This study asked if the participants knew of the sanctions' impact on the lives of their families and friends who are living in Iran. Their responses are as follows.

Economic and Financial Impact on participants and their families in Iran

Referring to the consequences of the sanctions on the lives of Iranians back in Iran, the participants outlined two of the major themes to be an increase in people's living expenses and a decrease in their purchasing power. Farhad indicated that inflation has increased in Iran because of the international sanctions. He added that the life expenses of Iranians also have increased. Fahim, Rod, and Ali concurred that their families and friends' purchasing power has decreased because of the sanctions. These consequences were reported in many media outlets as mentioned above such as drastic increase in the

prices of chicken up to 30 % and fruits up to 66.6 % in June 2012 (Hallinan, 2012).

Fahim said, “My parents were living in Tehran but they recently moved to my hometown that is a smaller city where the renting prices and living expenses are lower ... although my sisters remained in Tehran to study they moved to my grandma's place”. This is a reflection of the noted claim in the Background chapter in which it was reported that many Iranian families decided to rent a smaller place or move to a smaller town in order to pay less expense for accommodation. Moreover, Rod pointed out the devaluation of Iranians' income in exchange with foreign currencies. He said, “Instability of social and economic life makes people feel unsecured”. Ali mentioned the high prices for Iranians' basic needs such as food, clothing and transportation, because of the sanctions. I will further discuss in greater detail how the hardships suffered by friends and family in Iran impact the participants in Canada, both at a financial and emotional level.

Some of the participants have a family member or friend in Iran whose business has been adversely affected by the sanctions. For example, Negin, who is from the upper middle class, explained the way in which his father's business has been affected: “My father is in printing and publishing market where the demanded price is still the same but the price of supply is fluctuated. Because of the sanctions, my father has to pay much more to buy and import his needed materials, such as paper, but he sells at the same old prices”. The businesses of Fahim's parents, who are from middle class, have also declined due to the sanctions; “basically my parents for the past year, did not work, just sat at home and did nothing ... this worries me a lot because when you stop working at that age you get depressed and they are very depressed now ... they cannot travel because of high travel expenses”. Fahim's dad used to work in a customs office in Iran dealing with

import and export between Iranian and foreign firms, and his mom had a beauty salon. He explained that his mom could not charge people based on the high value of the products used for doing their hairstyles, for example. Therefore, she preferred to close her store. The participants, such as Ali and Rod, indicated that closing the companies and businesses in Iran as well as high expenses in running and managing a business have led to unemployment. As mentioned in chapter 1, prices of imported goods are skyrocketed in Iran; many factories are not able to import raw material and run the production line (George & Hosseinian, 2012). Moreover, many businesses moved to other countries in the region. Therefore, many companies trim their employees or are dislocated that has resulted in unemployment in Iran (Jacobson, 2008). Based a report by *The Telegraph*, unemployment rate has gone up to 35% in 2011 (Tait, 2012). Farshad, who considered himself as middle class and an expert in the oil and petroleum field, elaborated that "oil", as the main resource and income of the Iranian government, has been embargoed under the latest set of economic sanctions. He stated, "as a result, unemployment increased, and in particular, some of our relatives who were working in big industries in Iran were affected by the consequences of the sanctions as there is an increase in unemployment and fewer job opportunities". Besides unemployment, the Iranian government is unable to pay pensions- a situation experienced by the family of at least one my participants. It has been reported that not only those who are retired but also those who work in the "elite revolutionary guards" have experienced delays in receiving their salaries (Tait, 2012). Amir, coming from the upper middle class, said that his family in Iran has "an easy life" because his father has a well-paid job that has nothing to do with the sanctions since it

does not deal with any foreign country or currency. However, he stated, “my family's saving and investing power has decreased”.

Shortage and high prices of medications are significant consequences of the sanctions in Iran mentioned by some participants. Farhad and his wife who was sitting beside him at the time of the interview agreed that, “although the medications are not included in the sanctions and embargoes ... their prices increased making them unaffordable for Iranians”. Farshad realized that lack of essential medicines and their high prices are because of the limitations and barriers in money transactions and shipping to Iran. Shaya and Shahin worried about their family members who are sick and on special medications. “My father uses special medicines and I am worried all the time; I think what if my dad cannot take his medications”, Shaya said. In addition, Shahin believed "lack of medication, to some extent is led by the government's mismanagement—there is no doubt about this, but the recent problems regarding medication is the impact of the sanctions in particular". He continued, “My grandma is sick and needs medicine; although she is able to get them, she is having difficulties and has to pay higher prices than she used to”.

Several participants touched on the different impact of the sanctions on different social classes in Iran. Setareh complained that “the middle class is vanishing and the poor class is expanding” under such circumstance in Iran. She strongly believed that the Iranian civilians are suffering, not the government, and the economic pressure on the civilians dis-unifies them. Farshad concurred, “The middle class people in Iran are affected significantly because they mainly work in private sectors and companies, which are affected by the sanctions”. These claims corroborate the findings mentioned in

chapter 1, such as Nossal's finding that illiberal governments can withstand the impact of the sanctions but civilians face the negative impact of the sanctions. This might be why Nossal states, sanctions are “[a] normatively bad policy tool, difficult to justify morally” (1994, p.262).

The Impact of the Sanctions on their lives in Canada

I asked the participants if they think the sanctions against Iran have had any impact on the lives of Iranians in Toronto and Halifax, including themselves. The overall responses to this question were positive. The participants mentioned that Iranians in Canada have not only financial, but also social and emotional ties with Iran, and because of these ties, their lives have been affected directly and indirectly. The participants indicated that many Iranians in Halifax and Toronto have businesses, assets and investments in Iran on which they are still dependent. Shahin explained that those Iranians who immigrated 30 years ago or came as refugees might not have that many connections and maintained ties with Iran; however, the latest wave of Iranian immigrants in and after 2000 were mostly business workers who have had relations with Iranian corporations, and simply their financial resources and investments are still in Iran. In addition, all of the participants pointed to the drastic devaluation of the Iranian national currency, compared to the US and Canadian dollar, as a significant problem for Iranians in Halifax and Toronto. Bringing an example, Shahin said, “some of these immigrants in Toronto bought a condo and now they cannot pay their mortgages as they do not receive sufficient money from Iran”. Likewise, Parisa, who has many Iranian clients in Halifax, reported that many of her clients had mortgage revocation or bank account revocation:

“I have many Iranian clients who live in Halifax but their main source of income is from Iran or they are being financially supported by their families in Iran ... so ... when the Rial in exchange for dollar ... it is like four times of what it was a year ago for the same dollar value. These clients have kids going to school here, they have rent to pay, they have mortgage here ... that is very hard to manage and on top of that they have barriers on how to get the money out of the country. You know because of the wire transfer sanctions, it is very hard to get money out of the country”.

Other respondents (Ali, Fahim, Farhad, Farshad, and Setareh) indicated the hardships of transferring money from Iran to Canada. Fahim claimed that it is impossible to transfer money directly from Iranian banks to Canadian banks and that you have to do it through exchange offices that cost you extra fees. Similarly, Farshad noted that: “if anyone wants to transfer more than \$40,000, he/she should get permission from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada that first, takes time and second, is complicated for an ordinary citizen who is not familiar with all the regulations and paper works”. He added that Iranians, who were residing in Canada and were involved in a trade with Iran, are highly affected as the sanctions have been directly on doing businesses and trade with Iran, especially the energy sector and big firms.

Some participants reported the indirect economic consequences of the sanctions on the lives of Iranians in Toronto and Halifax. As an example, Negin declared that she and her friends are living in Toronto while their parents are residing in Iran. Therefore, they are highly dependent on their parents' financial support. However, because of the impact of the sanctions on their fathers' businesses and the currency devaluation, they have faced financial difficulties. Negin said, “Many of my friends cannot afford their

living expenses here, and are thinking about going back to Iran”. Amir looked at this problem from an Iranian international student’s point of view: “imagine that one person estimated a particular amount of cost for continuing his or her education in Canada, now because of these crises, they have to pay three or four times more than estimated cost ... this would be a heavy burden on the family shoulders ... some students have to go back to Iran as they cannot afford such expenses”.

Besides these problems that the Iranians residing in Toronto and Halifax are facing, participants pointed to the closure of the embassies by the government of Canada as well as the closures of the Iranians’ bank accounts by TD Canada. As an example, Ali complained about the closure of the Canadian embassy in Iran. He said those Iranians who want to come and visit their relatives in Canada must go to Ankara to do interviews and get visas in addition to paying higher prices for plane tickets. He added that Iran also has no embassy in Canada anymore; “ put aside we, who are living in a smaller city (Halifax), in Toronto where, it is said, thousands of Iranians live ... how all these Iranians who need regular consular services survive ... what are they doing?”. In addition, Shahin, Shaya, and Parisa talked about the action of the TD bank of Canada, closing some of the Iranians’ bank accounts. Shahin knew a retired couple in Toronto who were receiving their pensions monthly (about \$600 - \$700) and their bank accounts were closed by TD Canada. “I consider it as an example of social isolation ... you do not have any criminal records or problem and just because of your nationality..., this is not acceptable as you are living in a multicultural country”, Shahin said.

In addition to discuss their perspectives on the impact of the economic sanctions on the lives of Iranians living in Iran, or Toronto and Halifax, two participants, Shaya and

Sara, highlighted the impact of the sanctions on those Iranians who are in the process of immigrating to Canada. Negin said, “as far as I realized so far, the stream of immigration from Iran to Canada reduced because the devaluation in the national currency as well as other negative results of the sanctions”.

Personal Experiences

Several of the participants have been involved in trading activities with Iran and other countries. All of them (Rod, Farshad, Shahin, Fahim, and Setareh) attested to the fact that the economic sanctions against Iran have knocked their businesses down. Rod used to trade between Iran and Africa; however, he claimed that during last year (2012) many international companies closed their offices in Iran and the few remaining companies had doubled the freight charges. As a result, it was no longer affordable for his customers to buy the products he sold. He was thinking of running a new business in Canada because his previous business is not viable anymore. Fahim also had a trade company in 2010 in Halifax but after toughening the international sanctions against Iran including the Canadian sanctions, he has not been successful in his business. Fahim tried to export many products from Canada to Iran such as paper and lintel but it did not work. He said, “There was no sanction on the green lintel itself but there were sanctions on working with Iran, including shipping and making payments or doing transactions”. Setareh had the same experience, and after the latest sanctions, she had to stop doing a business in which she was successful for several years. Setareh told me, “I have to build up my economic life again starting from the first step ... I do not have the peace of mind anymore, I have to work hard day and night and try hard to make reputations and connections because I cannot use my past experiences and reputations in order to manage

my life”. Farshad, who applied for immigrating to Canada through the skilled worker program, had also faced problems in doing his business. Experienced in the oil and petroleum sectors in Iran, Farshad was trading between Canadian, European and Iranian companies since coming to Canada. As he said, due to the fact that the majority of the revenue for his company was from the Iranian firms and Iranian supervisors, his business stopped after the sanctions. He said, “The last set of sanctions that Canada imposed on Iran on November 2011, known as SEMA (Special Economic Measure Act) was the last straw. We realized that working with Iran and its energy sector is not possible anymore”. Like Setareh, and Rod, who were thinking about a new business in Canada, Farshad believed that his knowledge, interest and capability have been in this business and he cannot easily switch to another business. As a result, he released his personnel and closed his office in Toronto. He is living with his wife and two young sons in Toronto; he said that he has enough investment to spend on his living expenses for now. However, this is obviously not a long-term solution, and the family expressed their anxiety over their financial future and security.

Some participants' businesses, assets and income located in Iran have been affected due to the national currency devaluation. Ali is in the real estate market in Halifax. He claimed that he used to transfer money from Iran to invest in real estate in Halifax. However, he is not relying on his assets in Iran any more as they are devalued compared to dollar. Ali noted, “It is not worth exchanging my income and assets from Rial to CAD or USD anymore”. He further explained that in order to invest in the real estate market, there is a need for one-time down payments based on the contract but the sanctions have curtailed his ability to make sufficient currency transactions on time from

Iran to Canada. He said that his negotiating power in the market has decreased as well as his options and opportunities. Moreover, his wife started to learn English in order to run the business that she used to have in Iran. Ali felt good that such a crisis made his family become more budget-conscious and independent but he said: “for any kind of family, being so concerned with expenditure habits becomes troublesome after a while”. He also touched on the limitations for Iranians in diasporas to send humanitarian aid to the Iranians inside because of the sanctions. Ali tried to help the victims of the Azarbaijan earthquake in Iran but found it impossible to send money directly to them; he finally sent his donation through a related humanitarian event in Halifax.

A couple of participants felt the negative financial impact of the sanctions on their lives because their families were supporting them from Iran. Negin is living with her sister in Toronto. Her sister is younger than she is. Both of them are going to school. Although Negin has a job, she still believes that the support that she receives from her parents is a heavy burden. Shaya also has the same situation, as her sister is studying in England and his father is supporting them both. She said also they came from the upper middle class but there could be an end for his father’s financial resources and investments. Another similar case to that of Negin was Fahim’s. After closing down his business, Fahim did not ask for his parents’ financial support as before. He recently moved in with one of his relatives in order to reduce his living expenses such as paying for the rent and food. Moreover, Farhad, Shaya, Shahin, Negin and Fahim agreed that because of the high prices of flight tickets, they travel less back and forth to Iran to visit their families. Amir mentioned that he was lucky that his supervisor increased his funds; if not he could have had problem paying his tuition as an international student in Halifax.

Parisa, who does not have any financial affairs in and related to Iran, is affected in a different way. She declared that, “these sanctions do not affect my business as if I have an income driven from Iran, or I have money in Iran, but affects me in a sense that the core of my business is in the Iranian community in Halifax and when their dollars are affected, my dollars get affected”.

As the participants highlighted, the national currency devaluation and the sanctions on the bank transactions with Iran are two major causes of negative impact on their lives. However, the way in which their lives are affected is different. Besides, when I asked how they tried to mitigate the impact of the sanctions on their lives some said they changed their businesses or they are thinking to run a new business and some said that they have become more budget conscious. For instance, Negin and her sister recently moved to a smaller apartment in Toronto in order to pay less rent and save more money. She believed that both of them are so busy with school and work that they have less chance to socialize. It is worth noting that a university in Toronto, in which Negin’s sister is a student, is giving her a hard time for receiving loan from the university. Negin said, “because Iran is under the economic sanctions, and they know about the economic issues in Iran, they want to make sure that somebody is able to pay my sister’s loan back”. In the matter of socializing, Setareh also said that she is working so much that she hardly gets a chance to spend time with her children. She stated, “ every single day I am stressed out ... I am predicting my future based on the situation in Iran, although I am living far from there but I am attached to it economically and socially”. Furthermore, Amir said that the sanctions and their consequences have affected his plans and decisions, "when I came here I had plan to get more knowledge, finish my studies here, go back home, and

start working there". Considering the current economic situation in Iran, Amir believed that there would be no opportunity to find a good job and compete with international companies; therefore, he was thinking about staying and building his life in Canada.

The last question of the study asked if the participants think that, they, as members of the Iranian diaspora in Canada, could do anything in order to mitigate the impact of the sanctions on the lives of Iranian civilians living inside and abroad. All the participants agreed upon two factors. First, they believed that Iranians' approach toward the current problems is not homogenous because some of them are afraid to speak about their problems and they are not unified in doing so. Second, some of the participants referred to their inability and lack of power to get their voices heard. Fahim, for instance, believed that the imposers of the sanctions only care about their own benefits and interests. Negin said, "Our voice never gets heard". Parisa, who stated that she talked with a couple of Canadian political parties, also believes that nothing is changing. It can be concluded that these participants do not consider themselves being able to play a big role in making a social and political change in their homeland because on one hand, they are living in a community in which some people are afraid to talk about their social rights and problems; and on the other hand, they think politicians will not take into account their concerns and won't make a change. Despite these, there are several online petitions signed by Iranians living in Canada addressing the Prime Minister of Canada. For example, a petition named "No Sanctions No War on Iranian People" has been started January 29, 2012. This petition emphasizes on the unjust and inhuman position of the Canadian government in applying the sanctions against Iran, which directly affect Iranian civilians in Iran, Canada and all over the world. The petition addresses Stephan Harper

and Dalton McGuinty (Premier of Ontario) and bring to their attention that there is a need for change in their current policies considering the human consequences of the economic sanctions. Therefore, it is obvious that there are still Iranians in diaspora who take actions and on the other hand, politicians who ignore people's requests and concerns. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, sustainability of transnationalism is important and such disappointment of Iranians in Canada leads to less political transnational activity in both Iran and Canada and negatively affects their transnationalism.

3.5 RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

As mentioned in the research findings, the participants either chose to come to Canada on their own or their parents made the decision for them. Overall, their main goals for moving to Canada were individual progress and development, including having better education, and career opportunities. They also mentioned the benefits of doing business in a more stable economic system. All of the participants emphasized their willingness to be a good citizen. They revealed that they enjoy living in Canada and would prefer to stay. To elaborate on being a good citizen, the participants pointed to respecting others, obeying Canadian policy and rules, and being socially and culturally involved in their respective cities. Participants' contributions to Canadian society are worth noting. The participants are a small group of people among thousands of Iranians residing in Canada. Those who were on their study or post-graduate work permits were both studying and working or trying hard to run a business and becoming immersed in the Canadian business market. These participants are mainly entrepreneurs, students and educated professionals. Furthermore, those participants who were either permanent

residents or citizens in Canada immigrated through business class (Provincial Nominee) or skilled worker programs. Therefore, they have brought money and skills to Toronto and Halifax. In cases where they have young children, they will further contribute to Canada's economy and multiculturalism.

The participants in this study are true examples of transmigrants who have strong economic, social, cultural, political, and emotional ties to Iran. Iranians in the US also retain strong ties to people in Iran (ALC, 2012). The length of the participants' residency in Canada has not resulted in a decrease in the depth of their transnational connections to Iran. Similar to Amir, who has been in Halifax just for one year, Farshad is still financially and socially attached to Iran, even after nine years residing in Toronto. It is also believed that "a member of a transnational community who has never lived in the homeland can have an even greater sense of obligation to support the homeland as another member who was born there" (Patterson, 2006, p.1896). Interestingly, Parisa, who has been out of Iran since she was three and has been residing in Canada for 12 years, is indirectly connected to Iran. Although she does not have any close family, memory, or business back in Iran, the core of her business in Halifax consists of Iranian clients.

Retaining different ties to Iran, the participants have experienced difficulties in their lives because of the recent international economic sanctions against Iran, including the Canadian sanctions. Based on transnationalism theory, transmigrants are exposed to the policies and institutional arrangements associated with states, including both their home and host land (Levvitt, 2001). It is also believed that policies of both home and host lands affect the experiences and perspectives of people in a diasporic community (Wong

& satsewich, 2006). It can be inferred that any crises (political, economic or social) in these states also affect transmigrants and the findings of the current study support this inference. As expected, the imposed economic sanctions against Iran have adversely affected the lives of Iranians abroad. The following distortions in Iran's economy have had various negative consequences for the participants in this study: the devaluating of the *Rial*, the Iranian currency; sanctions on trading with Iran, particularly in the oil and energy sectors; and the ban preventing SWIFT from interacting with Iranian banks and entities. Furthermore, many foreign banks, including American, Canadian and British national banks, avoid dealing with the Iranian government and providing services to Iranian firms and individuals—even those who are living abroad.

Similar to the Iranians residing in the US (ALC, 2012), the participants residing in Toronto and Halifax faced difficulties because of the sanctions. These difficulties are primarily economic but lead to social, emotional and political problems. To elaborate, all of the participants have businesses or financial assets in Iran, and some of them are supported by their families from Iran. As explained in the research findings, Farshad's business was directly affected because it was related to trading with Iranian energy sector companies. Moreover, sanctions on SWIFT and its financial transactions with Iranian bank accounts, and sanctions on Iranian bank accounts, have made it almost impossible for some of the participants to transfer their income from Iran to their Canadian bank accounts in Toronto and in Halifax. As Ali said, "when I want to transfer \$300,000 to my Canadian bank account, apparently I have to get it in 10 times and each time in the amount of \$30,000 ... it is a headache". Those who came to Canada to study and are being supported by their families in Iran also have problems. Talking about her Iranian

friends living in Toronto, Negin stated that some of them are considering going back to Iran because they are not able to pay their tuition fees. Negin also mentioned that the university is making it difficult for her sister to get a loan because her father's business is in Iran and the university wants to make sure that she will be able to repay her loan. Similar to Iranians in the US, Iranian students in this study pursuing higher education and career opportunities have had difficulties in receiving money from Iran and paying their tuition (ALC, 2012). Many of them came to Canada and the US with considerable potential to build upon and an idea of benefiting from abundant opportunities. However, they are limited now in the matter of their individual development. Furthermore, Negin and her sister are Canadian citizens but because they depend on money from Iran, they are facing some limitations. These all corroborate what Makarechi (2011) believes, the consequences of the economic sanctions on a diasporic community is that they create second-class citizens with unequal rights.

The impact of the sanctions on the businesses and finances of these participants decreased their purchasing power as well as their potential and opportunities in the market and society. As a result, they have limited opportunities in trade and real estate markets; they have had to find new clients and customers, and have even had to start from minimum wage jobs in Canada. Because of this unpleasant situation, some of them can no longer afford leisure time, as Setareh experienced. In addition, the Iranian international students report high levels of stress. They will have to decide whether to go back to Iran or work harder to earn some Canadian dollars. Fahim had to take a year off from school to work and save money before going back to school. The participants came to Canada in order to work in a "stable economic system" and benefit from educational

and career opportunities and now they have to face such difficulties because of the sanctions. Some of them are worried about the future of themselves and their families. The heads of immigrant families are skilled and experienced enough to enjoy a stable business but the sanctions have created confusion and insecurity in their economic lives. Economic well being is a base for social and emotional well being. When the participants' economic well-being is affected, they are also affected socially and emotionally. The participants reported being worried, confused, and feeling insecure because of the consequences of the sanctions. I contend that they are burdened and that this may affect their productivity in their daily lives. Setareh maintained that she is out working all the time and by the time of being at home she is too tired or stressed to accompany her children as a mother.

Participants' economic contribution to Canada also seems to be distorted. For instance, Farshad had to release his Canadian employees after closing his office in Toronto. As explained in the research findings, he used to import Iranian products for the Canadian firms in the energy sector. Because there are sanctions on trading with Iran's energy sector, many Canadian firms have difficulties supplying their needs. Diasporic communities can be helpful in the economic development of their home land too. However, it seems that the sanctions are decreasing the ability of the participants to do so through sending remittances and charitable donations for instance.

Stress and social isolation are unintended outcomes of the sanctions on the lives of the participants. The majority of participants stated that the high prices of airline tickets have prevented them from going back and forth to Iran to visit their families, and vice versa. In addition, closing its embassy in Iran, the Canadian Government made it

harder for families of the participants to come to Canada to visit them. As Ali mentioned, his wife invited her mom to Canada but her mother is old and could not go to Ankara and get her visa. Two of the participants made me realize the importance of their attachment to Iran. I empathized seeing Farhad and his wife's tears recalling their memories of Iran and Setareh's tears while picturing Tehran's streets and Damavand. Through talking directly with Fahim, I understood how difficult it is to become dependent on one's relatives in order to save money by not paying for rent and food. Moreover, it seemed that as they travel to Iran less frequently, they become more homesick. Because the familial ties of the participants are strong, some of them are worried about their parents and families who are living in Iran under such circumstances. Fahim said that his parents have been depressed sitting at home since they have not being able to restart their businesses because of the sanctions. Shaya was worried about her father's health, as he is on special medication, and the sanctions have resulted in a shortage of medication in Iran. Participants seemed to be additionally burdened by being worried about the adverse impact of the sanctions on the wellbeing of their families. Besides showing a high level of emotional strain, the participants are facing discrimination and social isolation in Canada. Setareh told that a retailer denied selling a product to her until he made sure that she was going to use the product in Halifax and not send it to Iran. This is also known to have happened several times to Iranians in the US, as in the widely reported case of Apple Inc. stores when the retailer refused to sell a product to an Iranian woman based on what he perceived to be a requirement of the sanctions (ALC, 2012). As noted before, the majority of the participants consider Canada as their second homeland but their sense of belonging in Canada has been compromised. The participants also faced other

discriminations directly because of the sanctions or misunderstanding of the sanctions by public and private institutions, such as the closure of their bank accounts, denial and recall of their mortgages, and increasing bureaucratic complexity and what the participants describe as 'hassle' in the process of their student loans. In the process of integration into the host society, discrimination is an important factor (Schwartz et. al, 2010). It can be concluded that when the participants feel isolated and discriminated against, they are less likely to be integrated in the social, economic and political aspects of the host country. Although the participants mentioned their efforts toward being good citizens in Canada, their sense of belonging in Canada is likely to decline under such circumstances.

The experiences of the participants in this study coincide with Iranians residing in the US (see for example ALC, 2012). However, the participants in this study did not mention sending remittances to their families in Iran. Rather, they pointed to sending or receiving money from Iran to Canada. Although Negin thought of sending Canadian dollars to help his dad, she realized it is not worth doing so because she will need the money back in two months. It can be inferred that the participants' businesses and financial status have been such that they cannot afford to send remittances because they are still struggling with assets and businesses in Iran, and their businesses here have suffered. In the cases of China, India, and others, it was demonstrated that the diasporic communities can play a significant role in the development of their homeland by transferring knowledge, skills and wealth (Patterson, 2006). Therefore, were it not for the financial difficulties facing the participants, they would help their homeland's development by promoting their businesses and sharing their wealth.

My findings relate strongly to the theory on transnationalism. There are many elements sustaining transnational principles and practices such as technology including availability and affordability of airline tickets, wire transfers etc (Wong & Satzewich, 2006). I conclude that the participants' difficulties with financial transactions and purchasing flights will result in fewer transnational practices. Moreover, policies of home and host countries are other factors mentioned in the sustainability of migrants' transnational activities. Based on the research findings, Canada's separate set of sanctions imposed against Iran has worsened the difficulties facing some of the participants (Parisa, Farshad, Setareh and Fahim). For instance, the closure of the Iranian embassy in Canada by the Canadian government resulted in hardships for the participants. Several participants also mentioned barriers to sending money to Iran as humanitarian aid, which has obvious implications for the development of the homeland. Shahin stated that before the recent sanctions, between 2002 and 2003, he was a member of a community group that sent \$ 230,000 in humanitarian aid for the Bam earthquake victims in Iran. More recently, when the group tried to send donations to Varzeghan Earthquake victims, they had to go through a long process, which included getting permission from the federal government and proving that the money will not go to government organizations. The money was more than \$40,000 and therefore had to be split up and sent it through different entities. Shahin said, "I have helped my fellow citizens and I would do so, no matter how ... but I wonder why we should go through all these difficulties to ... simply help out citizens back home". I believe that people like Shahin feel good as a result of helping the people in their homeland and if they are not able to do so, they will be disappointed and frustrated, and this can be considered another impact of the sanctions on

their lives. Shahin pointed to an important activity for Iranians in Canada, which is their participation in Iran's presidential election. Shahin said that to participate in the last round of elections (four years ago), many Iranians from Toronto went to the Iranian embassy in Ottawa to vote. This sheds light on the transnational political activities of Iranians in Canada. It is worth noting that, at the time of writing this analysis, a new round of presidential elections has just taken place. Because the Iranian embassy in Ottawa is now closed, Iranians in Canada were unable to cast their vote. They have been effectively denied their right to vote and are thus unable to influence the political development of their homeland (See for example Ionescu & International Organization for Migration, 2006). This is also another impact of the economic sanctions on the lives of Iranians, including the participants of this study.

The idea of class and transnationalism came up in some of the responses. As mentioned in the background chapter, Iranian immigrants in Canada are mainly middle or upper middle class (Moghissi, 1999 & Behjat-Sadr, 1990). This was found to be true in my research. The participants asserted that their social classes have changed as a result of the economic hardships that they and their families have faced. For instance, Shaya, from the upper middle class, declared that her lifestyle and social class have changed since coming to Canada. Although it has been shown that the process of migration affects (generally diminishes) an individual's social class (Kelly, 2007), the sanctions have worsened this fact for the participants. This is, of course, relative, since participants may exaggerate their economic hardships or may think their suffering is more severe than it actually is. For instance, Shaya complained that she had her own car in Iran and now she has to take the subway because she cannot afford buying a car. This is quite different

from Setareh, who is from middle class and has had to start with minimum pay jobs in Canada and abandon her promising business and experiences. It is believed that lifestyle and consumption are two defining factors of class (Kelly, 2007). Therefore, when someone's socializing and spending habits change, his/her class changes too. As it might be clear, the experiences of participants from the middle class were different from those from upper middle class to some extent. Fahim and Setareh were more affected by the sanctions as they have less economic resources to rely on under such circumstances. Fahim is now living with his relatives as he is not able to pay for his living expenses, and Setareh had to start her career "from scratch". On the other side, Farshad and Amir stated that the impacts of sanctions on their lives were not devastating and they still have investment and other resources to rely on. As mentioned earlier, the findings of this research are limited to participants from middle or upper middle class backgrounds. I tried to interview Iranians from lower middle class backgrounds to see the extent to which their experiences were different, but I could not find any considering my limited time and connections. As explained in the research findings, the majority of the participants agreed that the economic sanctions had greater impacts on people than the government. This is consistent with the weight of consensus in the literature on economic sanctions. Although Iranians are known as a segmented community because of different classes, ethnicity, and religions, the recent wave of Iranian immigrants are relatively homogenous (Mirfakhraie, 1999). Therefore, their perspectives on economic sanctions against their homeland were comparable.

In the matter of gender analysis, I did not find any significant differences between the male and female participants' perspectives and experiences. The experiences of those

men and women who had business issues such as currency devaluation, money transactions, and the impossibility of trading with Iran were remarkably similar. International students also faced similar problems regardless of their gender. However, if they had scholarships from Canadian universities, they were not affected by the sanctions. Moreover, if their parents were able to come and visit them, their parents' health conditions were good and their businesses were viable, then they experienced minor difficulties as a result of sanctions. Furthermore, examining the experiences of a homemaker could be interesting, but I did not get a chance to interview such a person. However, as mentioned in the research findings, Ali explained that his wife started to improve her English in order to start her own business in Halifax. On one hand, such women might achieve some level of independence. On the other hand, devoting time to learning English and trying to run a business might add increased pressure on them as wives and mothers. As it was mentioned earlier, after immigration, Iranian women are more willing to take their chances, become immersed in work environment in Canada, and become financially independent (Moghissi, 1999). These changes play a positive role in changing their traditional gender roles. Nonetheless, Middle Eastern women, including Iranians have different gender roles in the societies of their homelands. To elaborate, before immigration, they were exposed to a patriarchal culture in which most of the women are homemakers (Kousha, 2002). Moreover, there is a societal expectation from these women to be perfect mothers and to devote their time to home and their children (2002). In Iran, many women leave their jobs after their children are born (2002). Therefore, for a woman who has to learn English language and enter the business market in the host land, it might be a double burden to make a balance between her

previous responsibilities as a homemaker and their new roles. This might be an interesting research topic to explore whether or not Iranian women in this situation benefit from finding a job or/and starting a new business.

Besides differential experiences of women and men, I did not specifically focus on the different experiences among the participants living in Halifax and Toronto. In fact, they reported the same difficulties. However, the political transnational activities of participants in Toronto seemed to be broader in scope. For instance, none of the Halifax participants mentioned voting for Iran's presidential election. Moreover, the scope of Toronto-based participants' cultural activities was wider because there are more Iranians living in Toronto than Halifax. Furthermore, a participant, who recently moved to Toronto from Halifax, believed that there are more job opportunities in Toronto, which might offer a resolution to his financial problems.

CHAPTER 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Economic sanctions are considered a punitive policy against adversarial governments. Debates regarding the utility and efficacy of sanctions are extensive. A significant body of literature asserts that economic sanctions, even if politically effective, cause negative human consequences. The literature regarding the human consequences of sanctions is focused on the civilians inside a targeted country. However, as this research shows, the human consequences of economic sanctions are not limited to civilians within a targeted country, but also reach those who have immigrated abroad. Specifically, this research demonstrates that Iranians residing in Halifax and Toronto have experienced negative impacts from the sanctions against Iran on their lives in these cities.

The qualitative methodology allowed me to gain a deep understanding of participants' experiences. For instance, face-to-face interviews gave me the opportunity to feel the depth of participants' sense of place and attachment to Iran. Moreover, transnationalism helped me to explain how Iranian immigrants in Halifax and Toronto maintain ties with Iran, and how an economic and political crisis in their homeland has affected their lives, experiences and contributions to both home and host land. Some participants have businesses and financial assets in Iran, or have families in Iran who support them financially; both groups are negatively affected by the sanctions since they have had to start new businesses in Canada, find new customers, or work harder in order to pay for their living expenses. As a result, they are under pressure, and sometimes are not able to spend enough time with their families or able to spend money on leisure activities. One of the findings of the current research is that the participants have strong familial ties. When their families are affected, they get hurt emotionally; some

participants were worried about the health and social well-being of their parents. The Iranian students also are affected, especially those who do not have scholarships, or financial support from their families in Iran. According to the current study, these Iranians are having a hard time getting student loans because they have to prove they are able to pay it back, under such circumstances. They seem to be in limbo. Because it is hard to afford living expenses in foreign currencies, those Iranian students who had planned to stay in Canada are thinking about going back home. On the contrary, those who had planned to earn a degree here and return home to work are thinking about staying in Canada because they are afraid of not finding a job in Iran that suits their educational background. This study also demonstrates that the contributions of the participants to the home and host land have been decreasing. For instance, they are not able to send humanitarian aid or remittances to Iran, and they are no longer financially productive enough to contribute much to the Canadian economy. Policymakers should consider the role of diasporas and transmigrants in their country's development and this study implies that the economic sanctions are indirectly affecting the contributions of people in a diasporic community, thereby affecting the development of home and host land. Both in Toronto and Halifax, the participants revealed similar experiences and perspectives regarding the sanctions. As an example, social isolation was similarly experienced among these Iranians. They also claimed that they are experiencing discrimination when trying to receive and send money to Iran, when their Canadian bank accounts are closed and mortgages are recalled, simply because they are Iranians and their economic resources are in Iran.

I contend that the theory of transnationalism ought to expand its focus on the role of policies on the lives of transmigrants rather than emphasizing the roles of transmigrants on the economy, society, and policies of their home and host land. Transnationalism also ought to take into account the bilateral relations between home and host land governments. Although the international sanctions against Iran have resulted in some difficulties, the lives of participants living in Halifax and Toronto are additionally affected by a separate set of sanctions imposed by Canada. I strongly believe that, considering its open immigration policy, the government of a country like Canada has to understand that transmigrants are not detached from their country of origin and the people there. Transmigrants need to be connected to their families and citizens back home while living in or between two nations. Moreover, they might be interested in supporting the development of their homeland while building a new life in their hostland. Canadian political parties and, on a larger scale, international policymakers have to think more seriously about a practical set of targeted sanctions, or at least about mitigating the impact of economic sanctions on diasporic communities. People go through a long and sometimes arduous process of immigration in order to have a better life and chances. Therefore, it is unfair that their lives and opportunities get affected by a punitive policy against the government of their countries of origin. Living in a new country far from their family is hard enough; they do not have to be additionally burdened. It is worth noting that one of the goals of Canada's immigration program has been the "economic component", in which the Canadian government has attracted professionals and business immigrants who will contribute to Canada's economy and labour needs (Library of Parliament, 2008). Participants living in Halifax and Toronto immigrated as skilled

workers or business class immigrants who had the potential to make financial and professional contributions to Canadian society. However, by imposing a strict set of sanctions against Iran, the Canadian Government has diminished the participants' contributions to Canadian society. As many of them declared, Canada's borders have been open to qualified Iranians, and setting a strict, separate set of sanctions against Iran does not seem logical and respectful to them.

Participants do not believe that they are able to have their voices and concerns heard. This may represent a growing apathy or mistrust of the democratic system in Canada. This feedback shows that policymakers should be more open to and interested in civilians' concern and problems. A country like Canada, having thousands Iranian immigrants in its different provinces, should know about their concerns before taking any strict action against the homeland of these people. Canada, at the very least, should consider the grievances of the Iranians diaspora in Canada. For instance institutes such as ISIS (Immigrant Settlement & Integration Services), or ACCESS Employment, should create a team in order to help those Iranian immigrants who have faced problems because of the sanctions.

It can be concluded from the study that economic sanctions are attached to human costs, although the experiences of individuals living with the consequences of sanctions outside of the sanctioned country are significantly different from individuals living inside it. For example, while Iranians living abroad might not necessarily be affected by malnutrition and death, they might have to struggle with many other issues affecting the quality of their daily lives, such as money transactions, transportation, communication, and so on. This study expands our knowledge of the varied experiences of individuals

who are living with the consequences of sanctions in a transnational context. Moreover, the participants' perspectives and responses as a vibrant and evolving minority in Canada are important for researchers, policymakers and immigration agencies. My initial research revealed that, transnationalism and transnational studies focus more on the role and impact of migrants on the economy and policy of host and homelands - for instance, on the degree to which brain drain or remittances play a role in the economic development of a homeland. The current study suggests that it is important to examine the impact of economic or political crises in a homeland on the lives of a diasporic community.

In terms of further research, it would be valuable to compare other diasporic communities whose homeland is sanctioned, particularly those sanctions imposed by their host land. Moreover, it would be useful to study the experiences of those Iranians who are in the process of migrating to Canada. Students of political science and public policy can think of an alternative to economic sanctions against Iran or the degree to which it is possible to diminish the human consequences of sanctions in diasporas. My purpose for doing this research is not only to explore other Iranians' experiences but also to contribute to the literature on economic sanctions and transnationalism. In this respect, it is hoped that this research will expand our knowledge of the impact of economic sanctions on Iranians living in Canada, and establish a basis for comparison with other sanctioned communities and their transnational diasporas. Furthermore, I hope that, realizing that they have similar problems; Iranians in Halifax and Toronto will become more unified and motivated to voice their concerns regarding the economic sanctions.

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APPENDIX A Interview Questions

- Talk a bit about yourself:
 1. Which city are you from in Iran?
 2. When and for what purpose did you come to Canada?
 3. Did you come alone, or did your family members come here too?
 4. How long you have been in Toronto/ Halifax?
 5. What is your status in Canada (Citizen, Permanent Resident, International Student, etc.)?
 6. Why did you choose to immigrate, and why did you immigrate to Canada?
 7. When was the last time you were in Iran?
- What is the main reason for you to travel to Iran?
- What are the main ties (connections) that you have been keeping with your homeland Iran (it can be financial, social, cultural, emotional etc.)
- Do you think about going back to Iran or staying in Canada?
- What are the main transnational activities that you take part in (these activities can be related to both your homeland and host land, or can relate these two together)?
- Do you think that economic sanctions against Iran have had any impact on Iranians in Canada, particularly Toronto and Halifax? How?
- Have the sanctions had any economic impacts on your life in general? How?
- Have the sanctions made you feel social isolation (any disconnection or lack of connection between you, your homeland, or your family members back home)

- In a case that you have family members in Iran, how much do you know about the effects of sanctions on their lives?
 1. to what extent and how they have been affected?
- What is your view of these economic sanctions as an international policy against adversaries and in response to violations of international law?
 1. Do you think they have had any impact on governments, especially Iranian government in order to make them comply with international laws?
 2. Do you think the goals of economic sanctions justify their impact on people?
 3. What is your view of the imposed economic sanctions by Canada (as your host land) against Iran?
- Have you ever come up with any actions to mitigate the impacts of economic sanctions on your lives? How? Have you been successful?
- What do you think about your role as a member of the Iranian diaspora in mitigating these conflicts, and also their effects on your life and the lives of Iranians back home?
 1. Is it possible to help Iranians back home?
 2. Is it possible to get your voice heard to policy makers?
- Is there anything else that was not mentioned in questions that you are concerned about, or experienced it?
- Can you suggest any other individual who might be interested in participating in this study?

APPENDIX B List of Interviewees

Interviewed in Toronto

Name (Pseudonyms)	Date of Interview
Aryan	February 8, 2013
Farshad	February 9, 2013
Negin	February 8, 2013
Fahim	February 10, 2013
Shaya	February 8, 2013

Interviewed in Halifax

Name (Pseudonyms)	Date of Interview
Ali	25 January, 2013
Amir	14 February, 2013
Farhad	6 February, 2013
Parisa	1 February, 2013
Rod	12 February, 2013
Setareh	27 January, 2013