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"Sharing power" : representation of visible minorities on the boards of selected immigrant serving agencies in Peel

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**"SHARING POWER": REPRESENTATION OF VISIBLE MINORITIES ON
THE BOARDS OF SELECTED IMMIGRANT SERVING AGENCIES IN
PEEL**

By

Masomeh Effat Ghassemi-Gonabadi, BA, Tehran University, 1971

**A Major Research Paper
presented to Ryerson University**

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Arts
in the Program of
Immigration and Settlement Studies**

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Master of Arts
Immigration and Settlement Studies
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Abstract

This study analyzes patterns of racial minority representation on the Boards of immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) in the cities of Mississauga and Brampton in the Region of Peel, Ontario. Executive Directors of 13 organizations were contacted and asked to provide ethnic, gender, age and educational information on the composition of their Boards and to describe the ethnic make-up of the client populations they serve. Boards were then scored on diversity (numbers of different ethnic members on the Board) and representativeness (a comparison of the ethnic composition of the Boards to the ethnic make-up of the population served by their ISAs). Findings indicate a wide range of scores on both diversity and representativeness. Some Boards are fully homogeneous and unrepresentative of their clients. Others are diverse but unrepresentative, and still others are fully representative of their client populations.

Key Words: Peel Region; Immigrant Serving Agencies; diversity; board of directors; visible minority; representation; women.

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A special “thank you” to my supervisor, Dr. Meinhard and my second reader Dr. Kumar. I have truly appreciated your guidance during my journey, and you have forever instilled in me the idea that: “in research you will never find the answer, only more questions”, and I will keep on asking my questions.

Finally, I would like to conclude by reiterating my drive and motivation to do this research: I am convinced that: “Leaders must demonstrate a deep personal commitment to ensuring that the talents of visible minorities are not only recognized, but leveraged fully throughout the organization” (Oliver, 2005, p.5). It is unique that we live in a society where our biggest threat lies not in scarcity, but in finding ways to free ourselves from exclusion and systemic racial discrimination that leave so many of us in dark isolation.

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“SHARING POWER”: REPRESENTATION OF VISIBLE MINORITIES ON THE BOARDS OF SELECTED IMMIGRANT SERVING AGENCIES IN PEEL

Sharing power is much harder than spouting platitudes about participation. Look around you at your next board or committee meeting. Is there visible minority representation? (Hill, 1986 p. 59)

Introduction

My purpose in writing this paper is to investigate the emergence of pluralism and diversity as essential requirements for the resilience and sustainability of immigrant serving agencies (ISAs).

While Canada's racial groups are projected to comprise one-fifth of the national population in the early 21st century, they continue to face racial discrimination (Galabuzi 2006). Diversity on nonprofit boards is vital for ensuring that the viewpoints of people using programs and services are reflected in the planning and operation of the organization. Robison (as cited in Huggins & Bangs, 2003) claims that through 'representation', the board both accesses the different perspectives it needs to make vital decisions in the organization's best interests while at the same time it acquires legitimacy for those decisions in the eyes of its members.

During the last few years, some institutions have adopted access and equity, or diversity-related policies. For example, the mandate of the Public Service Commission of Canada is to ensure a fair hiring process. Consequently, provincial governments have set up diversity management units within a federal government agency for the planning, development and management of human resources. These units administer the Government's Affirmative Action Program through their diversity initiatives, which ensure equality in hiring within the federal civil service. In 2004, the Maytree Foundation launched a program called abcGTA to discern the extent of diversity on public boards.

The project addresses the current imbalance between the proportion of immigrants and visible minorities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and their relative lack of representation in public agencies, boards and commissions (abc) (The Maytree Foundation, 2005).

Although many organizations claim to be carrying out diversity-related policies, most have failed to live up to the required standards. In this light, the Auditor General's report (2000) clearly states that although both gender balance and geographic representation on boards of directors of Federal Government Agencies has improved, the Government has yet to develop an effective mechanism for promoting greater diversity in appointments to public boards.

The focus of this study is to survey various immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) in the Peel Region and determine how well the boards of these agencies represent the clients that they serve.

Literature Review

The term 'visible minorities' was first used in 1984 by Rosalie Abella in the Royal Commission Report on Equality in Employment (Li, 2003, p.33). According to the Employment Equity Act, the term is defined as:

"A person in a visible minority group is someone (other than an Aboriginal person) who is non-white in colour/race, regardless of place of birth and is from one of the following groups: Black, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian-East Indian, Southeast, non-white West Asian, North African or Arab, non-white Latin American, person of mixed origin (with one parent in one of the visible minority groups listed above), other visible minority group (Public Service Commission of Canada n.d.)."

In the spring of 2005, the Multiculturalism and Human Rights Program at the Department of Canadian Heritage released a study, which projected that by 2017, roughly one out of every five persons in Canada will belong to a visible minority group. These numbers increase in major cities like Toronto and Vancouver, where such populations will soon be in the majority.

The steady growth of the non-white, non-aboriginal population is not a new phenomenon. In 1981, visible minorities comprised less than 5% of the population. By 1996, about one in 10 people was a member of a racial group. With over 75% of new immigrants belonging to various racial groups, the proportion of people of colour in Canada at the time of the 2001 census reached 13.4% of the population, or about four million persons (Pendakur, 2005).

Social Inclusion

Civic participation should be looked at as the ultimate goal of immigration. We need to recognize that if immigrants have a fair and positive experience in their settlement and integration process, they will be more likely to be willing to participate in civic affairs. The sense of 'belonging' and the readiness to participate is developed only if newcomers are valued, respected and given opportunities to reach their full potential in the host country. This can be accomplished if we relate better to their needs and challenges. In Omidvar's and Richmond's (2003) study, 'Social Inclusion' was defined in relation to immigrants and refugees as:

"... the basic notions of belonging, acceptance and recognition. For immigrants and refugees, social inclusion would be represented by the realization of full and equal participation in the economic, social, cultural and political dimensions of life in their new country. In a simple but useful sense, therefore, social inclusion for

immigrants and refugees can be seen as the dismantling of barriers that lead to exclusion in all these domains" (p. 1).

If Immigrant Serving Agencies have board members with first-hand experience of what immigrants and visible minorities undergo, they may be more sensitive and better able to deal with their problems and provide real solutions. By diversifying the boards of ISAs, we create better chances of integrating an immigrant population into social and political institutions.

In the past few years, and especially after the September 11, 2001 attacks, a great deal of work has been published that re-examines the social fabric currently defining Western culture. Neglecting the long-term integration of newcomers into societies has created major problems. Policy-makers are struggling to find speedy and thorough solutions to this issue, realizing that our existing policies and practices lack genuine attempts at eliminating systemic barriers to the full participation and integration of newcomers. This led Mike Funston, the Toronto Star reporter, to note that: "Mississauga has rejected an appeal by a landed immigrant to allow residents without Canadian citizenship to serve on municipal committees and boards" (p.A19). In this article, the Mayor of Mississauga Hazel McCallion said, "That piece of paper (citizenship document) is the most valuable piece of paper in the world". The fact is municipal governments should encourage and promote full participation of their residents with no conditions and allow people to take the lead in their daily lives.

Integration and civic participation are concepts that are connected and interrelated. Without the active participation of all stakeholders and the political will to facilitate the full integration of newcomers in all levels of our society, civic participation cannot occur. This leads not only to a loss of the vibrancy of Canadian society, but also

to long-term social problems for Canada. Saloojee (2005) considers racism a form of social exclusion:

“Racial discrimination in all its manifestations is the process by which that exclusion occurs. Exclusion for racialized groups means unequal access to rights, to the valued goods and services in society, to the labour market and to all fields of public life. Because of their skin colour, members of racialized minority communities encounter barriers that result in incomplete citizenship, undervalued rights, undervalued recognition and undervalued participation” (Saloojee 2005 p.18).

As we see here, discrimination has not been completely abolished from the social framework. By ensuring that agencies, boards and commissions are representative of all members of society, civic participation can be greatly improved. One indicator of social inclusion is the representation of visible minorities on boards of both nonprofit and for-profit organizations. This should ensure that the voices of all stakeholders are heard. Boards often claim to be diverse when in fact they merely employ ‘tokenism’. It is crucial to define tokenism as it refers to a policy or practice of limited inclusion of members of a minority group, usually creating a false appearance of inclusive practices, intentional or not. According to Go (2005) “...the appointment of Chinese Canadians to the position of “head of state” is a highly symbolic gesture...given the troubled history of Chinese immigration to Canada...Chinese Head Tax and Exclusion Act” (p. 40). Another typical example in real life and television includes minority races (such as a black character in a mainly white cast, or vice versa) and women.

Tokenism cannot be used to cover the need for systematic change to social, economic and political inclusion. Avvy Go, the director of the Metro Toronto Chinese

and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic, wrote an article titled "Moving beyond Tokenism" in which she argues that tokenism is a symbolic gesture revealing that underneath the façade of a well-integrated community lies the disturbing reality of inequity and racial prejudice.

"For close to a decade, China has been the top source country of Canada's immigration. Yet Chinese Canadians are almost invisible among the senior levels of all governmental and most corporate institutions. The lack of representation of Chinese Canadians in positions of power is in part a legacy of our country's troubling history." (Go, 2005, p.40).

The doors of Canada's boardrooms must be opened to engage more visible minorities and women from marginalized communities in decision-making practices. The United Way of Greater Toronto has recently revised its Terms of Reference in order to ensure that their recruitment practices reflect the diversity in their community, believing that only thus will they be able to practice effective leadership (United Way of Greater Toronto 2004).

Role of Boards in nonprofit organizations

There is an increased interest in the nonprofit sector over the past several years in both political arena and academia. Nonprofit boards have fundamental responsibilities to provide social services to the public. Therefore, there are frequent questions: What makes an effective nonprofit organization? On the other hand, what are the board's responsibilities? There are not many empirical studies to date investigating the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations, and the allocated responsibilities of board members.

In a study by Green et al. (2001 p. 462), the authors concluded that there are ten areas of primary responsibility for the board of directors:

- Mission and policy
- Strategic planning
- Program evaluation
- Board selection and tenure
- Board development
- Selection and evaluation of chief professional officer
- Resources
- Financial management
- Community interaction
- Dispute resolution

In the area of strategic decisions, such as design and delivery of programs, services and evaluation, Perlov and Shinn (2001 p. 114) emphasized more on development of human resources in order to achieve desired outcomes.

To improve nonprofit organizations' activities, the way boards perform in their governance responsibilities is very essential. Board development is one of the areas that Holland and Jackson (1998 p. 128) studied and indicated that diverse boards should engage in ongoing efforts to develop their skills - could noticeably develop their performance and strengthen the ways the board adds value to the organization. Overall, to add to the above roles and responsibilities of boards, community relations, public policy and positive relationship with Executive Director are worth to mention and can be applied to any immigrant serving agencies' boards' responsibilities.

Diversity in Peel

Ethnic diversity in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is spreading outwards as more and more immigrants settle in suburban areas like the Peel Region. Ontario receives about one-half of the approximately quarter million immigrants arriving in Canada each year. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) absorbs nearly 75% of all immigrants in Ontario, with Peel receiving more than 20,000 – roughly one quarter of all new immigrants to the GTA. Immigrants made more than 43% of Peel's population in the 2001 Census (Statistics Canada, 2001).

Between 2000 and 2004 the number of immigrants in Peel has more than doubled (from 11% to 24%) with over 50% coming from India, Pakistan and Philippines. Immigrants from India alone make up 34.6% of all those arriving in Peel between 2000 and 2004 (Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005). In Kumar and Qadeer's study (2006), it addresses an important question: "what services immigrants, coming to and living in the Region of Peel need and how their delivery can become more effective? Immigrants' needs are qualitatively different, though not substantively...that common services may be provided in forms that are suitable for immigrants culturally and linguistically" (p.4). The above figures indicate that there is a rapid growth of immigrants in Peel region and policies should be made to address their diverse needs.

Immigration accounted for 62% of the population growth in the Peel Region during the decade 1991-2001 (The Peel Immigration Fact Sheet Statistics Canada, 2004). The fact is that services in Peel cannot keep up with its growth. The future consequences of this may be that by not being able to provide adequate services and

programs to its newcomers and visible minorities, Peel will lose an important source of human capital (The Social Planning Council of Peel, 2005).

Population projections for Ontario, forecast that Toronto's population will increase from 2.6 million in 2004 to 3.1 million by 2031, a rate of about 19% (The Ontario Ministry of Finance Population Projections for Ontario, 2004). Growth in the other regions of the GTA (Durham, Halton, Peel and York) will occur at an even faster pace. Durham, Halton, Peel and York regions are forecast to grow by 50% or more over the same period (Ministry of Finance, 2004). These figures illustrate the importance of the Peel Region as a focus of my research.

Role of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ISAs)

The focus of this study is Immigrant Serving Agencies (ISAs) because, by the very nature of their work, they must ensure equity and cultural sensitivity in service delivery. According to a Training Guide of the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI 2000), settlement is a long-term, dynamic, two-way process through which ideally, immigrants achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society gains access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities. ISA provides a wide range benefits to communities that meets the social needs of its members, which have not met by the public or private sectors. Also, it is inspired and motivated by basic human values, not for profits and rises from the grassroots to meet people's needs.

In 1974, the federal government instituted the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) and later added the Host Program and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program in 1992 and 1991 respectively

(CIC website <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pub/immigration>). In a study done in 2005, Lim, Lo, Siemiatycki and Doucet identified fourteen services that ISAs provide to newcomers ranging from filling in forms to advocacy. The purpose of these programs is to help immigrants settle in their new country. Another study concluded that language training is the service offered by ISAs that is in greatest demand (Oliveira 2005).

ISAs have vital advocacy role in redefining of the notion of 'settlement' and integration. The current dilemma of settlement policy is related to the short-term, limited funding / resources and lack of clear vision of the settlement policy. The role of ISAs is to be more vocal and more organized in demanding continuum dialogue with all levels and departments of government and held them accountable for the results of newcomer settlement. Another essential role of ISAs is to combat exclusion and promote inclusion for immigrants and refugees in their social, economic, cultural and political integrations. I strongly believe that it would be useful starting point for considering diversity and representations of ethnic groups in boardrooms of immigrant serving agencies.

According to Richmond and Shields (2005):

“...the voice of these agencies has historically been essential in the development of settlement policy, in promoting community development with newcomer communities, and in advocacy for anti-racism and equity. But funding restrictions, lack of resources, and an increasingly competitive environment are threatening to silence this voice” (p. 517).

Currently, there are seventeen ISAs in Peel that provide settlement and language programs in twenty-two sites. Out of those seventeen agencies, thirteen offer LINC programs (LINC website) and these will be the focus of this study in terms of representation of visible minorities on their boards.

The Maytree Foundation Initiative

Canada's rapidly-changing society calls upon government, institutions and organizations to reflect its ethno-cultural diversity. This is particularly important and urgent for human service agencies, where equal access is essential for ensuring equality in service delivery. Advocacy groups such as the Urban Alliance and the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto have brought the acute need for culturally sensitive human services to the public's attention on several occasions. The most influential organization however, is the Maytree Foundation, which has brought such issues to the fore.

The Maytree Foundation, a private organization, is committed to reducing inequality in Canada and to building strong civic communities. In the fall of 2004, it launched a totally new initiative, "abcGTA", which advocates that immigrants and refugees become fully engaged in the decision-making process. More specifically, the purpose of this project is to address diverse communities' lack of representation in the GTA's public institutions, agencies, boards and commissions (abcs).

The Maytree Foundation discovered that only 1.7% of public board (non-governmental) members in Canada are from visible minorities. Maytree argues that our public institutions should reflect the authentic faces of the people who actually live in the city, and the GTA's diversity should be represented at the decision-making level. One of the key initiatives of this project was to develop a web-based directory of candidates from ethnically diverse backgrounds who are qualified, interested and able to serve on the boards of public institutions. It is Maytree's objective that this directory be used as a concrete tool by public institutions to reach out and identify new voices and new

perspectives from the ethnically diverse communities to serve on their boards. In addition, the directory also serves to highlight the achievements of ethnically diverse leaders in the GTA. The website launched on May 12, 2005, www.abcgta.ca, now provides a pool of over one hundred well-qualified minority candidates. This should assist in diversifying the GTA's boardrooms and eliminate any excuse concerning the alleged unavailability of suitable candidates.

According to a retired senior vice-president at Celestica Inc, the talent pool of most organizations certainly does not reflect the new Canada (as cited in Keung, 2005, p. A1). "Usually, whenever there is an opening on a board, you go through your personal Rolodex and tap on the people you know. Obviously, there is a disconnect out there with the old boy's club."

Ratna Omidvar, the executive director of the Maytree Foundation, made a similar statement in a *Globe and Mail* article: "While the city of Toronto has 42% visible minorities and the GTA has 30% visible minorities and growing, yet the movement of these people and faces into the corridors of power are very limited. It's the old boys' network." (Lewington, 2005 p. A12).

This helps answer the question of why public agencies, boards and commissions are still largely white, middle-aged and male, and highlights the importance of having not only policies but also practices that stress diversity and representation of "racialized"/minority communities amongst decision-makers.

Representation of Visible Minorities on Boards

Most studies of nonprofit boards have been conducted in the United States and deal with recruitment and retention, training and orientation, and change in attitudes and

ideology (Board Source, 2002; McKechnie, Newton & Hall, 2000; Bradshaw, Murray & Wolpin, 1992). For the most part, they do not address diversity in depth. While there is some empirical research on minority representation on boards, few of them concentrate on ethnic diversity (Rutledge, 1994; Widmer, 1987). In addition, the studies do not investigate best practices of how to make the board of directors more diverse and effective. Brudney and Murray (1998) suggest that a board model that is most appropriate for one organization is not necessarily suitable for another, and decisions about governance need to be based on the configuration of personalities, culture and environmental pressures unique to each nonprofit organization.

Coffey and Wang (1998), define board diversity as "... variation among its members ...that may derive from multiple sources such as expertise and managerial background, personalities, learning styles, education, age and values" (p. 1596). They do not mention ethnic diversity. On the other hand, in a later study, Arfken et al. (2004), emphasize that "diversity in gender, age, ethnicity, and view-point can offer corporations a number of benefits including additional knowledge, fresh ideas and insights to aid problem-solving, better product positioning, enhanced strategic planning, new knowledge or opinions, and even additional accountability" (p.178). Despite some progress with respect to women and ethnic minorities, "more than three decades after diversity became a buzzword in the upper ranks of corporate America, boards remain full of aging white men" (p. 180).

Board members bring resources to the organization as a result of their backgrounds. Diversity by profession and occupation has a positive relation to the organizational performance (Zald, 1969, as cited in Siciliano, 2004). Traditionally,

individuals with business backgrounds and experience were the most desirable candidates for board membership (Worthy and Neuschel, 1984).

A different perspective on the importance of board diversity comes from the Netherlands where people are turning to neighbourhood boards to resolve disputes instead of resorting to the legal system. The authors, Peper and Spierings (1999), argue that:

“...many neighbourhoods in the Netherlands have reached the stage of colliding subcultures, and interpersonal conflicts. The young live next to the old, the rich next to the poor, single people next to families, the white next to the brown and the black, the established next to the outsiders. In some places, this social-cultural abundance leads to fear, uncertainty, and irritation. Not everybody is as understanding and tolerant of diverse lifestyles and thinking patterns as another person is...Multi-ethnic community boards are starting to function as mediatory panels for setting disputes between neighbours and neighbourhood residents” (p. 483).

Although the focus of this paper is not on mediatory processes conducted by community boards, the aforementioned study provides a good example of how board diversity can function as an integrating mechanism in mixed neighbourhoods.

Implications

Most organizations serve their own neighborhood, city, town or rural municipality. A majority of them provide services or products directly to people, targeting both the general public and various segments of the population, such as children, youth, seniors or people with disabilities. In addition, most provide public benefits rather than serving their own special interests or those of their members. This may help to explain why non-

profit and voluntary organizations receive the support they do from individual Canadians, governments and businesses.

There are 161,000 non-profit organizations and 80,000 registered charities in Canada, with approximately 2 million employees (13% of the labour force) in the voluntary sector. With revenues totaling \$112 billion in 2003, non-profit and voluntary organizations comprise an important part of the Canadian economy. Even setting aside hospitals, universities, and colleges, their revenues total \$75 billion. Given the predominantly local focus of most organizations, they likely play an important but unrecognized role in local and provincial economies (National Survey of Non-profit and Voluntary Organizations, 2003). Every day, these organizations make decisions that significantly impact Canada's economic, social and cultural well-being. There is a growing understanding that decisions made by directors are felt far beyond boardroom walls, affecting individuals, corporations, and society. To optimize the community benefits, board members are held accountable and responsible for their decisions. Decisions made by the board members are reflected in the planning and operations of the organization and are critical for people who utilize programs and services.

Volunteers in the non-profit sector are an integral part of Canadian life, serving as vehicles for engaging millions of Canadians in an effort to address the needs of their communities. There is a significant need to engage young people, seniors, women, physically challenged people, representatives from gay and lesbian communities and minorities on the public agencies, boards, and commissions (abc's).

It is important that the GTA political representation at all levels, reflect the population it serves, and that it be sensitive, responsive and accountable to the needs

of the community at large. It is especially important at the level of public bodies, since these are very effective springboards to political office. In Matheson's research study (2005), he questioned the relevance of the municipal level of governance and representation of visible minorities:

"In Peel Region, the municipal government has become the most unrepresentative political body, with none of Mississauga and Brampton's 21 elected councilors being of South Asian origin, and only one being a racial minority, Jamaican-born Brampton city councilor...this discrepancy between the provincial / federal levels and the municipal level is a stain on the municipal body that claims to be the closest to the people..." (Matheson, 2005, p.4)

It is not surprising to find that ethnic representation lags in both political and public bodies.

New Canadians' Perspectives

Adjusting to a new life in Canada can be challenging for recent immigrants. Volunteering is one way to practice new language skills, build social networks, gain Canadian experience, develop a sense of attachment to, and integrate into a new community. The combination of language classes — often available from settlement organizations and school districts — along with volunteer experience can assist individuals in adapting to their new environment. Furthermore, immigrants can enrich an organization with new perspectives, and can help voluntary agencies build links with new communities. Many organizations that serve a diverse population, or who are seeing changes in the composition of the community in which they operate, are conscious of the need for their staff and volunteers to reflect the population they serve. This means making special efforts to recruit board members from diverse cultural

groups. Diverse boards bring different world-views and a broader way of being able to address problems. Different communities have different issues and unique problems, which cannot be understood by the “old boys club”.

Methodology

This study seeks to discover whether the Boards of Directors of agencies serving immigrants are representative of the ethnic composition of their clients. Towards this end, Immigrant Serving Agencies in Peel Region were identified and surveyed using a questionnaire to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. For the purpose of this study, qualitative research was used, as the nature of the topic, diversity, is a multifaceted phenomenon that is built individually through different variables that quantitative research cannot answer (Neuman, 2003). Qualitative research enables the participants to mould the research and allows their voices to become the basis of analysis.

Prior to conducting the research, ethics approval from Ryerson University's Research Ethics Board' (REB-2006-048) was obtained. All ethical considerations were addressed and the safety and well-being of project participants was paramount to the investigator

The study group was chosen from a list of 17 ISAs in the Region of Peel. In order to maintain consistency in the sample, only those organizations were chosen that provided a LINC program in addition to the other services provided. Contact information for those organizations was obtained from the Peel LINC Partnership website (<http://www.lincpeelhalton.com>). The executive director, program manager or president of each of the agencies was contacted and asked to participate in the study.

In an effort to encourage participation, I drafted a request letter (Appendix 1) explaining the purpose of the study and emphasizing its relevance to helping ISAs improve their service to immigrants. The letter assured the respondents of the complete confidentiality of their responses. I followed up these letters with e-mails and telephone calls. All thirteen of the contacted agencies agreed to participate, thus establishing a response rate of one hundred percent (100%).

Survey Instrument

Since data about the ethnicity, gender, age, education and occupation of board members of the sample organizations was not systematically, nor readily, available from secondary sources, a questionnaire was constructed to gather this, and other data. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

The questionnaire probes three main areas of interest:

- Background characteristics of board members
- Programs and policies to increase board diversity
- Effect of diversity on board and organizational functioning

Background characteristics of board members

The ethnicity, gender, age, educational level, profession, country of birth and language of each board member was requested in the questionnaire. As a result of a short pre-test, relevant ethnic backgrounds were categorized as: Caucasian, African Canadian, Asian (Vietnamese), South Asian/ East Asian, Philippines, Arabs (Palestinians), Hispanic, and Other. Since the "Other" category contained a wealth of information, when the data were analyzed the categories were revised as follows:

European, South Asian, East Asian, Philippines, Middle Eastern, Latin American and Other.

Age was grouped into decade categories from under 20 to 70+. Educational level was divided into 3 categories: High School Diploma, Bachelors degree, and Masters degree or higher. Since I was interested in diversity, instead of using standard professional groupings, I left that question open-ended. Country of birth was divided into Canadian born or foreign born. Language was left open-ended as well.

Programs and policies to increase board diversity

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked whether they have policies in place for recruiting people of different ethnic backgrounds, and how they go about recruiting and retaining minority groups.

Effect of diversity on board and organizational functioning

Finally, a question was included that probed whether diversity on the board helped the organization function better.

Data Collection

Data collection proceeded in four stages. First, I conducted an extensive Internet search for information related to the 13 agencies in my sample. In most cases, the mandate, mission and policy of the organizations were not available on line. Although information about programs and services were available on line, I could not find any information about their board and executive members.

Second, once all agencies' information had been gathered, I called each individual agency and introduced my project to the executive directors of the selected

agencies in order to obtain their verbal approvals. Following their approval, I sent them the questionnaire mail, e-mail, fax or personal delivery. Despite the fact that the questionnaire was not very complicated rather easy but to navigate the ethnic identity of the board and executive directors was not an easy task. Out of 13 agencies, three executive directors asked me to do the survey one-on-one in their office. This opportunity provided the first hand perspectives on the area of research - with more explanations and detailed, particularly in response to the last three questions.

Third, after a brief perusal of the data gathered, I called each respondent again and asked them to rank order the top five immigrant groups that their organization served.

Finally, I conducted an Internet search on some major organizations in Greater Toronto Area (GTA) to learn about resources available to help organizations increase the diversity of their boards and provide examples of best practices in Greater Toronto Area. In Canada, three of our largest national organizations have web sites offering resources and information in support of boards: United Way of Canada-Centraide Canada, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (www.nonprofits.org) and Volunteer Canada. Federal and Provincial governments have on-line resources and information devoted to the voluntary governance but rarely seems to find diversity on the board of directors in ISA's. When all the data were gathered, I sent each participant a thank-you letter. (See Appendix 4.)

Analysis

The analysis took place in two stages. A preliminary perusal of the data revealed that a crucial question was not included in the questionnaire: the main immigrant groups

served by the agency. Without this information, it would be impossible to determine the representativeness of the board. Fortunately, all the respondents were amenable to answering the additional question.

The main analysis comprised creating tables in which the organizations could be compared with respect to board diversity, and more importantly board representativeness, i.e., to what extent the board's composition reflected the immigrant groups that were served by the agency. Diversity scores and representativeness score were calculated for each organization. These calculations will be discussed in more detail in the "Findings" section below.

Findings

This study set out to answer three basic questions: 1. Are the boards of directors of ISAs diverse with respect to ethnicity, gender, age, education and occupation? 2. Is the composition of the boards representative of the people they serve? 3. Are there policies and programs to help boards achieve diversity? Underlying these questions is an assumption that board diversity and representativeness enhance the effectiveness of the organizations they guide. However, the scope of the study did not allow me to examine this question in any meaningful way. It will remain for future research to link organizational effectiveness with board diversity.

The willingness of executive directors to participate in the survey indicates that diversity and board representativeness is an issue of interest to them. Those who were interviewed, either in person or over the phone freely expressed their opinions about the value of diversity.

Respecting the promise of confidentiality that I undertook, none of the agencies will be referred to by name, only by number.

Ethnic Diversity

Boards in the group of 13 agencies ranged in size from 4 to 18 members, and their executive committees ranged from 2 to 7. (See Figure1.) The total number of the board members in our study was 149 people and the total number of the executive members was 60.

<Insert Figure 1 here>

Tables 1 & 2 detail the ethnic make-up of each of the ISA boards and their executive committees. Across all boards, visible minorities make up 76.5% of the directors and 75% of executive committee members in Peel. Four boards (ISAs 3,4,8,10) are exclusively made up of visible minorities. Europeans make up only 23.5 percent of board and 25 percent of executive committee members, whereas Asians, account for about 63 percent of the board and 66.7 percent of the executive committee members. They outnumber Europeans, Africans, and Latin Americans in Peel.

Such overall diversity does not necessarily mean that all of the boards are ethnically diverse. A quick glance at Table 1 indicates that the four boards that are exclusively comprised of visible minorities are also boards that are 100% homogeneous in their ethnic composition. An additional 3 (ISAs 2, 7, 9) boards have only two groups represented. Thus, even though visible minorities are well represented across all boards, less than half the boards are truly diverse with respect to ethnicity.

<Insert Tables 1 and 2 here>

In the case of ISAs, it is not only diversity that is important, but also how well the board members represent the client populations served by the organization. Table 3 lists the top five groups served, in rank order, for each of the ISAs. The presence of a board member from one of these client groups is indicated by a “Yes” under the client group name. By adding up the number of yeses, I calculated a representativeness score. The scores ranged from 0% to 100% with one organization (ISA 9) not having a single person on the board belonging to even one of the ethnic groups served and one organization (ISA 11) in which all the client groups were represented on the board. Altogether only four boards (ISAs 11, 1, 6, and 7) can be considered representative, with more than half their client populations represented on the board. In the remaining boards, the level of representativeness was less than 50%.

Gender diversity

Females make up 47 percent of the total of 149 board members and 45 percent of 60 executive committee members in Peel (Figures 2, & 3). This figure is in line with the average female representation on nonprofit boards and considerably higher than female representation on for-profit boards (Meinhard, 2006). All the 13 agencies had at least one woman on their boards. One board was made up exclusively of women (ISA 8).

The data do not indicate a relationship between board size and the representation of women, as the percentage of women fluctuates throughout the different agencies.

<Insert Figures 2 , 2.1 and 3 here>

Age Diversity

Just over three quarters of board members are between the ages of 30 – 60, more or less evenly divided among the three decades. (See Figure 4.) The average age on the executive committees tends to be bit higher, with 31% of executive committee members over the age of 50. (See Figure 5.) Generally speaking, young people in their 20s do not serve on boards in great numbers, and this is true of the current study as well. This is unfortunate since they could serve as role models for the many young immigrants arriving to Canada. Youth volunteers (i.e. volunteers between the ages of 19 to 29) have the potential to develop into future leaders and consequently, will have more influence on the decision-making process.

<Insert Figures 4 and 5 here>

Diversity by Educational level

The Immigrant Serving Agencies in this sample are largely governed by well-educated people. More than three quarters (78.6%) of ISA's board members and 85 percent of their executive members hold at least a Bachelors degree; 32% a Masters or higher. (See Figures 6 and 7.) These figures may be a reflection of the Canadian Immigration policy (points system) in recent decades, but they still indicate highly educated board members.

<Insert Figures 6 and 7 here>

Diversity by Profession

Figure 8 shows that the top 5 professions on ISA's board members are: 1- Retired people (14.4% - unknown profession), 2- Accountants (12.9% of the board members), 3- Business owners (8.3% of the board members), 4- Engineers (7.6% of the

board members) and 5- Teachers / Educators (6.8% of the board members). Figure 9 specifies that the top 5 professions on ISA's executive committee members are: 1- Accountants (16.7% of the executive members), 2- Business owners (10% of the executive members), 3- Lawyers (8.3% of the executive members), 4- Engineers (6.7% of the executive members) and 5- University Professors / Researchers (5% of the executive members). According to Swanson (1992), it is a mistake when too many board members happen to be from the same background and share the same basic interests. There seems to be a healthy mix of skills on these boards, however educational level in itself does not guarantee a well functioning board.

<Insert Figures 8 and 9 here>

Diversity by Country of Birth

The vast majority (84.6%) of ISA board members were born outside of Canada. This figure is slightly higher for the executive committees of these boards (88.3%). Five of the ISA boards in this sample (ISAs 3, 4, 7, 8, 10) are made up almost exclusively of foreign born members. These people were immigrants themselves at one time, so they are well informed of the trials and tribulations faced by newcomers. This puts them in a strong position to guide their organizations towards best serving their clients.

<Insert Figures 10 and 11 here>

Diversity by Language

Following from the fact that a large majority of board members are foreign born, a similar majority speak a language other than English. (See Figure12.) This too is advantageous to the board, if the languages spoken are those that the clients also speak.

<Insert Figure 12 here>

In summary, from the above examination of board member diversity in this sample of ISAs, we can conclude that over the general picture there is healthy variation on all measures of diversity. However there are a number of organizations that are quite homogeneous on key factors such as ethnicity and gender (ethnicity: ISA 3,4,8 and 10) (gender: ISA 4, 8, and 13). With respect to whether boards are actually representative of the client populations they serve, the results are less positive, with most organizations scoring on the lower rather than the higher end of the representativeness scale.

Diversity policies, procedures and practices

About 77 percent of ISAs do not have written policies and procedures with respect to achieving diversity and representativeness on their boards of directors. Although over three quarters of the sample do not have written policies, it is clear that their recruitment practices encourage diversity and representativeness. All 13 ISAs identified different approaches for recruiting Board members. For example, one on one outreach through the community members, or asking for recommendations from existing Board members is common practice. Multicultural staff members are valuable resources for connecting with ethno-cultural communities to recruit new members. It is interesting to note that not a single agency mentioned using or even referencing the rich source of data made available through the abcGTA Maytree Foundation web-site (www.maytree.com). This is an on-line service launched by the Maytree Foundation in Fall 2004, providing data on more than several hundreds of qualified people with

particular skills, interests and diverse backgrounds ready for volunteering on the boards (www.abcgta.ca).

Finally, respondents were asked whether having a diverse board was beneficial in helping the organization better function. Those who answered definitely thought that board diversity was beneficial.

"We have a diverse group of Board members regarding the survey's criteria and I feel it does help us function better. It ensures that the perspectives of both municipalities are represented along with perspectives from various ethnic communities and those who have an immigrant experience." (ISA 13)

"Yes, as it brings different perspective as well as different ways of doing the same thing and thus selecting the best method." (ISA 6)

The most diverse agency, ISA 11 in this study used three words: "Definitely – It does." Even an organization that did not think board diversity was related to how the organization functioned recognized other benefits of board diversity.

"Not necessarily, but it helps in establishing the needs of various cultural groups." (ISA 12)

Limitations

This research has included one Region's ISAs with LINC and ISAP programs, and relied primarily on survey responses from executive directors and board members. Inherent in single method data collection is the possibility of mono-method bias in results. Another limitation was a perceived hesitance including possible resistance to answer all questions sincerely. Accordingly, many participants may have altered their responses without the researcher's knowledge. It is an unfortunate aspect of qualitative research that the researcher cannot control situations such as recalling or

reconstructing numbers of boards / executive committees or ideas about having a written diversity policy in their by-laws.

Due to limited interaction with the participants, I was not able to build a mutual relationship with all the participants in order to obtain more information about their policies and practices. Consequently, there was a marked hesitation from at least 5 agencies, to respond to all the questions in a detailed manner (agencies # 3, 4, 8, 12 & 13). For example, using N/A or just Yes / No answers did not give me a clear direction to effectively analyze the situation. One month was not sufficient to build a better rapport between the participants and the researcher in order to gather all the data.

Another limitation of this study is that there was not enough time to search around the issue of effectiveness. There is little consensus in the literature as to what constitutes organizational effectiveness, and even less in terms of how it can be measured. Sowa et al. (2004), in a review of the subject, claim that measures of organizational effectiveness must take into account not only the outcomes of the programs or services provided, but also internal organizational factors such as mandate, goals and mission and how to achieve them. Others emphasize different internal aspects such as management practices and program implementation (Etzioni, 1964), the survival of the organization (Pfeffer, 1982) and participant satisfaction (e.g., Boschken, 1994; D'Aunno, 1992). As a result of the difficulty of measuring organizational effectiveness, this paper focuses primarily on diversity on the boards of ISAs – and reserves the issue of effectiveness for future research.

The research could have been strengthened by seeking alternative sources of information from clients, staff members and government agencies. Further research

needs to expand on the measurement of diversity and inclusiveness – board effectiveness and organizational effectiveness in ISAs.

Discussion and Conclusions

This study investigated the board composition of 13 immigrant serving agencies in the Peel Region. Both the literature on board effectiveness and the literature on the integration of immigrants into full civic participation point to the importance of involving more immigrants and visible minorities on boards. Indeed, the question of how our society handles diversity is crucial, as the ultimate indicator of a successful multicultural society is the achievement of social cohesion in our cities, communities and country. From this perspective, the composition of each of the 13 ISA boards in this sample is exemplary. More than three quarters of their members come from visible minority groups and 85% are foreign born and speak another language in addition to English. Therefore in terms of social inclusion, the objectives of multicultural policies have been achieved.

Despite this, fewer than half of the boards in this sample are truly diverse with respect to ethnic composition. Four of the boards are fully homogeneous and another three have representation from only two ethnic groups. The ethnic homogeneity of these boards would not be problematic in situations where the boards are fully representative of the people they serve. However, since the original survey questionnaire did not ask about the ethnic composition of the ISAs' clientele, I was unable to determine whether these boards were representative of the people they served. Fortunately, the study's respondents were happy to provide me this information in a follow-up interview. The results indicated that only four boards could be considered to be representative of the

people they serve. In one case, not one of the groups served by the agency was represented on the board, despite the fact that all of the board's members belonged to a visible minority group.

So the question is, is it enough to simply involve visible minorities on the boards of ISAs, or are diversity and representativeness important as well? When writers and scholars talk about the importance of diversity, the implication is that there is a need to involve people of colour and other minority groups on boards of organizations, especially those serving diverse populations. In this study we see a different situation. One in which minority groups are on the boards, but the boards are neither diverse nor representative of the clients that they serve.

The literature on boards suggests that board diversity is beneficial to organizations as it provides organizations with an array of skills, opinions and ideas. Having board members who are representative of the clients served by the organizations is additionally beneficial in providing boards with important insight into their problems and concerns, thus enabling them to better serve their clientele. In addition, it gives them enhanced legitimacy.

Perhaps a word on tokenism is in order here. According to Board Source (an online source), no one board member should be required to represent an entire section of the population. In this study there is only one board in which tokenism may be an issue. ISA 7 has one member of European origin amongst 10 South Asians. However, none of ISA 7's clientele is European.

All of the respondents in the group, who answered the question, felt that board diversity was beneficial to their organization. Whether in fact it helped their

organizations deliver services more effectively, or even be more in tune with their clientele is not clear.

In summary, this study has shown, that counter to some expectations, the boards of immigrant serving agencies provide opportunities for visible minorities to participate in community services for immigrants. Close to half the boards studied are ethnic diverse, all are diverse with respect to gender and occupation. Board members are highly educated and well distributed in terms of the middle range of age categories. This diversity has been achieved despite the fact that only a small minority of the sample's organizations had diversity policies.

With respect to the impact of diversity on organizational performance, the study's respondents certainly thought board diversity was beneficial, however without having been able to measure organizational effectiveness, there is no way of determining the effect of board diversity.

The findings of this current study have opened up some interesting questions for future research.

- Is serving on boards of organizations an important factor in enhancing civic participation among immigrants in Canada? There is a lot of hearsay around this issue, but not a lot of empirical research.
- From the perspective of organizational effectiveness, is board diversity important or is it enough to simply have minority groups serve on boards? Again, there is very little empirical evidence one way or the other.
- Does board diversity and representativeness increase organizational effectiveness?

This study provides a compelling case for future research on the effectiveness of Boards and has specific implications for progressive immigrant servicing agencies.

Table 1. Race / Ethnicity of Board Members in Immigrant Serving Agencies in Peel, 2006

ISAs Code #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total	%
European	9	8			3	4	1		3		3	1	3	35	23.5
African Canadian	2				5	4					4	1	1	17	11.41
Asian:		2				2					4	4	3	15	10.07
South Asian	3				1	6	10							20	13.42
East Asian/N/C				17 V	1				1	18C				37	24.83
Philippines					1									1	0.67
Middle Eastern			7P					14A				1		22	14.8
Latin American											1			1	0.67
Other													1	4	2.68
Total	14	10	7	17	11	16	11	14	4	18	12	7	8	149	100%

Note: Agency number 7- one board position is vacant (has 12 seats)

Agency number 2, 6, 11, 12, & 13 have not identified the ethnicity of their Asian board members

Asian: 5 agencies have not specified the Region of their boards

A= for Afghans

C = for Chinese

P = for Palestinians

V = for Vietnamese

Total Europeans: 35 (23.5% of the total 149 Board Members)

Total Minorities: 114 (76.5% of the total 149 Board Members)

Table 2. Race / Ethnicity of Executive Members in Immigrant Serving Agencies in Peel, 2006

ISAs Code #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total	%
European	4	4				1			1		1	1	3	15	25
African Canadian					2	1					1	1		5	8.3
Asian:						1						1	1	3	5
South Asian	1				1	4	5		1		1	1		14	23.3
East Asian/N/C				5 V						5 C				10	16.7
Middle Eastern			7 P					5 A						12	20
Latin American											1			1	1.7
Other															
Total	5	4	7	5	3	7	5	5	2	5	4	4	4	60	100%

Note: Asian: 3 agencies have not specified the Region of their executive committee members

A= for Afghans

C = for Chinese

P = for Palestinians

V = for Vietnamese

Total European: 15 (25% of the total 60 Executive Members). Total Minorities: 45 (75% of the total 60 Executive Members).

Table 3. Matching the Board of Directors' representation with the top 5 Ethnic Groups Served by ISAs

Top 5 Ethnic Groups Served in Peel Region by ISAs

Scores: lowest score = 0, highest score = 5

ISAs Code	#	Affirmatives										%
		Sri Lanka	India	Pakistan	Russia	Former Yugoslavia						
1		Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	4					80%
2		Pakistan	Middle East	China	Korea	Latin American	2					40%
3		Yes	Yes	No	No	No						
3		Palestine	Pakistan	China	Vietnam	Latin American	1					20%
4		Yes	No	No	No	No						
4		Vietnam	China	Middle East	Poland	Latin American	1					20%
5		Yes	No	No	No	No						
5		India	China	Latin American	Vietnam	Afghanistan	2					40%
6		Yes	Yes	No	No	No						
6		India	Latin American	China	Pakistan	Ukraine	3					60%
7		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No						
7		India	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Middle East	China	3					60%
8		Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No						
8		Afghanistan	Iran	Somalia	Middle East	Kurdish	1					20%
9		Yes	No	No	No	No						
9		China	Middle East	Latin American	Korea	Iran	0					0%
10		No	No	No	No	No						
10		China	Pakistan	India	Middle East	Afghanistan	1					20%
11		Yes	No	No	No	No						
11		India/Pakistan	Pakistan	Sri Lanka	Caribbean	Latin American	5					100%
12		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes						
12		Pakistan	India	Sri Lanka	Latin America	China	2					40%
13		Yes	Yes	No	No	No						
13		India/Pakistan	Middle East	China	Latin America	Poland	0					
		Yes	0	0	0	0	1					20%

Table 3. Shows that the highest diversity score belongs to the agency number 11 and the lowest diversity score belongs

to the agency number 9.

Figure 1. Number of Board and Executive Members in Thirteen Immigrant Serving Agencies in Peel, 2006.

Note: Number of board members in total is 149
 Number of executive committee members in total is 60

Figure 2.1 1 Gender Diversity of Board Members in Peel, 2006

Figure 2. Gender Diversity of Board Members in Peel, 2006

Figure 3. Gender Diversity of Executive Members in Peel, 2006

Figure 4. Age Range of Board Members in Peel, 2006

Figure 5. Age Range of Executive Members in Peel, 2006

Note: Boards and Executive members of Immigrant Serving Agencies in Peel are largely comprised of fairly older members.

Figure 6. Educational level of Board Members in Peel, 2006

Figure 7. Educational level of Executive Members in Peel, 2006.

Figure 8. Profession of Board Members in Peel, 2006

Note: Agency number 10 did not provide the Board and Executive Members' Profession

Figure 9. Profession of Executive Members in Peel, 2006

Figure 10. Country of Birth of Board Members in Peel, 2006

Figure 11. Country of Birth of Executive Members in Peel, 2006

Figure 12. Language other than English Spoken

Figure 13. Diversity Policy in the Recruitment Process

Note: Figure 12 shows that language diversity among the Board and Executive members in Immigrant Serving Agencies is diverse and represents the multi-lingual and multi-cultural communities they serve.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Request Letter

“Representation of Visible Minorities on the Boards of Selected Immigrant Serving Agencies in Peel”

Request for Board Member information

July 4, 2006

Dear Executive / Board member:

I need your help! I am Masomeh Effat Ghassemi a Graduate student in Immigration and Settlement Studies at the Ryerson University in Toronto. I want to learn more about the members of your board of directors. I am conducting a study of diversity on boards of Immigrant Serving Agencies in Region of Peel. **This study has been reviewed and received ethics approval through Ryerson University's Research Ethics Board (file # 2006-048).**

The package has three appendices (Request Letter, Consent Agreement and Questionnaire).

The questionnaire has two parts; a quantitative part that will ask about the demographic information related to the board members and a qualitative part that agency representative can complete. The questionnaire will only take 30 to 45 minutes of your time, and, all of the information you provide to me concerning the agency's name and information will be kept confidential.

If you agree to take part in this research, then, please complete the Consent Agreement and the Questionnaire and return it to the agency representative or me in the pre-paid postage envelope that has been provided within 15 days. If you would like to find out more about this research first, please direct your questions to me via email address or telephone number:

palc@on.aibn.com - 905-306-0577. Rest assured that the information provided to me would not be shared with anyone not affiliated with this research for solicitation or any other purposes.

Thank you in advance for your help with this research project. I hope that the result will be used to improve diversity and service on Immigrant Serving Agencies' boards (ISAs). Such diversity has the potential to improve the efficiency of ISAs' boards, services and ultimately, the success of nonprofit organizations in the Peel Region.

Sincerely,

Masomeh Effat Ghassemi-Gonabadi

Graduate Student, M.A. Immigration & Settlement Studies

Appendix 2. Consent Agreement

Consent Agreement

Title of Research Study:

("Sharing Power" Representation of Visible Minorities on the Boards of Selected Immigrant Serving Agencies in Peel)

Investigator: Masomeh Effat Ghassemi-Gonabadi
Graduate Student,
M. A. Immigration & Settlement Studies, Ryerson University
Faculty advisor: Doctor Agnes Meinhard

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Before you give your consent to being a volunteer, it is important that you read the following and ask as many questions as possible to be sure you understand what you will be asked to do.

This study analyzes the patterns of representation of racial minorities in the Immigrant Serving Agencies in the Region of Peel particularly in the City of Mississauga and Brampton. This study demonstrates the imbalance between the proportion of immigrants and visible minorities and their relative lack of involvements in making informed policy decisions at the board level. In total, about 13 Immigrant Serving Agencies' organizations in the Region of Peel will be contacted in order to obtain demographic, education, and profession data on their board and executive committee members.

Immigrant Serving Agencies in Region of Peel will be contacted the agency's representative by telephone, e-mail and mail. The questionnaire is developed in order to identify/demonstrate the emergence of plurality and diversity as strength and as essential for the resilience of the Immigrant Serving Agencies, and to discover if the portion of representations of visible minorities on boards is adequate. The questionnaire will only take 30-45 minutes of your time. The agency representative will be approaching all the board members and submit the complete package consisting of Consent Forms, Letter of Introduction and Questionnaire. By agreeing to take part in this research, then, please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to the agency representative or investigator in the pre-paid postage envelope that has been provided within 15 days.

1- The aspect of the study is that all of the information is being collected for analysis. None of the procedures for example the questionnaires used in this study are experimental in nature. The only experimental aspect of this study is the gathering of information for the purpose of analysis.

2- Although there is no physical or discomfort involved in this study, you may reflect on unpleasant memories or experiences while responding to a questionnaire because of the personal nature of the questions asked in the survey. Please be sure that only the investigator will have access to the disclosed information and that all information will be stored securely in a filing cabinet in the investigator's office until September 2006, when all the data be destroyed.

You may also stop participating temporarily or permanently in the study at any point of the study. Your decision to not participate in the study will not affect your relation with the agency or Ryerson University.

3- It is anticipated that you will benefit from this study. Participating in the survey will allow for your point of views to be heard and expressed. You will be able to reflect on the topic of the study and your own thoughts and experiences. The information also, helps you in confirming your ideas or gaining more clarity on the topic of this study. The result of this study may be published in a scholarly journal or may be used for conferences, presentations. At the same time, however, it cannot be guarantee that you will receive any benefits from participation in this study.

4- To protect your privacy and confidentiality the data collected will be kept confidential. Numbers will be used in the transcription material. Only the investigator will have access to data collection, which will be stored safely in a locked filing cabinet that is only accessible to the investigator. Electronic files will also be safe as the investigator's computer is password protected. All original data will be destroyed at the end of this study (September 2006). However, please be aware that while the investigator can maintain confidentiality, other members of the board cannot guarantee its maintenance. In other words, the investigator cannot control whether other participants will truly respect your privacy after the data collected. Please be sure to respect others privacy.

5- In this study, the participant will not be paid to participate in answering the questions.

6- There are no financial costs that will result for you by participating in this study.

7- Participation in this study is voluntary. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not influence your future relations with Ryerson University and your relation with the referring agency. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to stop your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are allowed. At any particular point in the study, you may refuse to answer any particular question or stop participation altogether.

8- The finding of this study will be used mainly for the investigator's Major Research Project, but may also be used for publication. You can be assured of confidentiality and anonymity of information given and used in any forthcoming publications or presentations. You will have access to the general results of the study and an opportunity not only to see, but to review and /or edit data prior to publication.

If you have any questions about the research now, please ask. If you have questions later about the research, you may contact.

Masomeh Effat Ghassemi-Gonabadi Graduate Student

(Investigator)

Telephone Number:

If you have questions regarding your rights as a human subject and participant in this study, you may contact the Ryerson University Research Ethics Board for information.

Research Ethics Board

c/o Office of the Associate Vice President, Academic

Ryerson University

350 Victoria Street

Toronto, ON M5B 2K3

416-979-5042

Agreement:

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and have had a chance to ask any questions you have about the study. Your signature also indicates that you agree to be in the study and have been told that you can change your mind and withdraw your consent to participate at any time. You have been given a copy of this agreement.

You have been told that by signing this consent agreement you are not giving up any of your legal rights.

Name of Participant (please print)

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix 3. Questionnaire

(Quantitative data)

Date: _____

Name of Organization: _____

Contact Person: _____

Title: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Fax: _____

1. How many members are on your board?

2. How many members are on your executive committee?

(Please do not include names, just a count is required)

Race / Ethnicity	<u>Board</u>	<u>Executive Committee</u>
Caucasian	_____	_____
African Canadian	_____	_____
Asian (Vietnamese)	_____	_____
(South Asian, East Asian)	_____	_____
Philippines	_____	_____
Arabs (Palestinians)	_____	_____
Hispanic	_____	_____
Other (Please specify)	_____	_____

Gender

Female _____

Male _____

Age Range

Age 19 and under _____

20 – 29 _____

30 – 39 _____

40 – 49 _____

50 – 59 _____

60 – 69 _____

70+ _____

Educational Level

High School Diploma _____

Bachelor Degree _____

Master Degree or higher _____

Profession (Please provide a count of the members in the various professions that are represented on your board and executive committee)

Country of Birth

Canadian born _____

Foreign born _____

Language other than English _____

(Qualitative Data)

Do you have an explicit “**diversity**” policies in your recruitment process?

If the board has diversity in its members, does it help you to **function better**?

What methods do you use to **recruit** or **retain** visible minorities on your board?

Thank you for your participation in this research project.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics approval through Ryerson University’s Research Ethics Board (file # 2006-048).

Masomeh Effat Ghassemi-Gonabadi

Graduate Student,

M.A. Immigration & Settlement Studies

Appendix 4. Thank You Letter

Dear Executive / Board member:

Thank you again for your participation in the project: A survey of representation of visible minorities on the boards of selected Immigrant Serving Agencies in Mississauga. Your time and effort in completing the survey is greatly appreciated.

I hope that the result of my research project – “diversity policy” will become a mandatory part of the core value of your organization, and the three levels of government will recognize the need for truly inclusive policies and practices.

Once again, if you would like to receive a copy of this study or any other information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Masomeh Effat Ghassemi-Gonabadi

Graduate Student

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