



**ETHNIC COMMUNITIES
IN CANADA FROM
A GOVERNANCE PERSPECTIVE:
UNITY IN DIVERSITY?**

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Ethnic Communities In Canada From A Governance Perspective

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

In a report to the UNESCO World Commission on Culture and Development¹, Canada's approach to multiculturalism is touted as a model from which other countries can learn. The approach is one that makes use of a range of tools – constitutional and statute laws, regulations, policies and practices - that together work toward the government's cultural objectives.

Canada accepts more immigrants per capita than any other nation. It is estimated that close to 10% of the current adult population is made up of visible minorities, a number that is expected to double by 2016. By this time, it is forecasted that a full 25% of the children in the country will be visible minorities.² For these reasons, multiculturalism policy will continue to be of key and likely of increasing importance in years to come.

Opinions on multiculturalism policy in Canada seem to be as varied as the country is diverse. One of the most contentious and enduring questions is whether the promotion of ethnic diversity undermines efforts to foster Canadian unity. Some argue that promoting the self-affirmation of ethnic communities results in members that identify more strongly with their own communities and countries of origin than with Canada and that this lack of allegiance puts Canadian nationalism and identity at risk.³ Others insist that the opposite is true: "...the more members of minorities are encouraged to retain their ancestral identities, the more welcome they feel in Canada and the more they identify with Canada and with Canadian citizenship, both vital to Canadian unity".⁴

This debate has affected federal government policy and programming. In 1997, following a strategic review of its multicultural programming activities, Canadian Heritage launched a

¹ UNESCO, "Multiculturalism: A Policy Response to Diversity", UNESCO, www.unesco.org/most/sydpaper.htm.

² Under the Employment Equity Act of Canada, visible minorities are described as "persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour". Ten groups are described as visible minorities in Canada Blacks, Chinese, Filipinos, Japanese, Koreans, Latin Americans, Other Pacific Islanders, Indo-Pakistanis (or South Asians), South East Asians, and West Asians and Arabs.

³ Ma, Lilian, Binavince, Emilio, Boswell, Duncan and Gall, Gerald, "Taking Stock: The Jurisprudence on the Charter and Minority Rights, Equality Rights Committee," *Canadian Ethnocultural Council*, 1999.

⁴ Rhoda Howard-Hassman, "'Canadian' as an Ethnic Category: Implications for Multiculturalism and National Unity", *Canadian Public Policy*, vol. XXV, No. 4, December 1999.

restructured multiculturalism policy. The renewed policy works towards three main goals, all three of which are relevant to this study:

- Identity: Fostering a society in which people of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada
- Civic Participation: Developing citizens that are actively involved in shaping the future of their various communities and their country
- Social Justice: Building a nation that ensures fair and equitable treatment and that respects and accommodates people of all origins.

Of the approximately \$25 million allocated to multicultural programming in 1999-2000, only \$16.2 million was distributed through grants and contributions to ethnic organizations. Program guidelines indicate that funding preference will be given to proposals that are relevant to policy development and achieve one or more of a number of stated goals. Of particular relevance to this study are the government's interest in projects that "facilitate full and active participation of ethnic, racial, religious and cultural communities in Canada", that "facilitate collective community initiatives", and that support "the involvement of communities in public decision-making processes".

The Canadian Ethnocultural Council, an umbrella organization that monitors changes in federal policy on behalf of ethnocultural communities, has expressed a number of philosophical and political concerns over the direction this policy renewal has taken.⁵ Further, while the council acknowledges the Government's commitment to equality, it cites low budget allocations for multicultural programming as evidence of a "lack of interest in engaging Canada's ethnocultural groups in a full and equal partnership".

The purpose of this study is to make a modest contribution to this unity-diversity debate by focusing on the organizations established by ethnic communities. There is, of course, a vast literature on multiculturalism. That said, there are surprisingly few studies that describe how ethnic communities go about organizing and governing themselves to achieve their particular goals. This study is an attempt to begin to fill that void.

Specific questions this study addresses are the following:

- How do ethnic communities in Canada build capacity to organize and govern themselves? How important is volunteerism to building this capacity?
- Are there any common priorities that drive the establishment of these organizations?
- What are their principal sources of funding and how important is current government policy and programming?
- How do they interact with governments and other ethnic organizations?
- Is there a discernible mode of decision-making that is culturally specific to each of these communities?

⁵ Bohdan S. Kordan, "Multiculturalism, Citizenship and the Canadian Nation: A Critique of the Proposed Design for Program Renewal," *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, Vol XXIX, No. 2, 1997: 136-143.

The study concludes by teasing out the policy and programming implications and priorities for future research.

Methodology

Framing the methodology of this study are three distinct lines of inquiry. The first is a review of relevant literature in Canada, literature bearing on the question of governance and ethnic communities. The second, to provide needed context, is a summation and analysis of the legal and policy environment created by primarily the federal government for multiculturalism. And third, the Institute undertook case studies of five different ethnic communities across Canada, choosing these communities on the basis of the following criteria:

- They have been successful in both developing their own institutions and influencing those in the mainstream in order to preserve their culture and languages;
- The communities are located in various geographic parts of Canada;
- Their experiences together cover a wide range of service areas e.g. health, education, social services, cultural preservation, justice and
- One of the communities should be francophone in order to compare government policy programming.

The five participating communities were: the Jewish Community in Montreal, the Italian Community in Toronto, the Franco-Manitoban community; the Japanese Community in Winnipeg and the Ukrainian Community in Saskatoon. The Institute conducted these case studies primarily through an analysis of existing documentation, telephone interviews and in three instances, site visits. Participating communities had the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the study summaries of their activities.

Organization

The organization of this study report is straight forward. The following section, Section II, summarizes the results of the research on the ethnic communities and their organizations. In Section III, the Institutes concludes by examining the policy and research implications of this study.

For those readers interested in a having more contextual information , the paper includes three annexes: the first deals with the evolution of multi-cultural policy; the second, with the legal framework for incorporating not for profit organizations, the principal legal vehicle used by most ethnic communities in Canada; and the third, with an exploration of culture and the definition of what constitutes an ethnic community.

II. BUILDING GOVERNANCE CAPACITY: TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

Through past studies the Institute has learned that a combination of a literature review and carefully chosen case studies can lead to a powerful but relatively inexpensive research design, one capable of producing useful conclusions of general applicability. That said, we have found that is useful to conduct the literature first and then, on the basis of this review and the Institute's own experiences, develop a series of research hypotheses that can be tested in the course of the case studies. Without such hypotheses, the danger in case studies is to construct interesting stories, which, taken as a whole, don't have coherent themes. The danger of this approach – and one we were mindful of throughout - is that the hypotheses can tend to 'skew' the research results by over emphasizing certain points at the expense of others.

Based on our literature review, preliminary discussions with ethnic community members and our own professional and personal experience in working on governance issues, the Institute developed eight research hypotheses. These are stated first followed by a review of the results of the five case studies⁶. The hypotheses are then reformulated as tentative conclusions.

1. The extent and nature of ethnic organizations run by ethnic communities will be a function of at least four important factors - critical mass, geographic concentration of the population, the presence of an outside threat (or past persecution), and religious homogeneity of the community.

The factors listed above did, for the most part, play key roles in bringing ethnic communities together to build organizations and work toward common goals. An exception may be the Japanese community, for whom religion does not appear to have played an important role but language clearly has. In addition, a concerted effort was made to *avoid* geographic concentration of the Japanese community.

In all of the cases, these elements no longer exist to the extent they did when their communities first organized. Given the vitality of many of the organizations studied, it is conceivable that the importance of these factors diminishes over time as the communities become more established and their organizations mature. On the other hand, several of those interviewed expressed concerns about the survival of their organizations and the need for revitalization. The diminishment of the very elements listed above seems to be closely associated with the concerns raised. The Italian community, for example, is struggling to provide services to a population that is increasingly geographically dispersed. The Jewish community in Montreal fears that its population will drop below 100,000. The Ukrainian community in Saskatchewan is struggling to

⁶ The five case studies are found in "Ethnic Minorities In Canada: A Governance Perspective", available on the Institute's web site at www.iog.ca

redefine what it means to be "Ukrainian-Canadian". The Japanese have a very high rate of intermarriage and the Franco-Manitoban community even notes that the decrease in perceived threat has resulted in generally less interest from their current and potential membership.

It is apparent then, that in the absence of the elements above, groups are required to work harder to maintain interest of community members and encourage the volunteerism so vital to their survival.

The hypotheses would therefore be restated as follows:

Critical mass, geographic concentration, presence of an outside threat and religious and language homogeneity are important factors in the early stages of ethnic community development. Over time, however, the factors diminish as a result of progressive integration into the larger community. Without these factors, ethnic groups are required to work harder and find new ways to maintain the interest and commitment of community members so vital to the successful delivery of their programs and services.

2. Minorities will identify education for their young as a top priority to conserve language, culture and traditions. Taking care of their elderly members will also rank high on their list of priorities.

This hypothesis was largely confirmed by the case studies. The communities profiled do indeed see education for the young and care for the elderly as priorities for their organizations. All of the communities studied have formal programs for their seniors. Villa Charities, the Italian community's umbrella organization in Toronto, evolved out of an initial project to provide Italian-accented services for its seniors, offers a particularly extensive range of services for them. The Jewish community allocates \$2 million per year to seniors' programs.

In the case of the Japanese and Italian communities, education programs for the young are primarily delivered through their cultural community centres. In contrast, the Franco-Manitobans, and Saskatchewan Ukrainians and the Montreal-Jews have formal programs and in the case of the Jewish community, private schools, to ensure that their children receive a culturally accented education. A youth focus was repeatedly cited as a critical way to ensure the survival of language and culture as well as organizational renewal. Unfortunately, a least two of the communities profiled in this study, the Italians and Japanese, have seen youth groups dissolve over recent years.

3. Developing alliances will be a strategy adopted by all groups as a means of combating racism, discrimination, etc. Possible alliances include the following players: governments, other ethnic groups, other NGOs, political parties etc.

Alliances, mostly informal, with a range of other ethnic groups, governments, political parties and other non-governmental organizations have proved valuable for most of the communities studied. Many of them identify this as an area requiring further exploration and effort (Franco-Manitoban, Japanese).

As one example of its partnerships, the Jewish community in Montreal has worked with the Greek and Italian communities to promote Canadian unity. The Japanese community in Winnipeg has recently worked with other NGOs (Project Peacemakers, Peace Alliance Winnipeg, United Nations Association and Veterans Against Nuclear Arms) to sponsor a photography exhibit. In its early years, the Japanese community also received legal, employment and communications assistance from the German Mennonite and Jewish communities and well as the Young Women's Christian Association. The Italian community has been particularly successful in getting politicians working toward their interests, so much so in fact, that they are now approached by the provincial government to collaborate on projects. They have also benefited from a strong relationship of mutual sharing with the Jewish community in Toronto.

While the relationships have worked toward combating racism and discrimination and other social causes in some cases, it is apparent that this aspect of the hypotheses has been too narrowly formulated. Alliances have been fostered for a myriad of reasons including the sharing of resources and ideas, exposure, access to power, and a means for having a voice.

Ethnic groups to varying degrees make use of partnerships and less formal alliances for a variety of reasons. These include the mutual sharing of resources, ideas and best practices, public exposure, and access to those in positions of power and influence

4. Ethnic communities will show a degree of commitment to Canada because of:

-Canadian values of acceptance and a "loose" Canadian identity to which they can contribute

-Canada's democratic institutions, processes, programs (health-care)

-volunteerism, which breeds a sense of trust and legitimacy vis-a-vis governments

That said, they will attribute little weight to official multicultural policies and programs as a factor contributing to their vibrancy. Within the last decade, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms will be viewed as an important tool to promote their interests.

Whether ethnic communities demonstrate a relatively high degree of commitment to Canada due to a perception of a "loose Canadian identity" is not clear based on the research conducted for this study. Similarly, the research methodology does not allow for a categorical assessment of whether key Canadian features such as democratic institutions and processes, volunteerism and social programs like health care foster an enhanced commitment to the country.

This said, volunteerism and the democratic organizational governance models used by all of the communities are important elements of the way communities run programs and deliver services. The democratic processes required by law in the operation of a non-profit organization appear to

have been adopted with relatively little difficulty by the communities. Similarly, organized volunteerism, a notion quite foreign to some of the communities, plays a critical role in providing the human resources necessary to run programs and deliver services on limited budgets. The Japanese and Italian communities, for example, did not have a formalized volunteer tradition. On this point, it is important to note that the communities researched for this study are mature and have had decades to evolve into their current governance structures.

Another common element to the communities' approaches to governance is a reliance, to the extent practical, on consensus modes of decision-making. Attracting and keeping volunteers has a lot to do with the adoption of this style. So too does the need to present a unified front to the media and other organizations, especially governments. One exception to this consensus-based approach to decision-making was the Franco-Manitoban school board, whose elected members appear to rely on a majority vote to deal with differences.

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other legislative and policy instruments were not generally identified as factors influencing the day-to-day work of organizations to any great extent. A notable exception to this is the Franco-Manitoban community, which has a long history of experience with using and contesting both federal and provincial legislation. A number of cases have been taken as far as the Supreme Court of Canada and have succeeded in granting the community language rights as well as educational governance rights. The importance of these instruments to communities may not be reflected in the case studies for this paper, however, since, for the most part, this study profiled the program and service umbrella organization of the community and not the political or advocacy arm.

While multicultural policies and the Charter may not be at the forefront of daily program activities for the majority of groups, they do appear to provide an underlying sense of legitimacy, given the values that they symbolize, and therefore represent an indirect governmental endorsement for the objectives and activities of ethnic organizations.

Recognizing the need for further testing, this hypothesis will be restated as follows:

Over time, ethnic communities adopt Canadian democratic institutions and other legally required processes with relative ease. Similarly, they embrace organized volunteerism, which in some cases is not part of the cultural tradition, as an effective way to deliver programs and services to the community. Consensus-based decision-making is also the preferred approach. Ethnic communities, in most cases, attribute little weight to official multicultural policies and programs as a factor contributing to their vibrancy. The political and advocacy arms of communities will be more concerned with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other legal instruments.

- 5. We expect to find significant commonality in governance structures because of:***
- Canadian law (regarding the governance of non-profit organizations)***
 - few democratic traditions outside of their Canadian experience to fall back on***
 - copying and learning from each other***

Further, the minority groups will have developed sophisticated means for dealing with dissent within their communities in order to maintain a unified front.

The hypothesis that governance structures and processes will be significantly similar among ethnic organizations seems to have been proven with considerable certainty by the research. Under the statutes governing non-profit organizations, certain key elements of governance (constitutions, directors, members, by-laws, accountability mechanisms) are required by law and will therefore exist in all organizations. However, many of these requirements contain a substantial degree of flexibility, thus allowing governance structures to be tailored to a wide range of needs. This flexible legal framework seems to have resulted in most groups having adopted the democratic structures and processes without serious difficulty. An ethic of consensus decision-making, noted above, and inclusive membership appears to have evolved naturally, due largely to a strong reliance on volunteers to fulfill mandates. In some cases, the Jewish and the Franco-Manitoban communities for example, there has always been a strong, democratic tradition.

Whether this similarity is at all due to “copying and learning from each other” is not apparent. Other factors are likely explanations for the broad similarity in governance approaches. For example, ethnic communities are not immune to declining levels of deference, a trend that has affected all western countries. Such a trend will result in more emphasis on consensus-building. Further, ethnic communities will have been influenced over time by the Canadian education system and many other organizations in Canada.

With regard to managing internal conflict, two of the case study subjects noted a commitment to maintaining a united front to the public and media, despite occasional disagreement behind the scenes (Franco-Manitoban, Montreal-Jews). Whether this represents a “sophisticated” approach is not clear.

Based on the research conducted it appears that the hypotheses would be more accurately worded as follows:

Ethnic organizations, especially as they mature, have significant commonality in governance structures and processes due to a number of factors. These include: Canadian law regarding the governance of non-profit organizations; the reliance on volunteers; and other contextual factors like exposure and integration into the Canadian education system and other organizations.

6. Minority groups will have a strong “grass roots” focus, with community development coming from the “bottom-up”. There will be less reliance on charismatic leaders. Community vibrancy will be a function of at least the following factors:

- significant community voluntarism*
- maintenance of key traditions and rituals*
- language retention*
- a distinctive community building (or buildings) as a meeting place and symbol of their significance to the rest of society*
- a strong, long-established ethic or individual giving to the community -either dollars or time. The ethic will derive from the sentiment that “we must take care of ourselves, no one else will”.*
- a high degree of adaptability - a survival tactic learned early on*

Some of the elements of this sixth hypothesis were confirmed by the study while others require some qualification. Firstly, minority groups were confirmed to be predominantly “grass roots” in their early development. Many of the organizations were created as a result of community members identifying a single need and funding a project that responded to that need (Toronto-Italians). Over time, however, as programs expanded, the communities evolved toward the umbrella-affiliate structure, which is more bureaucratic and “top-down” in nature. The planning and fund dispersal roles of these organizations naturally result in a less “grass roots” character. The Ukrainian Congress of Canada has recognized this and is considering adopting a model of individual membership rather than the organization membership that currently exists. The organization feels that this approach might strengthen grassroots support.

In contrast to the stated hypothesis, the leadership of key charismatic individuals during early development stages of some of the organizations was critical (Toronto-Italians). Building on initial successes, community leaders often pushed organizations to expand in scope. With time, though, charismatic leadership has become less important as organizations have matured and become increasingly bureaucratized. At this point the focus may shift to the maintenance of relationships initiated by the charismatic leader.

All groups have a community building and in some cases (the Italian and Jewish communities) have extensive campuses that house their organizations. Some of these are distinctive enough that they act as a symbol for the community to the rest of society, particularly in the cases of the Italian and Japanese communities profiled. Most groups conduct activities that strive to preserve and encourage key traditions and rituals (Ukrainian Dance, Japanese and Italian food). Community giving, both monetary and in the form of volunteerism, is essential for most. Philanthropy emerged as particularly important success factors in the histories of the Jewish, Japanese and Italian communities. The Franco-Manitoban community, with most of its funding derived from government sources, has had to rely less on voluntarism and philanthropy in the past but has recently put in place a substantial volunteer workforce for its economic development program.

The hypothesis is, therefore, restated as the following tentative conclusion:

Minority groups have a strong grassroots orientation in early stages of development but become less so as umbrella organizations evolve to take over planning and fund

management functions. The affiliate organizations delivering services, may, however, stay very 'grassroots' in character. Charismatic leadership is often key in organizing communities early on but becomes less so as organizations mature and bureaucratize. Community voluntarism and giving (time and money), a widely recognized community building (or buildings) and the maintenance of traditions and rituals appear to all contribute a great deal to community vibrancy. The priority placed on language retention varies significantly among communities.

7. *Minority groups will demonstrate sophistication in dealing with all levels of government and the media.*

The communities studied seem generally skilled in their relationships with media and government – for example, the Italians for fundraising, the Jewish community for media profile. In the case of the Japanese community in Manitoba, once the key goal of redress had been reached, the perceived need for government and media intervention declined and was therefore no longer pursued. It is important to note here that this study did not focus on the political/advocacy arms of the communities (with the exception of the Franco-Manitobans), which appeared to be particularly sophisticated in this area.

The hypothesis is restated as follows:

Durable minority groups, and in particular their political/advocacy arms, demonstrate sophistication in dealing with all levels of government and the media.

8. *Ethnic communities, in terms of long-term survival, will be more concerned about “out-marriage” as opposed to any threats of assimilation posed by mass or ‘pop’ culture.*

The level of concern among ethnic communities with regard to the effects of “out-marriage” is difficult to ascertain. Most acknowledge that it is a reality in Canada over which ethnic groups have little control. Several of the community leaders interviewed expressed concern about declining numbers. Some are unsure whether their organizations will have relevance in future decades as a result. The Italian and Japanese communities have taken a relatively relaxed approach to the issue and have opened membership to all in an effort to spread elements of their cultures across the larger community. The Ukrainian community is currently looking at redefining the term "Ukrainian-Canadian".

The community organizations profiled did not have formal programs for stemming outmarriage. Informally however, it is possible that the communities are making efforts to sustain their populations. In some cases it appears that “out-marriage” may be more aptly termed “in-marriage” due to an effort on the part of “non-ethnic” spouses to learn and practice elements of the culture of their spouses and in encouraging their "ethnic" partner to take an interest in their roots.

Another important factor bearing on the community's sense of unity and common identity is the arrival of new immigrants who enter the community. This a current challenge facing the Jews in Montreal and the Franco-Manitobans and was part of the history of the other three communities making up this study.

The tentative conclusion on this hypothesis is the following:

Ethnic communities, in terms of long-term survival, will be more concerned about “out-marriage” as opposed to any threats of assimilation posed by mass or ‘pop’ culture. In some cases, the arrival of new immigrants entering the community also poses challenges to maintaining a sense of common identity.

In summary, the statements above, reformulated from the original hypotheses should prove helpful to other communities in large urban settings. They are important in two senses: first, they provide indications of the type of governance capacities required to succeed. Second, they give a flavour of how these communities have gone about developing these key capacities.

The reformulated statements are also useful jumping-off points to discuss policy and research implications, a subject to which we now turn.

III. POLICY AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Policy Implications

The focus of this study is on governance and building governance capacity. Consequently, our comments on policy and programming will be limited to this topic only.

Of relevance to this study is the radically different manner in which the federal government supports the building of governance capacity for three distinct groups: Aboriginal peoples, francophones outside of Quebec and multi-cultural communities. For Aboriginal groups, the government has announced in “Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan” that strengthening Aboriginal governance is one of its four principal priorities for forging a new relationship Canada’s Aboriginal peoples both on and off reserve, and it has allocated approximately \$20 million per year in new funding for this purpose. This amount is over and above already substantial funding for Aboriginal governing structures, both on and off reserve.

Government support for governance capacity building is evident in the Franco-Manitoban community, which receives a considerable program funding through the Canada-Community Agreement (approximately \$13 million over 5 years), an amount that does not include federal support to supplement provincial funding for operating a separate school board.

The contrast with multi-cultural communities is stark: federal funding allocated to communities through the multiculturalism program of Canadian Heritage, amounts to \$16 million of project funding, not all of which is dedicated to building governance capacity. This amount represents a substantial reduction of funding levels established in the 1980s.

But the contrast among these three groups goes beyond the level of funding. The approach to building capacity is also radically different. As the Franco-Manitoban case illustrates, federal support is long term (five years), program rather than project based and premised on a funding allocation partnership between the government and the community. Similar elements are found in the Aboriginal area. Contrast this with the project-oriented, single year, design of the program directed at multi-cultural communities, a design based not on a funding partnership but on meeting government-established criteria.

Federal funding characteristics	Multi-cultural communities	Aboriginal and Francophone communities
length	Short – specific start & end date	Often longer (5 years in some cases)
orientation	Projects	Programs
decision process	Government centred	Some evidence of partnerships

There is a growing body of literature, based on international experience, that suggests this approach to building governance capacity will be largely ineffective. As the Institute’s Mark Schacter has noted in a recent Policy Brief,

“Recent talk about “capacity-building” is as much about a fundamentally new way for development assistance agencies to conceptualize and implement their mandate as it is about new field techniques...If a “capacity-building” approach is to be taken seriously, it means that development assistance agencies must become better at bending their policies and procedures – their “way of doing business” - to the needs and circumstances of the countries they serve.”⁷

Government support for capacity building in French Canadian and Aboriginal communities is appropriate given, among other things, their unique rights and entitlements under the constitution and legislation. While multi-cultural communities do not enjoy these same rights, there are at least two strong ‘governance’ arguments⁸, arguments that pertain to the country as a whole and that would underpin a case for a significantly higher degree of federal commitment and support for their organizations. (These arguments pertain to provincial governments as well.)

Multi-Cultural Organizations Spawn Volunteerism

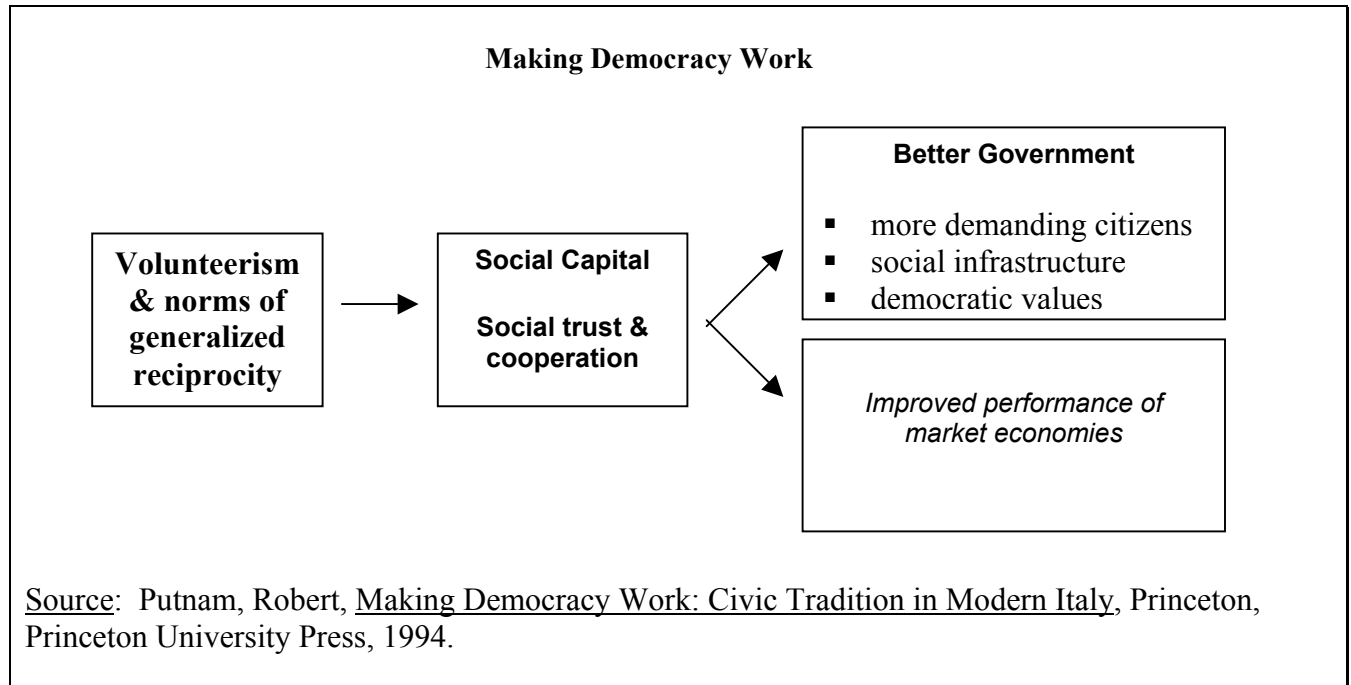
Firstly, vital ethnic communities consistently show a high degree of dependence on volunteers in delivering programs and services. In several cases, formal volunteer activity was foreign to the culture in question (the Japanese, for example) until efforts to enhance and preserve the community led naturally to a significant dependence on volunteers. And, as community organizations flourish and expand, the need for volunteers increases.

Academic interest in the voluntary sector has been enhanced thanks in part to the work of Robert Putnam, an American academic, who, based on extensive research in Italy, has advanced the

⁷ Mark Schacter, “Capacity-Building: A new way of Doing Business for Development Assistance Organizations”, January 2000, www.iog.ca

⁸ There are, of course, many other arguments not related directly to governance that could buttress support for building capacity in ethnic organizations.

thesis that sound government is due in large measure to a healthy voluntary sector. His argument⁹ can be summed up in the diagram below.



Several empirical studies appear to support the Putnam arguments. For example, Lisa Young from the University of Alberta, using data from the 1999 Alberta Civil Society Survey, found the evidence generally supportive of the Putnam thesis at it relates to the relationship between civic engagement and higher levels of trust in government.¹⁰ Similarly, John Helliwell, a Canadian academic, and Robert Putnam, working with Italian data, found the results supported the thesis that civic engagement led to higher economic performance.¹¹

But even if the Putnam thesis proves to be not fully supported by the evidence of future research in Canada, there is little question – as the case studies in this study illustrate - of the energy and empowerment that these volunteer-led organizations produce in their communities. These organizations are able to mobilize resources that would otherwise not be available to improve the quality of life of their communities. (Witness the fund-raising prowess of the Jewish, Japanese, Italian and Ukrainian communities as outlined in the case studies.) Furthermore, volunteerism provides a market-like check to their activities. If they become increasingly remote from their

⁹ The call for a renewed spirit of voluntarism, implicit in the Putnam thesis, appears to have resonance among many Aboriginal people in Canada. For example, at a recent conference on Aboriginal governance in urban settings held in Winnipeg in 1998, speaker after speaker called for a return to voluntary activity in order to strengthen Aboriginal communities. See Institute On Governance, “Report on Completing the Circle: Aboriginal Governance in Urban Settings,” 1998.

¹⁰ Lisa Young, “Civic Engagement, Trust and Democracy: Evidence from Alberta,” unpublished paper presented to the Trends Seminar on Value Change and Governance, Toronto, Ontario, June 1999.

¹¹ John Helliwell and Robert Putnam, “Economic Growth and Social Capital In Italy”, *Eastern Economic Journal*, Volume 21, No. 3, Summer 1995.

members or fail to meet their needs, then potential volunteers will “vote with their feet”. They will stop volunteering, stop giving money or cease supporting the services offered through user fees. Thus, the process of continually ‘re-invigorating’ organizations and services was an important element in all of the case studies.

Empowering volunteer organizations also plays another key governance role as commentators like Benjamin Barber point out¹²: such organizations are an important mediating force in a democracy, helping to keep in check the power of the state and the private sector. Thus, in any well-functioning democracy, a key element is balance, a balance among the powers of the state, the private sector and civil society. The Japanese community provides the best illustration of this role in its redress initiative, an initiative that resulted in a re-balancing of the powers of the state so that the kind of forced internment and re-location of its own citizens that occurred in the 1940s can never happen again in Canada without parliamentary approval.

But balance is also important within the voluntary sector. Alan Cairns’ concern on the potential for American-style ghettos populated by Aboriginal peoples in Canadian cities¹³ provides a compelling case, among other reasons, for building governance capacity in Aboriginal communities in urban areas. Nonetheless, these same cities will also be populated by increasing numbers of newly arrived immigrants, who will need to build relationships with Aboriginal communities. There has to be balance in these relationships if they are to prove productive and not divisive.

The widespread use of partnerships between the public and voluntary sectors of society has led to a greater focus on voluntary and non-profit organizations by governments. In the United Kingdom, for example, the government has signed formal “Compacts” with civil society organizations to clarify roles and establish ongoing forums for communication.¹⁴ Judging from a number of policy pronouncements, the Canadian federal government has followed suit: “The Government will enter into a national accord with the voluntary sector, laying a new foundation for active partnership with voluntary organizations in the service of Canadians.”¹⁵

Multi-Cultural Organizations Can Make the Country ‘Work’ Better

One of the findings of this study noted in the previous section is the similarity in governing structures and processes adopted by organizations in the communities highlighted by the cases. In other words, there does not appear to be within Canada a unique Italian-Canadian or Ukrainian-Canadian or Japanese-Canadian approach to organization or problem-solving. This

¹² Benjamin Barber, “*A Place For Us: How to Make Society Civil and Democracy Strong*”, New York: Hill and Wang, 1998.

¹³ See Alan Cairns, “Aboriginal Peoples’ Two Roads to the Future”, *Policy Options*, January-February 2000.

¹⁴ The role of civil society is likewise said to be central in British policy vis-a-vis governance in developing countries. “The promotion of good governance thus necessitates the careful assessment of how the immense contribution of civil societies - and NGOs, in particular - needs to be integrated with that of the State.” Speech by Andrew Goudie, Director, Department of International Development, March 25, 1998, <http://www.oneworld.org/odi/speeches/goudie.html>.

¹⁵ Government of Canada, *Speech from the Throne to open the Second Session of the Thirty-Sixth Parliament of Canada*, October 12, 1999.

not a surprising, given the common legal structure under which they operate, their reliance of volunteers, who are a mediating force against autocratic decision-making, and common contextual elements - for example, the Canadian education system - in which they operate.

We also noted the propensity of ethnic community organizations, especially as they mature, to build alliances and work with a wide variety of other organizations, including all levels of government.

These characteristics lead to a second argument for public funding of organizations in ethnic communities – the country will work better. Canadians are more likely to have common approaches to solving problems, approaches that will put a significant reliance on negotiations and consensus-building and that will be built on higher degrees of trust, based on past dealings. This will be no mean feat, especially as the country becomes even more diverse in the years to come. But such a result would be squarely consistent Canada's history. As John Ralson Saul noted in the recent Lafontaine-Baldwin Lecture,

"The point I can't help making is that, after 133 years of this unusual experiment, we have killed in political strife among us less than a hundred citizens – most of them on a single day at Batoche. Even one is, of course, one too many. But compared to any other Western democracy, it is almost a miracle. You may consider this an odd reflection, but I think the first measure of any citizen-based culture must be, not its rhetoric or myths or leaders or laws but how few of its citizens it kills."¹⁶

To be clear, this is not an argument for a kind of 'civic nationalism' around which Canadians can forge a new identity. (For one thing these approaches to organization and decision-making, as illustrated in these case studies, are not unique to Canada. And for another, they are so embedded in our day to day living that Canadians likely give them little thought.) Rather, the argument is more a pragmatic one: Canada will be a better place to live because we are more adept at joint problem-solving, especially at the local level and in our work places.

A flavour of this argument that the country will 'work' better surfaced in a recent media report about a dispute in Toronto between the Chinese and Muslim communities over the location of a cold storage facility for keeping bodies awaiting burial according to Muslim law. Unfortunately, the proposed location of the storage facility, to be part of a new mosque, was in close proximity to a Chinese-Canadian community, which has an ancient belief (feng shui) in the importance of one's surroundings, both interior and exterior, to overall well-being. Also problematic to local residents was the proposed height of the Mosque's minaret, about 11 storeys. Instead of the proposed development becoming a "...fierce battleground for two cultures...", the reporter noted that "...cooler, new Canadian heads prevailed":

¹⁶ John Ralson Saul, "How will we make Canada ours again", *Globe and Mail*, March 24, 2000. The Baldwin-Lafontaine Lecture Series was established to explore the connections between the Canada's history and its civic culture:

“After much back and forth and deployment of goodwill, mosque officials, the town council and residents arrived at a compromise...The cross-cultural ill-will has ebbed away. The town says concerns have been allayed, some perhaps blunted by the passage of time.”¹⁷

In sum, this type of problem-solving has to become the norm if we are to continue the non-violent tradition noted by Saul. Supporting multi-cultural organizations in building governance capacity can help the country continue to re-invent this Canadian near ‘miracle’.

Should governments, whether federal or provincial, commit to higher level of support for building governance capacity in multi-cultural communities, then they may wish to review the recent experience of international development agencies before fashioning new initiatives. This experience speaks to a growing body of knowledge about both field techniques and a fundamentally new way for development agencies to conceptualize and implement their mandate. Both are important, but the former - the new field techniques- will see little success in the absence of the latter - a new way to define their mission.

If a “capacity-building” approach is to be taken seriously, it means that development assistance agencies must become adept, among other things, at incorporating more recipient control into the planning and design of projects and programs.¹⁸ Beyond that, development assistance agencies must see their objective, *ideally*, as being to put themselves out of business. A development assistance agency is successful when a country or community it serves no longer needs its help, or at least, needs less of it.

Research Implications

Four areas for further research emerged in conducting this study:

- **Focusing on the governance experience and capacity needs of ‘younger’, more recent immigrant groups** – this study deliberately chose older, more mature communities, communities with a solid track record in developing and sustaining governance capacity over many decades. A second set of case studies could focus on more recently arrived immigrant communities to ascertain how their development strategies parallel or differ from those featured in this study. Such case studies might be particularly useful, should governments commit to playing a more active role in the developing governance capacity for ethnic communities. Case studies are also useful catalysts for getting various communities together in seminars and workshops to share experiences and open needed dialogue among them.
- **Developing tool kits for building governance capacity** – This study produced a series of models on how various communities are meeting their education needs and those related to advocacy, co-ordination, media relations and planning. Similar case studies could focus on other service areas – economic development, care of the elderly, youth to name a few – and produce models from which other communities might be able to borrow ideas. Another

¹⁷ Ron Csillag, “When feng shui meets Muslim law”, *The Globe and Mail*, January 10, 2000.

¹⁸ A more comprehensive treatment of this theme can be found in Mark Schacter *op. cit.*

useful tool might be in the areas of volunteerism and fundraising – what works, mistakes to avoid and so.

- **Exploring whether there is international experience in the area of governance capacity and ethnic communities that might inform efforts in Canada** – All western democracies are facing similar challenges posed by increasingly diverse populations in large urban settings. Legal, political and historical contexts are obviously different from those in Canada and so useful governance approaches or lessons learned can not be ‘imported’ without modification. That said, the Institute’s experience has been a positive one over the past decade in the international sharing of governance lessons and experiences.
- **Testing the Putnam thesis in the context of ethnic communities in Canada** - The Robert Putnam thesis canvassed earlier in this conclusions section – that voluntarism provides the ‘social glue’ to well functioning democracies and market economies – might usefully be tested in ethnic communities in Canada. Do volunteers in ethnic organizations have higher levels of trust and co-operation than their non-volunteering counterparts? And, if so, is there evidence that this ‘social capital’ in turn leads to better government and better functioning economies?

Conclusions: Revisiting the Unity-Diversity Debate

There is no question that ethnic organizations maintain and even enhance diversity in this country. Their missions are to preserve and strengthen a community based on language and a distinct cultural identity. The practical results of these efforts are schools, homes for senior citizens, hospitals, cultural centres and even businesses - all with an ethnic accent.

But paradoxically, these same organizations also promote unity. To survive and prosper, they incorporate under Canadian law and, in doing so, take on a governance structures and practices which are common throughout the not for profit sector. Further, volunteerism and other forces drive decision-making that relies on consensus-making and compromise. Finally, they learn to interact with governments, other ethnic organizations and the media. Not surprisingly, they start to look and act - well, Canadian.

This paper has illustrated the different manner in which the federal government supports Aboriginal, francophone and multi-cultural organizations both in terms of the quantity of funding as well as the quality of programming. Its major conclusion is that they are good policy reasons for reducing, if not eliminating, these differences.

ANNEX A

THE CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT: MULTICULTURALISM IN CANADA

A brief Chronology

The principles of multiculturalism in Canada - diversity, respect, equity and tolerance - are embodied in a range of legislative and policy instruments, which, working together, make up the government's multicultural framework. Some contend that this multi-faceted approach to multiculturalism is among the world's most progressive.

The foundations of Canada's current approach to multiculturalism can be traced back to domestic and international legislation and accords reached during the post-war era. During a trip to the Canadian graveyard at Dieppe in 1945, then Secretary of State Paul Martin, "was struck by the range of names found among the Canadian fallen, names that spoke to the pluralism of origins making up Canadian society".¹⁹ Upon his return, he became the champion for an inclusive Canadian citizenship commenting that "Of whatever origin, these men were Canadians". In 1947, Canada first adopted the *Citizenship Act*, which gave immigrants from non-Commonwealth nations and British subjects the same rights under the law.

In 1960, the federal government introduced the *Bill of Rights*, which, for the first time, granted citizens legal protection from discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex. Over the next decade, the federal government introduced policy that led to an amended *Immigration Act*. The new *Act* removed barriers to non-traditional immigrant groups, particularly Asians.

In 1963, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism was established and set out to examine the contribution of the two founding races" as well as "other ethnics" to Canadian society.²⁰ As a result of the work of this Commission, the federal government passed the *Official Languages Act* in 1969, which legalized French and English as Canada's official languages at the federal level.

In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt a formal multiculturalism policy. The policy expressed a commitment by the government to "supporting all of Canada's cultures, intercultural understanding and the social development of cultural groups". The policy responded to a number of demographic, cultural and political changes in the country. One of these was the marked increase in non-white immigrants, which contributed to and highlighted the need for programming to serve visible minority groups.

Over the next two decades, legislation expanded notably with the adoption of the amended *Citizenship Act* of 1977, the *Canadian Human Rights Act* of 1977 (revised 1985), the *Canadian*

¹⁹Harold Troper, and Morton Weinfeld, "Ethnicity, Politics, and Public Policy: Case Studies in Canadian Diversity", *Diversity in Canada*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.

Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), and the *Employment Equity Act* of 1986. Then, in 1988, Canada's multiculturalism policy became law when Parliament unanimously passed the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

A number of international declarations to which Canada was signatory are credited with helping to make the *Act* possible. These include The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1969), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1976).

Overview of Canada's Policy & Legislative Framework on Multiculturalism²¹ Canada	
1947	Passage of the first ever <i>Canadian Citizenship Act</i>
1960	Passage of the <i>Canadian Bill of Rights</i>
1963	Establishment of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism
1969	Book IV of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission Report emphasizes the bilingual and multicultural nature of Canada
1969	Introduction of the <i>Official Languages Act</i>
1971	Introduction of Canada's Multiculturalism Policy
1977	Passage of the <i>Canadian Human Rights Act</i>
1982	Adoption of the <i>Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms</i>
1984	Special Parliamentary Committee Report, <i>Equality Now</i> , calls for a Multiculturalism Act and establishment of a national research institute on multiculturalism and race relations issues.
1986	Passage by Parliament of the <i>Employment Equity Act</i>
1988	Passage of the <i>Canadian Multiculturalism Act</i>
1996	Government establishes the Canadian Race Relations Foundation
1997	Renewed Multiculturalism Program announced
International	
1948	<i>The International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide</i>
1948	<i>The Universal Declaration of Human Rights</i>
1958	Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention
1965	<i>The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination</i> (Canadian ratification in 1969)
1966	<i>The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights</i> (Canadian ratification in 1969)
1966	<i>The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</i> (Canadian ratification in 1976)

Other key events include the creation of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship and the signing of the Japanese-Canadian redress, both in 1988. In addition, three critical reports were tabled in the early 80's: "Equality Now! Report of the Special Committee on Visible

²⁰ At the time of the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission, the Government of Canada had not yet acknowledged the unique contributions of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada.

²¹ Department of Canadian Heritage, February 1999, 10th Annual Report of the Operation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 1997-98, Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, Ottawa.

Minorities in Canadian Society", the report of the Abella Commission (1984), which resulted in the Employment Equity Act, and "Equality for All".

Programming

The Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, created in 1978, was responsible for multiculturalism policy in Canada until the early nineties when it was dismantled. Then, in 1993, the Department of Canadian Heritage was established to consolidate a number of national policies and programs that “maintain Canada’s cultural sovereignty and promote Canadian identity”. The current federal multicultural program falls within the broader Canadian Heritage Program of this department. The program is made up of the following two business lines as well as a corporate management business line that provides policy direction and support to departmental program delivery²²:

Canadian Heritage Program				
Business Lines and Objectives	Product Service Lines	Planned Spending (millions)		
		1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
Cultural Development and Heritage <i>“To foster an environment in which Canada’s arts, heritage, cultural industries, and broadcasting products and services are created, produced, marketed, preserved and shared with audiences at home and abroad thereby contributing to Canada’s economic, social and cultural growth”.</i>	Broadcasting	127.5	127.5	127.5
	Cultural Industries	93.1	93.1	93.4
		22.2	22.2	22.2
	Arts	28.6	25.0	25.0
	Heritage			
Canadian Identity* <i>“To assist Canadians in recognizing and celebrating their shared identity and in enhancing their capacity to contribute to Canadian society”.</i>	Official Languages	209.5	192.3	192.3
		98.4	96.3	93.9
	Canadian Identity	26.3	25.7	25.4
	Multiculturalism	62.1	62.9	51.8
	Sport			

*A new Product Service Line, Citizens' Participation, has since been added to the Canadian Identity business line.

In 1997, following a strategic review of its multicultural programming activities, the department launched a restructured multiculturalism policy. The renewed policy works towards three main goals, all three of which are relevant to this study:

- **Identity:** Fostering a society in which people of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada
- **Civic Participation:** Developing citizens that are actively involved in shaping the future of their various communities and their country
- **Social Justice:** Building a nation that ensures fair and equitable treatment and that respects and accommodates people of all origins.

²² Department of Canadian Heritage, “Canadian Heritage: 1998-1999 Estimates -A Report on Plans and Priorities”.

Of the approximately \$25 million allocated to multicultural programming in 1999-2000, \$16.2 million will be distributed through grants and contributions. Program guidelines indicate that funding preference will be given to proposals that are relevant to policy development and achieve one or more of a number of stated goals. Of particular relevance to this study are the department's interest in projects that "facilitate full and active participation of ethnic, racial, religious and cultural communities in Canada", that "facilitate collective community initiatives", and that support "the involvement of communities in public decision-making processes". Programs are delivered at both the national and regional levels. National programs focus on research and institutional change within the government whereas the regions deliver most of the programs related to capacity building, community building and institutional change outside of the federal government.

Canadian voluntary and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, non-governmental institutions, individuals and private sector companies (projects must be of non-commercial nature) are all eligible for financial assistance under this program. Projects may involve community action activities, institutional development, public education or research.

Other programs within the Cultural Identity business line and Cultural Heritage Program have multiculturalism implications. Of particular relevance to this study and directly related to governance are programs that support the "development of minority Francophone and Anglophone communities" and that provide support for organizations working toward the "well-being of Aboriginal women, youth and communities".

ANNEX B

THE LEGAL CONTEXT FOR NOT FOR PROFIT GOVERNANCE IN CANADA

There are broad parallels in provincial and federal legislation governing the establishment and operation of not for profit organizations. In particular, the governance provisions are similar calling for, among other things, a basic structure consisting of members, officers and directors; certain decision-making rules; constitutions and by-laws as governing instruments; fiscal and political accountability requirements; governmental oversight; and rules governing the distribution of surpluses. Within these broad parameters, the legislation provides significant flexibility for groups to fashion their own approaches to governing their institutions.

An organization, whether incorporated as a not for profit organization or not, can obtain charitable status for tax purposes provided its activities fall within the legal definition of “charitable purposes”, a concept which encompasses four categories:

- Relief of poverty;
- Advancement of education;
- Advancement of religion; and
- Any other purpose beneficial to the community not falling under the other three categories.

In all four categories, as one legal scholar notes, “...the objects or purposes must provide a general benefit to the public to be charitable. This benefit may be limited in its application to a portion of the community. If so, the portion must be significant.”²³ Political activities such as advocacy must be ancillary or incidental to the objects of the charitable organization.

On certain fundamental issues – for example, the definition of a charity and the legal liability of directors, officers - the law appears confusing and underdeveloped.

Readers can find a more comprehensive treatment of the not for profit legal context in the Institute's study "Ethnic Minorities In Canada: A Governance Perspective", available on the Institute's web site at www.iog.ca.

²³ Donald Bourgeois, *The Law of Charitable and Non-Profit Organizations*, Toronto: Butterworths, 1995.

ANNEX C

WHAT IS CULTURE? WHAT IS AN ETHNIC COMMUNITY?

Definitions can be tedious. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this study it is useful to clarify several basic terms, starting with culture.

In a paper²⁴ developed for a recent seminar examining the effects of forces, mainly economic, pushing for increased North American integration, John Bumsted from the University of Manitoba made a distinction among four approaches to culture:

- high culture – that is ballet, opera, symphony orchestras, drama etc.;
- mass or popular culture – promulgated in large measure by the mass media;
- cultural industries – which, according to Bumsted, have been the overwhelming focus on Canadian cultural policy; and
- anthropological culture.

It is the latter category, anthropological culture, on which this study is based. One writer for a United Nations agency defines this approach to culture as follows:

“The whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs.”²⁵

A shared culture is fundamental to an ethnic community. As one writer explains:

“An ethnic unit is defined not by its biological characteristics, but rather by its social, economic and cultural features. An ethnic group is a particular social entity, a community of sort, with material and spiritual creations, customs, norms of behaviour, language, belief systems and values. A person belongs to an ethnic community because he or she has been ‘enculturated’ or socialized into the sociocultural patterns of the group, especially by way of language. It is this positive process of enculturation, often combined with negative factors such as discrimination or conflict, which produces in the individual a feeling of identification with his/her particular ethnic community.”²⁶

²⁴ John Bumsted, “North American Integration and Canadian Culture”, a paper prepared for the Trends Project of the Policy Research Secretariat, May 1999, available on the Secretariat’s web site, <http://policyresearch.gc.ca>.

²⁵ Christine Inglis, “Multiculturalism: New Policy Responses to Diversity”, Policy Paper No. 4, Management of Social Transformations (MOST), UNESCO, 1999.

²⁶ Bernardo Berdichevsky, “Cultural Pluralism in Canada: What it means to the Jewish community”, Canadian

But in addition to this “individual feeling of identification”, our notion of an ethnic community includes collective action. As one author explains, “...the ties among people [in an ethnic community] are not merely feelings, they are social relationships”.²⁷

Given the imprecise and, indeed, subjective nature of this definition, it is not surprising to find significant controversies arising in many ethnic communities, whether in Canada or abroad, about who does or does not belong. (Similar controversies have racked Aboriginal communities as well.) The Jewish community has had its share of such debates. One example, recently highlighted in a media report, described a group of “secular humanist” Jews arguing that Judaism is primarily about culture, not religion:

“Even more than their counterparts in the highly Reform and Reconstructionist movements, adherents of Jewish secular humanism have reshaped traditional Jewish ideas and practices to accommodate themselves as rationalist non-believers in modern times. While they cling to cultural aspects of Judaism and may even spin dreidels and light menorahs at Hanukah, they’ve revised or rejected most of the religious tenets and rituals that mainstream Jews consider central to Judaism.”²⁸

Similar controversies are a common element of all five of the case studies that form the core of this study.

Jewish Congress B Pacific Region, Vancouver, 1997.

²⁷ Michael Rosenberg, “Ethnicity, Community, and the State: Organizational Structures, Practices and Strategies of the Montreal Jewish Community’s Day School System and its Relations with the Quebec State”, Doctoral thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Carleton University, 1995.

²⁸ Bill Gladstone, “The Unorthodox Jews”, *The Globe and Mail*, November 22, 1999: R12.