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The evolution of advocacy in the Ontario immigrant settlement sector

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THE EVOLUTION OF ADVOCACY IN THE ONTARIO IMMIGRANT
SETTLEMENT SECTOR

by

Elizabeth Kaminsky, BA, University of Western Ontario, 2000

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 major research paper examines the way the Ontario immigrant settlement sector provides advocacy on behalf of newcomers. It sets out to answer three general questions: How does the sector interact with government? How does it maintain its role as advocate while under significant strain? Is the relationship between the state and the third sector undergoing change, and if so, what new opportunities for advocacy are arising? Through a comprehensive literature review and four key informant interviews, this paper discusses the history of the sector and three new developments, namely the Voluntary Sector Initiative, the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement and the formation of the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance. Recent developments indicate that the government and the third sector are beginning to work towards a system of shared governance where the third sector is a partner in policy research, development and implementation.

Key Words: third sector, immigrant settlement, advocacy, shared governance, social inclusion.

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Table of Contents

<u>Section 1: Introduction, Approach and Key Terms</u>	1
i) Introduction	1
ii) Research Question & Rationale	2
iii) Defining the Third Sector	2
iv) Defining Advocacy	4
v) Research Relevance & Approach	5
vi) The Key Informants	6
vii) Theoretical Framework	8
 <u>Section 2 – Canada’s Third Sector</u>	 10
i) Size and Scope of the Third Sector	10
ii) Role of the Third Sector	12
 <u>Section 3 - The Evolution of the Ontario Immigrant Settlement Sector</u>	 15
i) The Early Days of Settlement Support	15
ii) The Keynesian Era and Settlement Services	16
iii) Contemporary Developments in Settlement Service Support	19
iv) The Third Way and Shared Governance	24
 <u>Section 4 – Advocacy in the Immigrant Settlement Sector</u>	 25
i) Why the Settlement Sector Engages in Advocacy	25
ii) What Advocacy Activities the Sector Engages In	26
iii) Advocacy Chill	27
iv) How Advocacy Has Changed – A Move Towards Shared Governance?	29
v) Issues Surrounding Research as Advocacy	31
vi) The Role of Umbrella Organizations in Advocacy	32
 <u>Section 5 - New Developments</u>	 35
i) The Voluntary Sector Initiative	35
ii) CISSA	38
iii) Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement	40
iv) Implications for Advocacy and the Changing Policy Process	43
 <u>Section 6 –Conclusion</u>	 44
 References	 46
 Interview List	 56

Section 1 – Introduction, Approach and Key Terms

i) Introduction

As Ontario's immigrant population continues to grow and diversify, the challenges facing the immigrant settlement sector continue to grow as well. On top of the sector's commitment to provide appropriate, equitable settlement services to newcomers, the sector historically provided advocacy on behalf of its clients. Newcomers to Canada are vulnerable members of society dealing with language, social, economic and cultural barriers to integration. Their needs should be represented to policymakers to ensure that public policy is inclusive and equitable. In the 1990s, the government began restructuring its relationship with the private sector and the third sector. It downloaded many responsibilities, particularly service provision, to the third sector. The shift to a more decentralized governance structure meant that the government had to rely on a wider array of actors in order to fulfill its mandate. The third sector became an increasingly important actor as the state looked for more cost-effective ways to deliver services and formulate policy. Many actors in the immigrant settlement sector contend that because of funding cuts and restructuring, their advocacy voice has been effectively silenced. It is the intention of this paper to explore the possibilities of advocacy within the constraints of the current political context. While advocacy has changed over time and come under stress due to factors like funding cuts, it has remained an important part of the work of the third sector. Moreover, the sector has new opportunities to be a player in the public policy arena. The third sector holds valuable insight and experience which

need to be better incorporated into the public policy process. This can, in part, be achieved through research and meaningful partnerships with government.

ii) Research Question & Rationale

This major research paper seeks to explore the advocacy role of the third sector in Ontario's immigrant settlement sector. The key issues it seeks to address are: How does the sector interact with government? How does the sector maintain its role as advocate while under significant strain? Is the relationship between the state and the third sector undergoing change, and if so, what new opportunities for advocacy are arising?

iii) Defining the Third Sector

The *Accord Between the Government of Canada and Voluntary Sector* describes the sector as follows:

The sector consists of organizations that exist to serve a public benefit, are self-governing, do not distribute any profits to members, and depend to a meaningful degree on volunteers. Membership or involvement in these organizations is not compulsory, and they are independent of, and institutionally distinct from the formal structures of government and the private sector. (VSI, 2002)

While the Voluntary Sector Initiative chose to use the term *voluntary sector*, there is no consensus about what term best describes the sector. There are a multitude of definitions and terms used, they fluctuate based on geography and purpose and academic discipline. Some choose to use the term *voluntary sector* (Kramer, 1981; Dreessen, 2000) because many of the people working within organizations are doing so on a voluntary basis. This term also highlights the altruistic nature of the sector. Others choose to label it as *non-governmental* to draw attention to the distinctions between it and

government, while others call it *non-profit* (Hodgkinson & Lyman, 1989) to distance it from the private sector. Others use the term *charitable* (Phillips, 2001) because a portion of the funding comes from charitable donations and many of the organizations are registered charities. The term *third sector* is used to describe any organizations which do not fit in to either the public sector (first) or the private sector (second).

Each of these terms has shortcomings which make it a less-than-perfect option. The term *voluntary* ignores the significant number of paid employees working in these organizations. The criticism leveled against the terms *non-profit* and *non-governmental* is that they focus too much on what the sector is not. Labeling the entire sector as *charitable* is misleading because many organizations are not able to register as charities because they partake in advocacy. Some say that calling it the *third sector* is also incorrect because households are considered the third pillar of society while these organizations make up the fourth. (Dreessen, 2000, p.2)

The difficulty that academics, practitioners and public servants have in finding an appropriate label for the sector only serves to illustrate the complexities surrounding it. It is essential that the term used to describe the sector affords it a significant amount of importance. For this reason, the term *third sector* will be used throughout this major research paper. The term is broad enough to encapsulate small, ethno-specific agencies run entirely by volunteers and large, multi-service, national organizations run by well-paid executives. When referring specifically to the third sector organizations working in the field of immigrant settlement, the term *immigrant settlement sector* will be used.

iv) Defining Advocacy

The Voluntary Sector Forum defines advocacy as “the act of speaking or of disseminating information intended to influence individual behaviour or opinion, corporate conduct or public policy and law.” (VSF website, 2006) Boris and Mosher-Williams (1998) claim that “in classifications of nonprofit organizations, advocacy is narrowly defined as the protection of rights and promotion of political interests.” (p.488) For the purposes of this paper, Laforest’s (2001) definition of advocacy as “the act of voicing the concerns and needs of the constituency, conveying their opinion and representing their interest to the state” (p.8) will be used.

Advocacy, or public policy work, can take many forms. It can involve lobbying a politician, creating a media campaign to raise awareness of a specific issue, taking part in government consultations or doing policy-ready research. “Typical advocacy activities include conducting or distributing nonpartisan analysis and research to the public, sponsoring discussions or workshops on social and political issues in an effort to influence public opinion, and organizing grassroots campaigns to mobilize the public or their members to influence authorities.” (Minkoff, 2002, p.398) Gormley and Cymrot (2006), in their analysis of the strategic choices made by child advocacy groups in the United States, divide advocacy activities into two categories. *Outsider strategies* could be public education and mass media campaigns, while *insider strategies* could be presenting briefing papers to government departments and doing policy research. (p.104-105)

v) Research Relevance & Approach

The third sector plays a vital role in the human services sector in Canada, and particularly in the Ontario settlement sector. However, this central role has not been adequately examined in academic literature. Generally, the value and form of advocacy work has been overlooked by Canadian academics, and particularly by academics who are researching the immigrant settlement sector. Much of the research being done in this area has focused on funding cuts and their impact on the sector's service delivery function (Evans, Richmond & Shields, 2005). The goal of this major research paper is to gain insight into how the immigrant settlement sector in Ontario advocates, and how its advocacy role is being transformed.

Ontario was chosen as a case study for several reasons. The Province of Ontario receives more than half of all new immigrants to Canada, with 84% of those settling in the Greater Toronto Area. (MCI, 2005) This means that immigrant settlement is a major issue for those working in human services. Also, the new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement was signed last year, which means that the settlement sector will be experiencing some significant changes as a result. The ways in which the agreement will affect the advocacy role of the sector needs to be examined.

In addition to the agreement, two other national initiatives are studied in this paper. With regard to the third sector as a whole, the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) laid the groundwork for a better working relationship between the sector and government. This paper will evaluate what effects the VSI has had on the public policy involvement of the Ontario immigrant settlement sector. With regard to immigrant settlement in particular, a national advocacy group, the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector

Alliance (CISSA) was formed in 2005. The future success or failure of CISSA will have a significant impact on the way the Ontario settlement sector advocates.

Two main research techniques were employed in this paper; a comprehensive critical literature review and key informant interviews which allows for a descriptive analysis of the research questions provided above. A variety of sources were used for the literature review, including academic texts, community-based research papers and government documents. The four key informant interviews were conducted with individuals from the Ontario immigrant settlement sector who have considerable experience in the field of advocacy. As the advocacy role of the sector has not received much attention by researchers, the key informants' comments provide an invaluable insight into the way the sector has been changing from within and the way the three developments have affected the work that they do. The information gleaned from the interviews with the key informants has been included throughout this major research paper in order to enhance the critical literature review and to provide additional context for the discussion.

vi) The Key Informants

Amy Casipullai is the Policy and Public Education Coordinator for the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) located in Toronto. OCASI is a non-profit umbrella organization with over 170 member agencies. It is responsible for a large portion of the advocacy work done on behalf of immigrants in Ontario. Amy is also the past vice-president of the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR), a national non-profit

umbrella organization focused on protecting the rights of refugees and immigrants. CCR has historically been a strong advocacy voice in federal immigrant settlement issues.

Ted Richmond works as the Program Coordinator, Inclusive Communities for Children, Youth and Families at the Laidlaw Foundation in Toronto. The Foundation gives grants to organizations and individuals for projects which promote civic engagement, diversity and social inclusion. He has written many papers about the changing roles of the immigrant settlement sector and the effects of neoliberal governance on the advocacy activities of the sector.

Reza Shahbazi is the Chair of the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA), a newly formed national umbrella organization representing 450 settlement agencies. He is the founder and Executive Director of the New Canadians' Centre of Excellence Inc. in Windsor, Ontario. He also co-chaired a working group as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative along with a representative from the federal government.

Sarah Wayland is a research consultant who, as a member of Policy Solutions Consulting, conducted a feasibility study of a pan-Canadian immigrant settlement advocacy organization. Throughout her research for the feasibility study, she spoke with people working in the immigrant settlement sector across the country. Earlier this year, Community Foundations of Canada and the Law Commission of Canada published a report written by Wayland (2006) about the legal and policy barriers which immigrants face in Canada.

vii) Theoretical Framework

The Canadian public policy debate surrounding immigrant settlement and integration is often framed around the concept of *social inclusion*. Social inclusion for immigrants “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.” (Richmond, 2004, p.2) “The idea of integration and inclusion is particularly important for newcomer populations as it highlights the multiple barriers to employment and social integration that many immigrants and refugees face.” (Shields, Rahi & Scholtz, 2006, p.5) This concern over social inclusion arose from the increasing marginalization and exclusion that immigrants are experiencing. There was a time in Canadian history when immigrants thrived and outperformed their Canadian-born counterparts on a variety of measurements of success. Now there are growing numbers of immigrants living in poverty and experiencing underemployment (Richmond, 2004, p.3). This is even beginning to affect the second generation as can be seen in lower educational outcomes and high drop out rates. There have been a variety of factors which have hindered the social inclusion of newcomers, namely the characteristics of the immigrants themselves, the economic and political realities of the day, and the settlement patterns of newcomers. Each of these factors, and countless others, has led to increasing social exclusion of immigrants.

The increased ethnoracial diversity of newcomers to Ontario has links to increased social exclusion. Previous to the Immigration Act of 1967, newcomers to Ontario were generally white and European. Once the outwardly racist restrictions of the Canadian Immigration Act were replaced by the points system, the ethnoracial and

geographical background of immigrants changed drastically. For example, “while immigration from Asia accounted for less than 10 percent of all immigrants in 1966, it is now by far the largest category, with more than 93 percent of all newcomers coming from the region.” (Papillon, 2002, p.6) Research indicates that visible minorities in Canada experience income discrimination. (Richmond, 2004, p.3) The immigrant settlement sector tries to call attention to systemic racism to combat the exclusion felt by newcomers.

In addition to this increased diversity there has also been a significant concentration of immigrants in large cities. This has magnified some issues of social exclusion for newcomers as cities have struggled to keep up with the growing needs of their constituents. Increasingly, immigrants are residing in Canada’s three largest cities: Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. (Richmond, personal communication, 2006) These municipalities are struggling to provide adequate support to the large numbers of newcomers in their communities. Their urbanization is also magnifying the effects of the economic and social exclusion. The growing intersection between socio-economic class and ethnoracial characteristics is leading to what some researchers call the racialization of poverty. (Galabuzi, 2001) This link between immigrants and issues of poverty has led the immigrant settlement sector to join forces with other third sector groups involved in fighting poverty.

The immigrant settlement sector strives to bolster social inclusion by encouraging the government and citizens to adopt policies that respect the tenets of social justice, anti-racism, and equity. For these reasons, this discussion of the role of the third sector as an advocate for immigrants will be viewed through the lens of social inclusion.

In Section 2, the scope and roles of the third sector in Canada are discussed. Section 3 provides an overview of the evolution of the Ontario settlement sector up until present day. In Section 4, the advocacy role of the sector is analyzed, with special focus on how advocacy has changed over time. Section 5 considers three recent developments and their effects on the advocacy role of the sector. Section 6 presents conclusions and areas for further research.

Section 2 – Canada’s Third Sector

i) Size and Scope of the Third Sector

Up until recently, there was a dearth of academic research about the Canadian third sector. This has been changing as governments and citizens alike have begun to turn their attentions towards the third sector. However, the data that has been collected does not give an accurate depiction of the sector as a whole. There are no definitive numbers of how many third sector organizations exist in the country. There is no central reporting system for third sector organizations who are not registered with Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). However, statistics have been collected about the number, size, finances and operations of registered charities. Even still, the data is not robust or reliable. As a Statistics Canada report on the sector states: “Even on charities – about which we know the most – there are huge discrepancies between various studies regarding such fundamental data as total revenues. For any student of the sector, this is a most unsettling state of affairs.” (Dreessen, 2000, p.7)

In 1999, CRA reported 77,926 registered charities operating in Canada. Of course, the estimates of other nonprofit and community organizations are much less solid. Hall and Banting (2000) estimate that there were an additional 100,000 legally incorporated nonprofits and over 800,000 grass-roots organizations operating in Canada at that time. (p.11) The 2003 National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) reported a total of 161,000 nonprofit and voluntary organizations in Canada, of which approximately 45,000 were in Ontario. (Imagine Canada, 2005, p.1)

Third sector organizations get their funding from a variety of sources. The government is by far the largest contributor (60%), however private donations (14%) and earned income (26%) are important revenue sources as well. (Hall & Banting, 2000, p.13) Social service agencies in Ontario rely even more heavily on the state, drawing 89% of their funding from the government. (Eakin, 2001, p.5)

Unfortunately, financial statistics about the third sector are also quite skewed. Not only do the data only reflect the finances of registered charities, they are also overshadowed by a small number of very large institutions, such as hospitals and educational institutions. The organizations, while making up a very small share of the sector, collect the largest amount of funding from the government. For example, hospitals make up one percent of the entire sector yet they are the recipients of one third of the revenues flowing into the sector. (Sharpe, 2001, p.23) In 1994, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy estimated that the sector received \$90.5 billion in revenues that year. After accounting for hospitals and educational institutions, \$39.6 billion was left to be divided amongst the rest of the sector. Social service agencies, including immigrant settlement agencies, received an estimated \$8.8 billion. (Hall & Banting, 2000, p.13) The

NSNVO reported that the Ontario voluntary sector had total annual revenues of \$48 billion in 2003. (Imagine Canada, 2005, p.1)

This leads to a discussion of the kinds of activities the Canadian third sector is involved in. There are third sector organizations operating in virtually all aspects of Canadian life. They can take the form of food banks, women's shelters, symphonies, ethno-specific community organizations, settlement agencies, places of worship and many more. Their activities can range from service provision, public education, fundraising, or lobbying elected officials. It is also difficult to classify third sector organizations because many are involved in multiple activities at the same time. However, based on Statistics Canada data, religious organizations make up the largest share of the sector at 36 percent, followed by social service charities at 14 percent and community benefit organizations at 7 percent. (Hall & Banting, 2000, p.11) No matter what their mandates, third sector organizations are an integral part of Canadian society.

ii) Role of the Third Sector

Much of the discussion about third sector organizations centres around their responsibility for service provision. However, there are other important aspects of the sector which should not be overlooked. First, the sector is a *vehicle for civic participation and a builder of social capital*. Social capital is “conceptualized as a web of association which helps individuals succeed and decreases the need for state social welfare support or likelihood of state intervention in social conflicts.” (Huntoon, 2001. p.157) Participation in a third sector organization gives citizens the opportunity to give back and to be involved in the improvement of their community. This kind of

involvement leads to a sense of greater belonging which can lead to greater social inclusion. This has specific relevance when dealing with immigrant serving third sector organizations, where many of the employees and volunteers are immigrants themselves. Their involvement with the organization can be an important component to their feeling of belonging and full citizenship. “Active citizenship, in which citizens engage in civic life through voluntary associations, supports governance by providing better input and monitoring of policy and, as a by-product of participation, by producing greater trust in other citizens and in government.” (Phillips, 2001, p.183-184) The connections made through involvement in a third sector organization can not only build an individual’s social capital, but can increase a community’s social capital as well. (Huntoon, 2001, p.160)

Kramer (1981) argues that third sector organizations *reinforce democratic values*. They are positioned as the guardians of the values of the democratic system, such as altruism, social integration, self-help, collective action and pluralism. (p.193) By this logic, the state has an interest in legitimizing the role of the third sector, as it serves to uphold the same democratic values which the state wants to promote. However, while many third sector organizations do have altruistic and democratic aims, this is not always the case. Some third sector organizations are decidedly undemocratic, such as a neo-Nazi youth group.

Third sector organizations also play an important role in the public policy process by providing a *feedback loop between citizens and government*. In a democracy, citizens are able to influence public policy through elections, but in a robust democracy, there should be multiple access points to the public policy process. Between elections, citizens

can use their involvement in third sector organizations to influence their elected representatives and to bring new policy issues to the table. (Kramer, 1989; Casey, 1998)

The third sector gives people an opportunity to organize themselves in order to respond to government policies. The state benefits from this as well because the input of non-governmental actors in the policy process lends legitimacy to the policies. It gives the impression, either real or imagined, that public opinion was taken into consideration before the state chose to act. With regard to the immigrant settlement sector, this role is important because new immigrants cannot vote in Canadian elections until they become citizens, so their ability to access the public policy process is more limited.

Finally, the third sector acts as a *defender of minority rights*. In a democratic state, the will of the majority guides many government policies. This means that individuals in the minority often do not benefit to the same extent as those in the majority. The third sector can play a role in defending the rights of the minority and can lobby the state to encourage the adaptation of services in order to reach a wider section of the population. Canada's immigrant settlement sector is keenly aware of its responsibility to protect minority rights. Immigrants face multiple barriers to integration in Canada so they have higher needs than the average Canadian. They are significantly under-represented in elected office so non-governmental actors are needed to represent their views and defend their rights. (Wayland, 2005, p.3) This is becoming an even more pressing matter as the cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of immigrants continues to increase. While numbers of immigrants arriving from the traditional European source countries dwindle, the numbers of visible minority immigrants rises. Now, more than

ever, the rights of immigrants are tied to the rights of visible minorities. (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003, p.9)

Section 3 - The Evolution of the Ontario Immigrant Settlement Sector

This section outlines the history of the Ontario settlement sector from the early 1900s until present day. It describes the ways in which the responsibility for immigrant settlement has been transferred between the state and the third sector over time.

i) The Early Days of Settlement Support

In the early 1900's, the government took little interest in the settlement of immigrants. It was operating on the assumption that newcomers should be self-sufficient, so the government was not responsible for assisting them in their settlement needs. Help came instead from voluntary organizations, often of a religious nature, who gave out of compassion and charity. Among the earliest organizations to address the needs of newcomers were settlement houses. The three main settlement houses in Toronto were St. Christopher's, University Settlement and Central Neighbourhood. (Amin, 1987, p. 6) The workers lived inside the settlement houses which were located in poor slums with high concentrations of immigrants. The workers tried to "relieve the sufferings of the poor in the name of social harmony and Christian duty." (Amin, 1987, p. 7) Immigrants could take English language classes and receive some basic assistance from these centres.

In the 1920's, the workers in settlement houses realized that they required training in order to be able to fulfill their obligations to their clients. This brought about the

creation of social work programs at universities where the workers could take courses and receive professional qualifications. A rift formed between the religiously motivated founders of the settlement houses and the social workers working within them which caused a change in the form and function of settlement houses in Ontario. Workers no longer live in the houses, and their services and client base have diversified over time. The motivation of community workers has also developed from one of charity to one of service support. (Amin, 1987, p. 9) The most important development from this period was the recognition that not all newcomers have the same needs and that they require professional, non-judgmental assistance in the short term in order to settle properly in Ontario.

ii) The Keynesian Era and Settlement Services

Keynesianism is an economic theory based on the views of John Maynard Keynes. Shaped by his experiences in the Great Depression, Keynes believed that the state should exert control over the market in order to protect society against the fluctuations of the business cycle. He believed in full employment, and the provision of assistance to those who were unable to participate in the labour market. His views were implemented in many states after World War II, and lasted until the economic crises of the 1970s. In Canada, the Keynesian welfare state provided a strong social safety net including universal health care, unemployment insurance, old age pensions and a wide range of other social services. There was a mixed economy which balanced the forces of the market and the state. (Burke, Mooers & Shields, 2000, p.12)

Theoretically, there was little room for the third sector to play an important role in social services during the Keynesian era. However, even as the state began to grow and take on new responsibilities, the third sector grew as well. Some claim that during this era, the relationship between the state and the sector was “symbiotic.” (Wayland, personal communication, 2006) It became the primary provider of many social services such as immigrant settlement services, youth services and child care. (Evans, Richmond & Shields, 2005, p.75) Even though the third sector’s responsibilities grew during the Keynesian era, it received little attention at the time either from the state or from academics. “Under Keynesianism the emphasis was overwhelmingly on building state capacity, the third sector was largely cast as secondary and thus tended to be ignored.” (Evans, Richmond & Shields, 2005, p.76)

During this period, the federal government’s Immigration Division, which was responsible for the settlement of immigrants during the 1950’s, created a settlement unit in Toronto which staffed 60 people at its peak. (MCR & DMI, 1977, p.5) In 1966, the Department of Manpower and Immigration was created which centralized settlement duties in the newly formed Canada Manpower Centres. These centres provided orientation, settlement assistance, employment counseling as well as access to training programs. In addition to these direct services, the Department also ran a Local Initiatives Program whereby ethno-specific agencies could get project funding. By 1974, the Department created the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) which still exists today. This program purchases settlement services from non-governmental organizations and to a smaller extent funds certain research and training projects.

In 1972, Idi Amin expelled all Ugandan Asians, and countries around the world opened their doors to this newly displaced population. In less than a year, 7,000 Ugandan Asians had come to Canada. This considerable population required additional support from the government, so the Ontario government launched the first Ontario Welcome House as a pilot project. These refugees and other newcomers could get orientation, employment, housing and referral information from the multilingual staff at the House. By 1975, the Ontario Welcome House was made a permanent part of the new Ministry of Culture and Recreation. (MCR & DMI, 1977, p.5) The Ministry also provided some grants to voluntary agencies and funded community information centres.

Throughout the 1960's and 1970's, the civil rights movement began to leave its mark on the settlement sector. The number of ethnocultural groups began to rise, and they had access to funding from multiple government departments. The federal government adopted a multiculturalism policy in 1971, which brought about more support for agencies that championed the causes of diversity and equity. (Wayland, 2006, p.2) The agencies receiving funding were not only service providers, but advocacy organizations as well. Government funding lent legitimacy to the rights-based work being done by advocacy organizations. (Scott, 2003, p.116)

By this point, the federal and provincial governments had begun to accept a significant portion of the responsibility for the provision and funding of settlement support to Ontario newcomers. Third sector involvement also began to rise. The robust welfare state of the 1970s meant that there was a commitment to inclusion and funding for social services to aid all Canadians. However, even in this time of increased funding, several issues within the settlement sector had become apparent. Primarily there was the

issue of overlapping services. The federal, provincial and community based agencies did not set their agendas in conjunction with one another and consequently the lack of coordination resulted in redundancy in service provision while other needs were not addressed at all. Also, smaller language-specific and ethno-specific organizations could only provide limited services to their clients and would refer their clients to other agencies if they needed something beyond the scope of their mandate. However, because of the lack of coherence and cooperation in the field, there was no way to follow up on a client's referral to see if he or she got the additional support from the second agency.

(MCR & DMI, 1977, p.15) An additional aspect of this lack of coordination is that newer immigrant communities with lower social capital were less likely to have access to a wide variety of services.

Overall, this period was marked by the expansion of the immigrant settlement sector by both the state and third sector actors. Both were committed to the social inclusion of all members of Canadian society, including newcomers.

iii) Contemporary Developments in Settlement Service Support

After the economic downturn of the 1970s, Canada began to move away from a Keynesian system towards a neoliberal regime. Neoliberalism calls for greater reliance on a market economy in which market forces are left relatively unchecked by the state. It also means a significant shrinking of the state, in all aspects, including the downloading of social service provision to a variety of non-state actors. In this model, the state relinquishes much of its responsibility for direct service provision and contracts out to either private or third sector organizations. Hence, the third sector becomes an

increasingly important service provider of publicly supported goods, with contracting obligations set out by the state. Neoliberals point to the flexibility and innovation of the third sector which makes it a good fit for service delivery. Since third sector organizations are smaller and less bureaucratic than government departments, they are better positioned to alter their service delivery models to make them more efficient. Since many third sector organizations are community based, they are also more aware of the needs of their communities.

Critics of neoliberalism point to what they see as the co-opting of the third sector. Third sector organizations are theoretically independent and focused on protecting the interests of their clients, many of whom are disadvantaged members of society. But under a funding structure which creates dependency on the state, groups who otherwise would speak out against government policies may choose to remain silent for fear of jeopardizing their funding relationship. (Casey, 1998, p.51) Governments tout the innovative service delivery models of the third sector, but impose very rigid restrictions on how their money can be spent. Contribution agreements dictate the specific services to be provided, the specific client groups they should be provided to, and the specific outcomes. The supposed innovation of the third sector is stifled when agencies are forced to follow the strict guidelines of contribution agreements.

In 1993, the federal Liberal party shifted control of immigration to the newly created Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). This remains the federal department responsible for immigration policy and settlement funding today. Shortly thereafter, “Citizenship and Immigration Canada concluded that the provinces were best placed to administer settlement services” (Dolin & Young, 2004, p.34) and began a program named

‘settlement renewal’. The intention was to sign agreements with each of the provinces which would devolve responsibility for immigrant settlement to provincial governments. At the same time, the Ontario Conservative government slashed funding to all social services, which had a particularly devastating effect on the settlement sector. The province stopped the Multilingual Access to Social Assistance Program and the Newcomer Language Orientation Classes.

The federal government currently funds three main settlement services. The first is Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) which provides free English or French language instruction to adult newcomers. The second program is ISAP which has been explained above. The third is the Host program which pairs up volunteers with newcomers to help them in their settlement and to ease the initial stress of adjusting to Canadian life. In addition to these three core programs, CIC also funds Job Search Workshops and the Resettlement Assistance Program for refugees. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration runs the Newcomer Settlement Program which is similar to ISAP in that it provides funding to agencies who provide settlement services. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is involved with settlement support as well through its Access to Professions and Trades program for foreign-trained immigrants.

For over a decade, the settlement sector has been dealing with the fallout from the downloading of services from the federal and provincial governments. As it stands now, third sector organizations are contracted by the government to provide nearly all government funded settlement services. This has not been an easy transition and many people within the sector say that they are working under increasingly unrealistic

constraints. (Casipullai, personal communication, 2006) Most of the discussion so far has been focused on the restructuring of funding. This issue is worthy of examination because of its implications on the sector's capacity to do advocacy.

The Conservative governments of the 1980s and 1990s not only cut back on the volume of funding going to the settlement sector, they also shifted from providing core operational funding to providing project based funding. (Richmond & Shields, 2004, p.2) This method of contracting services out to non-governmental bodies brought about a bidding practice which fit well within the neoliberal philosophy of the day. Along with a change in the type of funding available, government departments also demanded increased reporting and accountability from service providers.

In the case of Ontario's Newcomer Settlement Program, organizations had to satisfy multiple criteria in order to qualify for funding. Agencies had to: 1) have been providing settlement services for at least the last two years; 2) have been non-profit for at least two years; 3) have adequate cash flow management and funds in reserve; and 4) prove that they had other sources of funding as well. (Lim, Lo, Siemiatycki & Doucet, 2005, pp.9-10) In reality, these funding requirements meant that an organization had to already be successful and running without a deficit in order to qualify. This makes the funding environment particularly hostile for new ethno-specific agencies who are trying to address the needs of newer immigrant groups. This does not bode well for the social inclusion of such groups, whose needs may not be addressed by the existing settlement sector.

Small ethno-specific organizations have felt the brunt of the shift to program-based funding contracts. Since large multi-service agencies compete for the same

contracts as small ethno-specific agencies, the large organizations have a significant advantage. Most importantly, they have staff who can handle the arduous and time-consuming funding proposals and reporting. Also, the larger agencies have larger operational budgets so they could afford to run at a deficit for short periods of time. They have also proven their program delivery capacity to the government. What has happened is that smaller ethno-specific agencies have had to choose between closing their doors or joining forces with larger organizations in order to secure funding. (Sadiq, 2004, p.6)

This has led to what Kareem Sadiq calls a “two tier system of dependency” (p. 7) where large multi-service agencies are dependent on the federal government for funding, and smaller agencies are dependent on the larger agencies in order to survive. This dependency has several negative implications, such as the pressure to assimilate to the norms and values of the larger organization and a loss of the cultural and linguistic distinctiveness of some of the smaller ethno-specific organizations.

It is important to consider how this affects the social inclusion of newcomers who are accessing these services. Some newcomer groups who are particularly at risk of social exclusion, such as racialized refugees from societies markedly different than Canada, could likely benefit the most from culturally, religiously and linguistically sensitive services. However, their communities have low social and material capital, so their community agencies are much less likely to be able to survive in this neoliberal environment.

iv) The Third Way and Shared Governance

Some scholars have claimed that Canada is now moving out of the neoliberal era towards a system of *shared governance*. Shared governance refers to collaboration between the public, private and third sectors through a system of networks as opposed to a hierarchy. (Phillips, 2006, p.3) Some even go as far as to claim that Canada is adopting the *third way*, a concept made popular by Tony Blair's Labour Party in the United Kingdom. The third way refers to a new political form which tries to balance neoliberalism and social democracy, leading some people to label it the radical centre. (Shields, 2006, p.131) It accepts that neither the state nor the private sector is single-handedly capable of creating a prosperous and inclusive society. "The third way seeks to harness the market to increase efficiency but it also seeks to use the state and civil society to provide the measure of equity necessary to support a socially cohesive society." (Powell, 2003 as quoted in Shields, 2006, p.131) While there is still debate among academics with regard to the extent to which shared governance is at work in Canada, there are signs that it has begun to affect the public policy process.

This movement in Canada towards shared governance comes about as a result of the neoliberal hollowing out of the state. After neoliberalism chipped away at the mechanisms of the state, the public policy process was affected as well. The state now needs to rely on a multitude of non-state actors in order to function, both in the realms of service provision and public policy. In this situation, policy-making is "best conceived as an ongoing process of institutionalized dialogue, of coordination and of collaboration between state actors and actors of civil society." (Laforest, 2004, p.186) The government's capacity to do research and to formulate policy alternatives has been

compromised since it is so far removed from the level of service provision. This gives the third sector an edge since it has the ‘on the ground’ experience which the state lacks. (Phillips, 2006, p.12) Also, the state needs the third sector to lend legitimacy to its policies. There have been various developments within the Ontario immigrant settlement sector which point to a shift towards shared governance. These are discussed in Sections 4 and 5.

Section 4 – Advocacy in the Immigrant Settlement Sector

i) Why the Settlement Sector Engages in Advocacy

As outlined in Section 2, the third sector has many functions. In the current political situation, the sector has been particularly preoccupied with service provision; however the sector can not achieve all of its goals through service provision alone. For immigrant settlement organizations, the policies of all levels of government are intensely relevant to the work they do and to the well-being of newcomers. They would be remiss if they remained silent during policy debates about such varied issues as immigrant selection, foreign credential recognition, treatment of illegal immigrants, ESL education and so on. Advocacy “brings to light widely held bias, challenges assumptions, and dismantles conventional perceptions.” (Harvie, 2002, p.3) In order to work towards a society that is more inclusive and equitable for all citizens, the sector must advocate on behalf of newcomers and must participate in the public policy process.

ii) What Advocacy Activities the Sector Engages In

In October 2005, a directory of all the third sector organizations engaged in Canadian public policy was published. The researchers Susan Carter, Betty Plewes and Havi Echenberg conducted an e-mail survey of third sector organizations in Canada. Out of all the respondents, over 25 organizations self-identified as being involved in the immigration and settlement policy field in Ontario. An interesting aspect of the survey was the way in which the researchers categorized public policy activity. The categories of participation were: 1) identifying issues, raising awareness and getting issues on the public policy agenda; 2) developing policy solutions through research and analysis, i.e. policy-ready research; and 3) promoting particular policy solutions, “also known as advocacy, lobbying and mobilizing” (Carter, Plewes & Echenberg, 2005, p.6). This delineation between advocacy and other activities like raising awareness and doing research is an artificial and problematic distinction. If we are to assume that advocacy is “the act of voicing the concerns and needs of the constituency, conveying their opinion and representing their interest to the state” (Laforest, 2001, p.8) then all three of the outlined activities could be considered advocacy. Many groups selected more than one category as they were engaged in multiple facets of public policy work. Of the groups surveyed, almost 90% said they were involved in increasing awareness and getting issues on the public policy agenda and 66% were involved in lobbying and advocacy. Fifty-eight percent reported developing policy solutions and creating policy-ready research. The researchers believe that fewer groups partake in this policy activity because it is the most difficult and requires considerable expertise. (Carter, Plewes & Echenberg, 2005, p.6) This activity will be discussed in greater detail later in this section of the paper.

iii) Advocacy Chill

Since the Canadian state has cut third sector funding and altered funding structures, many agencies have had to alter their mandates in order to survive. (Evans, Richmond & Shields, 2005, p.81) In some cases, ethno-specific or gender-specific agencies have had to open their services to a wider range of clients in order to qualify for funding. (Manery & Griffin Cohen, 2003) In other cases, agencies have moulded their settlement programs in order to fit the funding requirements of the government. The most significant change however, is in relation to advocacy activities. Many agencies that previously split their resources between service delivery and advocacy have now limited themselves to service provision only. In the past, advocacy was often paid for through an agency's core funding, but since the transition to project-based funding, agencies have not had the same autonomy in deciding how to spend their government dollars.

In addition to the lack of capacity, some agencies are also afraid to speak out for fear of losing their government contracts. This phenomenon is known as "advocacy chill." (Wayland, 2005, p.4; Creese, 1998, p.28) Catherine Scott describes it with the following example: "you do not want your name in the media when your next funding submission comes up for approval." (Scott, 2003, p.17) Since agencies are so dependent on government funds, they are reluctant to speak out against current government policies for fear of retribution. This means that these third sector organizations are forced to remain quiet when the rights of their clients are not being adequately protected. (Richmond, personal communication, 2006)

These concerns over speaking out are even more pronounced for registered charities. Under the Income Tax Act, charities are only allowed to spend approximately ten percent of their resources on political activities, and those activities cannot be partisan in nature. (CRA website, 2006) The Canada Revenue Agency can revoke their registered status if they do not abide by those rules. (Pross & Webb, 2003, p.93) In 1999, CRA rejected the Vancouver Society of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women's application for charitable status, stating that the Society's mandate was outside of the definition of a charitable organization. The Society provided counseling, training and advocacy for immigrant and visible minority women. (CEC website, 2006) They took their case to the Supreme Court, and while the court's decision recognized that the rules are murky and overly restrictive, the Society was still not granted charitable status. Unfortunately not much has changed since then. Amy Casipullai of OCASI describes the environment in which registered charities currently operate as a "climate of fear." (personal communication, 2006)

Those who want to limit the advocacy of charities believe that organizations should not get tax breaks or government funding if they are going to engage in political activities. They see these organizations as special interest lobby groups masquerading as charities. In their book about the third sector in the United States, Berry and Arons (2003) describe the vociferous opposition by conservatives to what they see as an infringement of personal freedom. They believe that in funding advocacy organizations, the government is forcing taxpayers to financially support political organizations even if they do not agree with those organizations ideologically. (p.80) "Conservatives wanted to know why they had to provide tax money to government so that government could fund

advocacy groups who would then turn around and sue the government. Where is the justice in that?” (p.81) This conception of the third sector as being dominated by special interest groups ignores the reality that many charitable third sector organizations serve disadvantaged segments of society, the same segments which are not adequately represented in the political process. One could argue that the views of the dominant class are already given a position of privilege in the political process, so the work done by charitable third sector organizations is merely evening the playing field.

Registered charities have various methods of coping with these limitations. Some choose not to take part in any activity which could be considered political advocacy. Others learn how to work within those boundaries by avoiding overly partisan activities. As an example, OCASI does not endorse any specific political party or candidate, but it does host an all-party forum where candidates discuss their platforms on issues surrounding immigrant settlement. (Casipullai, personal communication, 2006) Also, the language that an organization uses can make all the difference. The term *public education* has different connotations than *advocacy* but some activities might fall under both categories.

iv) How Advocacy Has Changed – A Move Towards Shared Governance?

With the move towards neoliberal governance, it is true that the state discouraged traditional advocacy activities. However, there were other aspects of the state’s move towards decentralization that created new opportunities for non-state actors to affect public policy outcomes. While the state devolved its service delivery responsibilities to the third sector, it also diminished its own research capacity. It now has to rely on non-

state actors in order to do policy research and policy analysis. (Phillips, 2003, p.23)

“While policy advice was traditionally the safeguard of public servants, the federal government now needs the input of the voluntary sector in developing, designing and implementing policy.” (Laforest, 2004, p.191) This is a positive development for the immigrant settlement sector since this is another way for the sector to access the public policy process. Third sector organizations can advocate on behalf of newcomers through the research they provide to the state.

Another common buzzword of the current regime is *evidence-based policy*. (Laforest, 2004) The state is preoccupied with accountability on all sides. While service providers need to be accountable to the government for the way they spend government funds, the government must be accountable to citizens for the way it spends tax dollars. The public policy decisions that the state makes need to be founded in sound, reliable research. This means that government departments are not only unable to do their own research, but they are in ever increasing need of a solid evidence base on which to formulate policy. All of this adds up to a vital advocacy opportunity for the immigrant settlement sector in Canada.

Rachel Laforest, in her paper *Funding Policy Capacity* (2001), discusses the advocacy initiatives of the children and family services sector in Canada. She describes a very similar funding crisis as the one experienced by the immigrant settlement sector. Organizations who enjoyed funding for advocacy work in the 1980s found themselves competing for project-based funding and being forced into service delivery roles in the 1990s. Many organizations that were committed to advocacy had lost their access to the state and thus lost their legitimacy. They needed to rethink their role and their

relationship to the state and to their community. (p.6) Many groups abandoned adversarial advocacy strategies and adopted cooperative ones. They took on the role of leading consultations with the public and providing policy analysis. One group stated that advocacy in the new environment was a matter of “making it a policy issue rather than a political issue.” (p.9)

Third sector organizations working in the field of immigrant settlement have also adapted in a similar way. They are involved in the policy process in a variety of ways. For example, when the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement was being negotiated, OCASI submitted a position paper outlining the settlement sector’s views. (Casipullai, 2005) Settlement organizations also make frequent submissions to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration. Third sector organizations also facilitate consultations with the public on issues relating to immigrant settlement. (ICA Canada, 1998) Most importantly, the sector has realized the need to provide high quality research and policy analysis to government. “The sector is waking up and slowly building its own capacity. It is partnering with academics and universities and building its research base.” (Shahbazi, personal communication, 2006)

v) Issues Surrounding Research as Advocacy

The move from traditional advocacy to policy research has a significant effect on third sector organizations. There are some who are unwilling to take a less confrontational stance and refuse to enter into partnerships with government. There are others who do not have the ability or the desire to participate in policy research. For

those who are willing to exploit this advocacy opportunity, it does not come without costs:

Public policy research differs from other [advocacy] strategies in the amount of effort required to produce a credible product or output. To conduct public policy research well, a group needs to hire expert staff members, such as persons with an advanced degree in economics, public policy, social work, law, or public health. Investments in computer hardware and software, professional conferences, and library research may also be necessary. These activities involve shifts in resources and in thinking. They cannot be accomplished overnight. (Gormley and Cymrot, 2006, p.106)

The shift from hiring community workers and activists towards hiring professional researchers has a significant, and possibly detrimental effect on the organization. The legitimacy of the sector is closely tied to the strength of its connection to the community, which could suffer if organizations stop employing people with “experiential knowledge on the ground.” (Laforest, 2004, p.195) Also, since research requires a significant level of expertise and sophistication, certain actors within the sector are privileged over others. Community-based organizations representing marginalized immigrant groups would likely not have the resources to do this kind of public policy work, which could serve to further their social exclusion.

vi) The Role of Umbrella Organizations in Advocacy

While immigrant settlement organizations may not have the funding or the capacity to advocate for their clients, they still believe that someone must champion the cause. One way they have addressed this need is through the formation of sectoral umbrella organizations. These organizations serve multiple purposes. They act as a conduit with which to share resources and collaborate on projects. Most importantly, they act as the voice for the sector. They have a stronger basis to demand change since

they represent a wide coalition of agencies. (Creese, 1998, p.29) However, the most significant reason that umbrella organizations are better positioned to advocate is that they are not directly involved in service provision. Thus, their funding is not as directly in jeopardy when they speak out. Their position “one step away from the frontline” (Wayland, personal communication, 2006) gives them more latitude.

Notable umbrella organizations working in immigrant settlement are provincial groups such as the Ontario Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) and the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA), and federal organizations like the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) and the Canadian Ethnocultural Council (CEC). Last year, a national settlement sector umbrella group was formed; it is the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance (CISSA). (CISSA website, 2006) Generally, these groups are committed to issues of social justice and take an anti-racist, anti-discrimination stance. More recently they have begun to join the broader anti-poverty movement as well. (Creese, 1998, p.29-30)

There is a legitimate need for umbrella organizations at both the federal and provincial level because of the nature of Canadian government. Immigration policy and settlement funding is set by the federal government, but provincial institutions are greatly affected by immigration as well. Education and health care are provincial responsibilities but they factor heavily into the successful settlement of newcomers. Advocacy groups need to take advantage of the multiple access points to the public policy process. (Wayland, 2005, p.6)

While several different communities of newcomers live in Ontario, not all of them have the same social capital nor do they all have the same ability to access the public

policy process. Thus, umbrella organizations can play an important part in encouraging the social inclusion of all the newcomer communities reflected in their membership. Their focus on anti-racism and equity can have a positive effect on all immigrant groups, regardless of their specific needs. “By framing and articulating these general issues, organizations like OCASI and APG are acting as proxy political voices for various ethnoracial communities whose direct voice is silenced by multiple forms of exclusion.” (Richmond, 2004, p.7)

However, there are some impediments to social inclusion which umbrella organizations should be careful to mitigate. While they can speak out for the broad needs of all newcomers, they run the risk of essentializing the experiences of immigrants and excluding those that do not fall in to the mainstream. With CISSA for example, the wide range of regional differences will pose a challenge for articulating the national settlement needs of immigrants. Can they accurately reflect the needs of urban immigrants while still supporting those people living in rural areas? Do immigrants in Quebec have the same needs as those in Saskatchewan? Also, because umbrella organizations are not service providers, and their membership is made up of agencies, not immigrants themselves, they lack a certain level of legitimacy when advocating on behalf of immigrants. Thus, they can appear to be acting as special interest groups when engaging in policy debates. (Casipullai, personal communication, 2006) Umbrella organizations must also differentiate between the causes they support on behalf of the *sector* as opposed to on behalf of *immigrants*. For example, while issues of professionalization of the sector have an impact on the services immigrants receive, it is unlikely that many immigrants would indicate that this is a high priority for them. This is not to say that the sector does

not need a united advocacy voice to speak out on issues relevant to people who work in settlement, but this should not come at the expense of advocacy on behalf of newcomers.

Section 5 - New Developments

Over the past six years, there have been some significant developments in the relationship between the state and the immigrant settlement sector. The signing of an Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector, the formation of CISSA, and the signing of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement have all influenced the way the government and the immigrant settlement sector interact. The implications of these new developments must be critically examined with regard to changing advocacy role of the third sector.

i) The Voluntary Sector Initiative

The governmental restructuring of the 1990s placed significant strain on the third sector in Canada, encouraging various actors in the sector to find ways to mobilize collectively and protect their common interests. People within the sector realized the need to raise the sector's profile and the need to build a better working relationship with the state. Up until this point, the various subsectors were operating independently, and were not unified as a sector. (Phillips, 2003, p.23) This meant that there was no single voice speaking on behalf of the third sector. In order to address this issue, the Voluntary Sector Roundtable (VSR) was formed in 1995, with 12 representatives from the main

subcategories of the sector, such as arts and culture, social services and the faith communities.

Around the same time, in the Liberals' 1997 Red Book, the party recognized the sector as the vital third pillar of Canadian society, and vowed to increase the capacity of the sector so that it could fulfill its potential. (Phillips, 2001, p.185-186) The VSR also initiated the Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector, chaired by Ed Broadbent (also known as the Broadbent Panel). Out of the panel, a collaborative commission was created between the federal government and the third sector. These collaborations, referred to as the Joint Tables, made their recommendations in 1999. (Brock, 2003, p.6) Both the Panel and the Joint Tables recommended further dialogue between the government and the third sector.

In June 2000, the government allocated \$94.6 million over five years to a Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) which marked an important turning point in the relationship between the state and the sector. Joint Tables were assigned to address different components of the VSI. The membership of each Joint Table was evenly split between representatives from the federal government and the third sector. This joint decision-making process reflects many of the cornerstones of social inclusion conceived by Omidvar and Richmond (2003), such as the values of proximity, involvement and engagement, and valued recognition. (p.ix)

The Joint Accord Table (JAT) was responsible for developing an Accord between the government and the third sector. The Accord was to be modeled after the Compacts which had been negotiated in the United Kingdom by the Blair government and the voluntary sectors in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. (Phillips, 2003,

p.18) One of the key issues for the sector representatives of the JAT was advocacy, and the right to engage in advocacy without any funding repercussions. (Phillips, 2003, p.35) The Accord does recognize the independence of the sector, including “their right within the law to challenge public policies ... and advocate for change” (VSI, 2001, p.8) yet the wording is ambiguous enough to absolve the government of having to address the 10 percent rule governing registered charities.

The following year, the VSI produced two codes of good practice, one for funding and the other for policy dialogue. The policy dialogue code commits the government and the sector to “engage in open, inclusive and ongoing dialogue” and to “develop and strengthen knowledge and policy capacity.” (VSI, 2002b, p.10) Amy Casipullai of OCASI says that her organization uses these codes of good practice frequently in their dealings with the federal government. They can be a useful bargaining chip since the government has to accept the credibility of their content since they were created jointly by government officials.

In order to build the policy capacity, the Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development Program (SIDPD) funded voluntary sector research projects that supported departmental objectives. (Laforest, 2004, p.191) In the case of the immigrant settlement sector, OCASI received \$857,000 in SIDPD funding to increase the sector’s capacity to address policy and program issues. (VSI website) The most problematic aspect of these capacity building projects was that the terms were defined by the government. This compromised the independence of the sector and also undermined their experiential knowledge which might have led them to research other policy gaps which the government was not aware of. (Laforest, 2004, p.191-192)

The Accord and the codes of good practice were significant steps towards a more positive and respectful relationship between the state and the third sector. The process involved a considerable amount of good will and commitment on both sides.

Regrettably, the VSI was only a federal initiative, so the sector's relationship with the provincial and municipal governments went largely unchanged. (Shahbazi, personal communication, 2006) Also, without strong support from all senior civil servants, the Accord has not been evenly applied throughout the federal government. Moreover, the Accord is not a legally binding document, which means that as political will changes, the valuable progress made by the VSI could be overturned.

ii) CISSA

The Voluntary Sector Initiative led to two national settlement conferences; the first was held in Kingston, Ontario in 2001 and the second was held in Calgary, Alberta in 2003. During the discussions held at these conferences, it became clear that the immigrant settlement sector sought a national body to represent it. (Shahbazi, personal communication, 2006) The alliance formed in November 2005 and secured funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada in February 2006. It is made up of seven provincial umbrella organizations, the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR) and the Sponsorship Agreement Holders. CISSA's mission is "to advance public policies and programs which facilitate the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees to Canada." (CISSA website, 2006)

Previous to the formation of CISSA, the CCR Working Group on Immigration and Settlement took responsibility for advocacy on a national level. CCR is a very small

organization operating on an incredibly tight budget, very little of which comes from government funding. Since 1978, CCR has spoken out on issues related to human rights, anti-racism and gender equality. It has been willing to be openly critical of the government if it felt that it was necessary. (Casipullai, personal communication, 2006) CCR has employed what Gormley and Cymrot (2006) call *outsider advocacy strategies* such as public education and mass media campaigns. (p.105) These outsider strategies are usually a result of a hostile political environment in which there is little trust and cooperation between the state and non-state actors. A hostile environment is one in which there is less funding and less access to the public policy process.

There have been some concerns from within the sector that CISSA will duplicate the work done by the CCR Working Group. (Wayland, personal communication, 2006) Reza Shahbazi, currently the Chair of CISSA, says that the alliance is meant to bring about new insights and employ new approaches to advocacy which will differentiate it from the work being done by CCR. He speaks of wanting to employ what Gormley and Cymrot call *insider strategies* such as providing briefing papers to government departments and doing policy research. “Insider strategies presuppose access, and access presupposes sympathy or support.” (Gormley & Cymrot, 2006, p.104) These different tactics could mean that CISSA is more adaptable to the current political environment and could achieve more access than CCR.

For example, in Laforest’s (2004) study of national advocacy groups in the child and family services field, she describes the experiences of two organizations, the National Children’s Alliance (NCA) and Campaign 2000. The two groups share many of the same members, (just like CISSA and CCR) but differ in the ways that they conduct advocacy.

While the NCA has adopted mainstream strategies of consensus building, Campaign 2000 has used more confrontational tactics of media campaigns and grassroots mobilization. Laforest (2004) explains that NCA received consistent government funding when other groups were having their funding cut, and is regularly asked for policy input and advice. (p.193) CISSA could follow a similar route as the NCA and become a respected advisor and a legitimate player in the public policy process.

It is clear that groups like CISSA and the NCA have to sacrifice some autonomy and independence in order to gain insider access to the policy making process. Yet, considering the myriad barriers to access for those who choose to employ outsider strategies, these groups could represent the future of advocacy in the current political environment.

iii) Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement

In November 2005, the federal and Ontario governments entered into a joint agreement on immigration in which the federal government pledged \$920 million of new funds over the next five years to help newcomers settle in the province. Before this, settlement funding had been frozen for ten years. (Douglas, 2006) This agreement marks a significant opportunity for capacity building in the settlement sector. Reza Shahbazi points to this influx of money as the way for the sector to expand its research capacity and raise standards in service delivery. (personal communication, 2006)

The Agreement outlines several improvements to be made in the sector. Federal ISAP and provincial Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP) funds will be better coordinated so as to create less overlap and to address a wider range of settlement needs.

This has been an ongoing issue for several years and will hopefully mean that agencies will have better access to adequate funding sources in the near future. The language training responsibilities of the federal government will be bolstered by the provincial government with regard to sector-specific Enhanced Language Training. Service providers have been raising this concern for years as many immigrants who complete the LINC training are still not equipped with adequate language skills to enter the workforce.

Similar to other provincial immigration agreements, Ontario will also develop a provincial nominee program, and a temporary foreign worker program. The temporary foreign worker program is based on the province's desire to be able to better address short term changes in the labour market. However, it raises certain questions about fairness and inclusiveness. If outside workers are going to be arriving in order to fill labour market shortages, will they be afforded the same pay and treatment as Canadian workers? Throughout Canada's immigration history, temporary workers in such programs as the Live-In Caregiver Program or the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program have not been afforded the same rights as Canadian citizens and have at times been treated quite badly. Also, it is likely that a portion of the temporary foreign workers who come to work in the province will want to stay. The government has not discussed what mechanism will be in place to process those individuals.

Likely the greatest strength of the new Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement will be its involvement of municipalities. It is the first and only agreement of its kind to include municipalities in the consultation process. More than that however, is the commitment on behalf of the federal and provincial governments to work in partnership with municipalities with regard to service planning and delivery. Amy Casipullai of

OCASI points to the involvement of municipalities as a good thing for the sector as they are often the level of government that is most responsive and progressive. (personal communication, 2006)

The agreement has both practical and ideological implications for the third sector. In a practical sense, the increased funding is vital in order address the needs of immigrants and to raise the currently dismal pay rates for settlement workers. It also signals an opportunity to make investments in human capital and in technology in order to increase the sector's policy research capacity. Ideologically, it represents the state's recognition of the important role that the sector plays and the relevance of the advocacy work conducted by the sector. As Debbie Douglas, Executive Director of OCASI (2006) said:

The immigrant and refugee-serving sector is more than a service provider or a third-party sub-contractor for government services. We intend to continue our efforts in asserting our legitimate role as an advocate for immigrants, refugees and newcomer communities beyond settlement alone. This new agreement is one of many elements that can contribute to shaping an immigration policy framed by the values of inclusion, equity and anti-oppression.

However, the ascent of the Federal Conservative party since the signing of the agreement may have implications for the implementation of the initiatives outlined above. So far, the Harper government has not backed down from any previous commitments made by the Liberals however there is anxiety within the sector that this could change at any time. (Casipullai, personal communication, 2006; Shahbazi, personal communication, 2006)

iv) Implications for Advocacy and the Changing Policy Process

The three developments outlined above all have an effect on the way the Ontario immigrant settlement sector interacts with government. They show positive signs of state-sector cooperation and of sector capacity building. They indicate, to some degree, a move towards a system of shared governance. The Voluntary Sector Initiative laid the groundwork for future collaboration between the sector and government. Its Joint Table process can be used as a blueprint for future joint decision-making. The important next step is to formalize the relationship and create some kind of ongoing dialogue. The formation of CISSA could mean that the settlement sector will have a unified voice which policymakers at Citizenship and Immigration Canada will listen to. OCASI's membership in CISSA ensures that the needs of the Ontario settlement sector will be well represented in these dealings with government. (Richmond, personal communication, 2006) The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement will bring about much-needed capacity building in the sector. This will affect the sector's ability to produce policy-ready research and to participate in public policy discussions. All three of these developments point towards an increasing level of cooperation between the state and the Ontario immigrant settlement sector, and to a greater level of respect for the sector, not only as a service provider but as a policy partner.

Section 6 – Conclusion

The aim of this major research paper has been to investigate the advocacy role of the third sector in immigrant settlement in Ontario. This advocacy role has transformed over time to adapt to new political and fiscal realities. This paper has attempted to bring an understudied aspect of the sector to light, however there are many opportunities for future research in order to gain further insight into this issue. It would be beneficial to do a case study of an immigrant settlement organization which has altered its advocacy strategies to examine what effects it has had on the people working within and the people served by the organization. The implementation of the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement is only in the very early stages, so the long term effects of the increased funding have yet to be studied. Similarly, the sector has not seen what implications the formation of CISSA will have on its ability to access the public policy process. The recent regime change from Martin's Liberal government to Harper's Conservative government could also have profound effects on the way the state interacts with the sector.

The immigrant settlement sector has undergone many significant changes over the last three decades which have dramatically altered the way that organizations operate. The Keynesian welfare state brought about an expansion of the state's capacity, and contrary to popular belief, the third sector grew alongside of it. (Evans, Richmond & Shields, 2005, p.75) Access to reliable core government funding meant that organizations were able to advocate on behalf of newcomers without fear of repercussions. The neoliberal restructuring of the state led to a shrinking of the government apparatus. The

effects were most evident in direct service provision, which was almost entirely downloaded to third sector organizations. At the same time, funding was cut considerably, and the funding which continued was based on contract-based project funding which did not allow agencies to spend any of this funding on advocacy. Their role as an advocate for newcomers had come up against political, fiscal and legal barriers. This resulted in the abandonment of several traditional advocacy strategies and the rethinking of the way in which the sector can continue to participate in public policy formation, most notably through umbrella organizations.

More recently, there have been changes which herald a move beyond neoliberalism to a context of shared governance in which the state and non-state actors work together to create policy and deliver programs. The immigrant settlement sector has new opportunities to build its capacity to conduct research and to act as a policy advisor to the government. With a unified national voice in CISSA and an influx of capacity building funding, the sector is now able to adapt to the new political realities of the day. It can leverage its new role as a partner in policy development in order to continue its fight for an inclusive, equitable Ontario.

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