

**Ways that Visible and Ethnic Minority Women in Ottawa
Think About the Quality of their Lives and Social Programs:
Developing Grassroots Indicators of Quality of Life**

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of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Social Work.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to document ways that visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa think about the quality of their lives. Data collection involved three group interviews with a Somali, an Arabic-speaking, and a Vietnamese group of women. The sample consisted of eleven women in total. Participatory approaches were used to influence project and methodology design.

The findings showed that the well-being and inclusion of the participants' children in Canadian society were of highest importance to them. In addition, participants discussed discrimination against various groups in the area of employment and housing. Other areas of importance were the education system, parenting and marriage support for newcomers, health and religion. These documented perceptions were used to develop a set of grassroots indicators of quality of life, which contributed to the development of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa's Bank of Knowledge.

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to document ways that visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa think about the quality of their lives. Their perceptions were used to develop, from a grassroots perspective, indicators of quality of life, as one way to measure long-term outcomes of social programs in Ottawa. The findings reflect issues around diversity in Ottawa and will be developed into tools to assist voluntary sector organizations, governments, and funders in monitoring these issues in ways that are relevant to visible and ethnic minority community members.

Context of the Study

Twenty-two percent of people in Ottawa are immigrants (166,745) and more than one-third of the Ottawa population is either foreign-born or children of one or two foreign-born parents. The diversity in Ottawa is truly rich, representing 61 ethnicities and some 70 languages (Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). Immigrants and visible and ethnic minorities carry with them valuable skills and culturally diverse ways of tackling social issues and creating social services and businesses (Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). Approximately 300 ethnic associations function in Ottawa, as well as numerous faith-based organizations. Despite countless barriers (e.g. difficulties with housing, employment, and access to services), most immigrants settle successfully and apparently cope with continuous problems through many resources and initiatives to support each other. Drawing on immigrants' skills, unique perspectives, informal resources, and expertise around diversity issues, can enhance evaluation and funding frameworks in Ottawa (Ottawa Mosaic, 2004).

Research around diversity issues in Canadian cities has recently been encouraged and initiated by the Metropolis Project of Heritage Canada (Andrew, 2004). Ottawa is picking up the pace of its research endeavours on these issues. Yet, this research is in its beginning stages, with many gaps in knowledge to be filled. The Metropolis Project reports research on diversity and immigration issues within cities. Metropolis bridges academic stakeholders with communities and municipal governments. Agreeing that diversity and the impacts of immigration within cities are understudied, Caroline Andrew, the guest editor of the first issue of *Our Diverse Cities* (2004), summarized recommendations from the authors in the publication. Those that were particularly relevant to this thesis include the need to raise the participation and voices of people being studied in diversity research and to examine how policies and programs impact the management of diversity.

In the year 2000, the City of Ottawa developed a Growth Management Plan, called *Ottawa 20/20*, in order to address the rapid changes in the city predicted for the twenty-year span from 2000 to 2020. *Ottawa 20/20* is guided by a set of planning principles, including “A Caring and Inclusive City” as well as “A Creative City Rich in Heritage, Unique in Identity”. The plans include goals such as the “better integration of minority communities and aboriginal peoples (p. 9)” and to “allocate resources to services that address the needs of newcomers and immigrants” (p. 12). Specifically, the Human Services Plan addresses the above principles around diversity and immigration. It states:

Diversity is an emerging value for the City of Ottawa. Diversity flourishes when people of all ethnic backgrounds and identities find economic and social inclusion combined with the opportunity to contribute to the life of the City as a whole (p. 28).

Questions to ask in response to these plans are: How will “inclusion” be measured? How are the needs of newcomers and immigrants determined? And, how will the city know that these goals have been achieved? The City of Ottawa is implementing the use of annual Report Cards, which is one process for tracking changes. These Report Cards will be based on both quantitative and qualitative indicators and measures. The Report Cards will determine activities and outputs of the city (i.e. what the city is doing to achieve the 20/20 principles), as well as outcomes (effects) of the activities. The term “the city” refers to the municipal government as well as community partners, residents, and businesses. The Ottawa 20/20 Growth Management Plans show that diversity and inclusion are at the forefront of concerns for the city, and thus there appear to be opportunities to influence the development of qualitative indicators that highlight the priorities of visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa.

The Ottawa Mosaic Network was formed in 2002 by Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI) and the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. The network recently conducted a research project that documented the assets of visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa. The final report (Ottawa Mosaic, 2004) illustrated success stories within Ottawa, the numerous ways that visible and ethnic minorities expressed their strengths within Ottawa (through skills, institutions, businesses, networks, traditions, and economic activities), as well as barriers that inhibited the development and use of their assets (Ottawa Mosaic, 2004).

Community organizations overwhelmingly reported the need for financial support and a strong funding base as their primary concern. Good financial support is obviously necessary in order for organizations to function and to fulfill their visions. Two-thirds of

the 96 survey respondents said that adequate funding was of greatest importance in order to continue their work. “Adequate funding” referred to a number of criteria, such as the amount of funding, stability and predictability, on-going support, and less “onerous” administrative requirements. In addition, smaller community groups needed support around applying for funding in order to effectively compete with larger groups.

Participants also noted the need to work at a broader level to alter funding frameworks, such as creating less competitive atmospheres, enhancing existing assets, and enabling organizations to move past simply surviving. Participants stated that advocacy for funding was necessary before organizations could focus on other issues. One of the recommendations in the report was to improve information sharing across sectors and to create places for accessing data and networking. The Ottawa Mosaic was a pilot project, only touching on the issues and left much room and opportunities to continue research.

The directions of Metropolis, the City of Ottawa and the Ottawa Mosaic Network illustrate that governments, community organizations (research and service-oriented) and community members are in the beginning stages of linking expertise and perspectives in order to manage increasing diversity due to new waves of newcomers in the city of Ottawa. Prevalent actions of these sectors include drawing on the participation of visible and ethnic minorities themselves, creating ways to measure the management of diversity, and stabilizing resources and funding frameworks (Andrew, 2004; City of Ottawa, 2003; Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). There are many opportunities to contribute to the present direction of stakeholders in the city, when addressing diversity. For my thesis I chose to contribute to the present work of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPCO) in its efforts to increase collaboration among organizations when measuring diversity.

The Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPCO) is presently developing a web-based center called *The Ottawa Bank of Knowledge*, which will be a place for voluntary sector organizations to share information around evaluation and to use common evaluation frameworks. The Bank of Knowledge will "influence the way in which evaluation is conducted locally, as well as the way in which voluntary organizations request and receive funding" (Abdulkadir, et al., 2004, p. 36). It is divided into five thematic accounts: poverty, housing/homelessness, inclusion for people with disabilities, diversity, and quality of life. This thesis will contribute to the development of the diversity account. Through my findings, and through the findings of other projects that address the remaining four accounts, organizations will be encouraged to deposit their data on indicators in the Bank of Knowledge, forming a larger picture of the quality of life of various populations in Ottawa.

I chose to focus solely on visible and ethnic minority women's experiences in Ottawa, based on the rationale of the Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services in Ottawa (2001). In general, women face more systemic barriers to social inclusion than men. By improving the conditions of the most vulnerable, conditions are improved for everyone. Women and men also have different positions and places in the labour market and family, and visible and ethnic minority women hold additionally unique positions in these areas. Often these differences are neglected due to the small number of women in decision-making positions in the city, workplaces, and even in voluntary sector organizations. Hence, it is continuously important to acknowledge the unique place, voice, and expertise of communities of women in Ottawa.

2.0 Definitions of Key Terms

The following is a clarification of terms that re-occur in this paper. Additional terms are defined throughout the thesis as they arise. Hall et al. (2003) defined the sector of society that is referred to as the voluntary sector, non-profit sector, third sector, or community-based sector. They stated that this sector includes social service organizations, hospitals, universities, sports and recreation organizations, places of worship, social clubs, and advocacy groups. To be defined within this sector, organizations meet the following criteria: they are non-governmental, non-profit distributing, self-governing, voluntary, and organized (ie. structured, but not necessarily legally incorporated) (Hall et al., 2003).

When referring to the Bank of Knowledge, the Social Planning Council of Ottawa uses the term **voluntary sector** (Reimer, 2003). The City of Ottawa (2003) and the Voluntary Sector Initiative (Hall et al., 2003) use these same terms when referring to present funding trends. Following the choice of these organizations, I have chosen to also use the term voluntary sector. However, when reviewing studies whose authors use the term **community-based organization**, I adopt their choice of term. Because this study also includes input from participants around programs in the **government or public sector** (e.g. schools and education system), I use the overarching term **social programs**, when referring to voluntary sector organizations and public sector organizations. Overall, the target of this study is towards the voluntary sector and providing alternative evaluation tools for this sector.

The construct of **quality of life** refers to an overall sense of well-being for individuals, and a supportive environment when applied to communities. Determinants

of quality of life are often health status and ability to function (ie. physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally), as well as individuals' perceptions of their neighbourhoods and communities (Florida, 2005).

I chose to use the term **visible and ethnic minorities** to describe individuals from various ethnic groups in Canada, whose cultural ancestry is not French or British. Alternative terms used for these groups are ethnoracial and ethnocultural (Luther & Prempeh, 2003). The terms immigrants, refugees, and newcomers, are often used synonymously with the term visible and ethnic minorities. Visible and ethnic minorities have a long history in Ottawa, and are certainly not solely immigrants and refugees (Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). Visible and ethnic minorities not only face struggles based on immigration policy, accreditation difficulties, and settlement barriers; they also face additional ongoing barriers, such as discrimination based on race and ethnicity, which continues even when individuals become Canadian citizens. Although the participants of this study were all immigrants and refugees, I chose to use the term visible and ethnic minorities. If additional research is conducted as a continuation of this project I hope that visible and ethnic minority groups will be included that are not exclusively immigrants and refugees.

In addition, even though I use the term visible and ethnic minorities, they are not a homogeneous group, nor are specific ethnic groups in Ottawa homogeneous either. I do believe that there are shared circumstances, however, among visible and ethnic minorities due to systemic barriers that they face as a group, in various manifestations. From these experiences we can examine and develop indicators, while still recognizing the great

diversity and richness in Ottawa. I have been careful not to generalize experiences to all visible and ethnic minorities based on this study.

3.0 Theoretical Approaches

The following theoretical approaches were incorporated into various stages of this study. Participatory approaches to research and development are presently being utilized in projects at the local, national, and transnational levels. Projects take on many forms, and participatory literature is presently quite influential and controversial (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). With a personal interest in the principles and success stories surrounding participatory research, I wanted to explore how the body of literature of participatory research and development would influence my own thesis project, particularly focusing on data collection methods, as well as indicator development.

My selection for the remaining two theoretical approaches is based on a report that was written for the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, as a contribution to the development of the Bank of Knowledge. For the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, Abdulkadir et al. (2004) considered the dilemma of how community-based organizations evaluate long-term outcomes of social programs. They considered the usefulness of social development theories in developing indicators of long-term outcomes of social programs. They reviewed the following theories: Asset-based Community Development, the Population Health Approach, Social Capital, and Social Inclusion. In order to continue this work, and the direction that the Bank of Knowledge had taken, I sought to incorporate two of these theoretical approaches into my thesis. I chose social inclusion and social capital because of their relevance for visible and ethnic minority women in general. Both of these approaches consider marginalized individual and group experiences and conceptualize their relationships with more dominant groups (Cushing, 2003; Putnam, 2002).

Because the paradigm that I used in this thesis was participatory, I did not design the research and interview questions to reflect social inclusion and social capital theories. Instead, during data analysis I reviewed social inclusion and social capital approaches alongside the data in order to see whether these approaches were relevant to the conceptualizations of the participants. In this way, they were useful lenses for viewing quality of life of visible and ethnic minority women.

Participatory Approaches to Research

The role of knowledge in the control of our lives is real.
Replacing insufficient facts and distorted ideas with reality
is a challenge worthy of considerable effort.
(Hall, 1985, p. 3)

In this research project, I explored the use of participatory approaches when conducting short-term research projects, particularly in the academic context. I adopted principles and methods of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). Throughout the fields of community development, education, research, and sustainable agriculture, the term *participation* has become a common concept, and a clear trend. Its implementation varies significantly but the main principles apply to some degree, to all approaches. Maguire (1987) described participation or participatory research as a paradigm, which is perhaps the best way to conceptualize it. Paradigms shape the way that we view and approach the world and they direct our questions and our assumptions (Maguire, 1987).

Participatory research (PR) became a trend in the 1970s, although the idea of listening to the people and learning from them existed well before this. PR began as a reaction to traditional, western ways of doing research, such as the positivist approach used in universities. This movement took on numerous forms (e.g. participatory action

research, participatory rural appraisal, and participatory evaluation), all with varying influences (Maguire, 1987). Across the world the term *participation* is presently used everywhere, in micro and macro contexts, from local communities to NGOs to universities to international financial institutions (e.g. The World Bank). With a shift to a larger scale, participation is being re-defined and re-conceptualized (Singh, 2001).

The implementation of participatory principles and methods actually varies greatly, and from the PR field emerges a continuous dialogue of what participatory methodology actually is and how it should be determined. Even though they reject positivist principles, some participatory practitioners still use quantitative techniques. Yet, the participatory context in which quantitative statistics are used, makes the difference. For example, stakeholders may create a quantitative questionnaire collaboratively as opposed to a researcher alone creating a questionnaire based solely on a theoretical concept or hypothesis. In addition, community members may distribute the questionnaire to fellow community members in person, while also aiding in its completion (Maguire, 1987).

Participatory approaches involve more than solely the academic, the “expert” or the professional “outsider” in the research process. Within the paradigm of PR, *stakeholders* are people who are affected by, or who are involved in, that which is being researched. In participatory projects, stakeholders are involved in the research (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998). Participation can take place at any stage of research (e.g. developing the research objectives and questions, data collection, data analysis), but the more stages individuals participate in, the more participatory the process is considered to be: the participants are likely to have more control of the project and the final outcome is

more likely to reflect the values and concerns of those involved. Many participatory practitioners believe that the most marginalized people -- those with the least power but perhaps most strongly affected by the research -- should be the ones who participate in a participatory project. In PR, marginalized people, as opposed to only professionals or academics, are viewed as the experts (Hall, 1985). Behind the decision to involve them in the research process is a necessary belief in people's capacity to grow, change, and create (Maguire, 1987). Instead of having people say what we, as researchers want to hear to support our research goals, we instead listen to the opinions and expertise of the people (Maguire, 1987).

Common Critiques

Many voices have raised criticism of participatory research and development. Criticisms are often based on methods used and the fact that there is no blueprint or structure for participation. Some criticisms also exist around the *principles* behind participation (e.g. treating community members as experts). Often participatory practitioners claim to create spaces where all stakeholders negotiate together around decisions. Even at the community-based level this is problematic. In reality, some actors are always left out, marginalized, or less heard (Singh, 2001). In addition, participatory practitioners often ignore the political contexts of projects, because of their local nature. By doing so they fail to theorize how exactly participation may change political structures. When participation occurs, because of the sometimes assumed equality or leveling out of actors' positions, the inequalities that do exist can be masked and the atmosphere for opposing political control is also discouraged because it is assumed that these inequalities are somehow eliminated. Finally, actors have varied end goals when

using participatory methods. Some governments use participatory approaches in order to gain legitimacy and public support, whereas much of the participatory literature would see participation as a right of people, as a way of empowerment, and in order to transform the production of knowledge and whose knowledge is validated (Maguire, 1987).

These criticisms are best used as criteria to evaluate participatory approaches in order to be aware of their strengths and shortcomings. Cousins and Whitmore (1998) suggested that participatory projects (particularly participatory evaluation) be examined through a multi-pronged lens. They identified three dimensions of participation, which could exist on a spectrum between two extremes. Although these prongs are not exactly mutually exclusive, they bring order to conceptualizing participatory approaches and present the concept of varying degrees of participation among participatory projects. The following is an overview of these three dimensions and the extreme positions along each dimension.

- Control of evaluation process - researcher controlled versus practitioner controlled.
- Depth of participation - consultation versus deep participation.
- Stakeholder selection for participation - all legitimate groups versus primary users.

Placing This Thesis Project Within the Participatory Paradigm

This thesis project was researcher-controlled, consultation-based, and involved primary users of programs as well as community leaders. Because of a hesitation to misuse participatory approaches, or simply to misuse the term participation, I am not claiming to have implemented a participatory research project for this thesis. Rather, I have used participatory principles to guide the process. If I were to identify with a form of participation, or with forms that had the most influence on the project, I identify with

Practical Participatory Evaluation, as well as Utilization-Focused evaluation (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998; Patton, 1997).

Practical Participatory Evaluation originated from researchers and evaluators in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Norway and Sweden, in community projects, schools, universities, private organizations, and industrial settings. The main purpose was to collaborate between labour and management and to de-politicize what had been highly politicized workplaces in the past. As a result of large social movements, such as the women's and civil rights movements in the 1960s and 1970s, people began to question norms in research, such as objectivity, the role of the researcher/inquirer, and who could be the producer of knowledge. Practical Participatory Evaluation functions within the bureaucratic context of organizations. Participation is used to support decision making and problem solving processes in programs. It generally consists of mainstream evaluation processes but with more stakeholders involved at different stages. Participation enhances the utility of programs and the use of evaluation. When service providers are included in the evaluation process, it is more likely that findings of the evaluation will be implemented and to bring about change. When service users are involved, the relevance of programs is more likely to increase, and participants' knowledge of programs and the evaluation process increases (Cousins & Whitmore, 1998).

Utilization-focused evaluation can take on any number of purposes and data collection methods. However, this type of evaluation is unique because evaluators follow the premise that evaluations should be judged by their utility (Patton, 1997). Utilization-focused evaluation is participatory and collaborative. Primary intended users, such as

project managers or those implementing evaluation results are included in all aspects of evaluation. Evaluators are also encouraged to include program participants. Not only does this increase ownership for participants, the process of participating is just as impactful as the findings of an evaluation. Participants acquire new skills and learn about evaluation through this process. Where participatory action research or more radical forms of participation may seek social justice or impacting structural inequalities, participation in utilization-focused evaluation (as well as practical participatory evaluation) does not necessarily achieve these end results. Practitioners of these contexts acknowledge and value the "usefulness of systemically collected and socially constructed knowledge" (Patton, 1997, p. 99).

The principles of participation drove much of the rationale and scope for the literature that I examined in this thesis. As well, it shaped how I recruited participants, collected data, and developed resulting indicators. The participatory principles that I considered, and the process of struggling to incorporate participatory principles into this thesis, resulted in valuable lessons and reflections. If community members are treated as experts and participatory techniques are adopted at this point, perhaps these same precedents will be followed in later stages of developing the Bank of Knowledge (e.g. community consultations and advisory groups).

Social Inclusion: Adjusting Accepted Norms

Because I sought to adopt principles of participation in all phases of decision-making throughout this project, I employed emic analysis first in my analyses, meaning that I primarily focused on the constructs and responses of the participants and their interpretations of their lives (Patton, 2002). Only after this did I compare the results to

already constructed social theories. At this point, I considered the concepts of social inclusion and social capital and their relevance in capturing the participants' perceptions of quality of life.

Social inclusion is the extent to which people "participate as valued, appreciated equals in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the community (ie. in valued societal situations)" (Lister, 2000, as cited in Abdulkadir et al., 2004). Experiences of exclusion, inequality, and discrimination are common among visible and ethnic minority groups, particularly when examining employment, housing, and poverty. Resources and income levels often distance them from enjoying a quality of life that is acceptable by the standards of the society in which they live. In order to be included, disadvantaged groups require special treatment, which is more than equal treatment. They need extra tools and investments in order to overcome additional barriers to inclusion, such as discrimination and systemic racism (Cushing, 2003).

The concepts of inclusion and equality are closely related and somewhat synonymous. Mensah (2002) reviewed the many meanings of *equality*. Equality can be defined as sameness, where everyone is treated the same regardless of background. In this case, equal opportunity is the goal and social and economic barriers are broken down. Another definition focuses on numerical or proportional equivalence, arguing that regardless of equal opportunity, if the results are that minorities are not equally represented in the workforce, equality is still not achieved. In this case, preferential treatment in hiring may be used, or ensuring that proportions of specific minorities in the population are represented in a particular workforce. Backgrounds and circumstances are taken into consideration and special measures (not solely in hiring practices) are used to

enhance employment opportunities of members of a designated group. Equality is not just a right or theory, but it should be a fact and a result. Canada's Employment Equity Act is, in theory, a step towards inclusion of minorities in the labour market. However, why are there still reports and statistics that show discrimination in the labour market? Inclusion is not only part of a theory or an act, but implementation must be ensured as well. A lack of target outcomes, time lines, monitoring mechanisms, and sanctions for non-compliance of employers, are certainly shortfalls in implementation (Mensah, 2002).

Sometimes, through the concept of social inclusion it is assumed that the public standard of quality of life is natural, whereas in reality it is biased with the values of dominant groups. When looking at diversity issues, some theorists and politicians view inclusion as equal opportunity within structures that are already static, reflecting one dominant set of values (e.g. every person for him/herself). Cushing (2003) cited a move towards "radical inclusion", where including diverse populations involves a rearrangement of the parameters of social inclusion, requiring that dominant groups are open to change as well. Instead of only letting people *in*, without changing the ideological foundations of society, groups are mutually accommodated for and the mainstream values are transformed (Cushing, 2003). In this project I examined whether the participating women's desires were towards inclusion, and if they were, what that inclusion looked like through their eyes.

Social Capital

The highly debated theoretical concept of social capital is defined by Putnam (2002) as "social networks and the norms of reciprocity associated with them" (3). The use of the term *capital* is used in order to challenge common assumptions of what capital

is. Instead of material goods holding value, such as real estate, personal property, and cash, social capital theorists posit that relationships, trust, and networks hold value, which can result in social benefits as well as economic growth. For example, informal and formal social networks in low-income neighbourhoods are related to crime reduction, and individuals' social connectedness is related to physical health. In addition, informal connections often lead to finding a job. Overall, communities with social networks and active organizations are stronger when confronting poverty, resolving conflicts, and taking advantage of new opportunities (Putnam, 2002).

The idea of social capital has many dimensions. Informal and formal connections hold value, as well as simple individual-to-individual relationships and more complex relationships of groups with other groups. These connections can be with people who hold common identities, which is referred to as *bonding* (e.g. sharing language, neighbourhood, or culture), as well as across distinct groups, known as *bridging* (e.g. marginalized communities with more mainstream organizations) (Putnam, 2002). From the above richness of the concept of social capital, it does not suffice to say that a community simply has more social capital than it did previously. Descriptions of how connections have formed, how communities are relating to other bodies, and the outcomes (beneficial or detrimental) of certain networks, are what bring value and meaning to the abstract concept of social capital (Putnam, 2002).

In the data analysis phase of this present study I determined the degree to which the theories of social inclusion and social capital matched the participants' ways of determining the quality of their lives. With this background knowledge, I was able to determine whether it was important for visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa to

be included in Canadian institutions in their present forms or whether they felt that these institutions should be changed in order to include their own values. I was able to be aware of the importance of participants' descriptions of connectedness in various forms.

4.0 Literature Review

In addition to reviewing past studies of the experiences of visible and ethnic minorities in Canada and Ottawa, I conducted much of my review of literature for the purposes of understanding the broader context and rationale of this study and the Ottawa Bank of Knowledge, as well as supporting the methods used in this study (ie. participatory activities and grassroots development of indicators). I included articles from peer-reviewed journals, as well as case reports and documents from voluntary sector organizations, social research institutions, and various levels of government. Academic research did not sufficiently cover all of the perspectives that I chose to examine, particularly developing grassroots indicators of quality of life and participatory approaches in research projects. In addition, research on municipal issues is certainly lacking in academic journals. Specifically, diversity issues in Ottawa are not well-researched even at a voluntary sector level (Andrew, 2004).

Context of the Problem: Funding and Evaluation Frameworks

Voluntary sector organizations in Canada have reported increasing difficulties evaluating their programs and establishing stable funding sources (Jackson & Teplova, 2003; SPCO, 2003). Funders (governments as well as public and private foundations) also face greater expectations from stakeholders to "prove" that their investments have long-term results. In turn, program funders require service providers to report "proof" of long-term outcomes of their programs. Specifically, stakeholders want to know if social programs make a difference in people's everyday lives. With this high degree of accountability, voluntary sector organizations struggle to illustrate cause-effect relationships within complex constructs such as poverty and diversity. Meanwhile,

funders continue to move away from the provision of core funding towards support of small projects. Funding is not provided for increases in evaluation expectations and service providers find themselves with a lack of resources and time to perform these evaluations (Abdulkadir, et al., 2004; Hall et al., 2003).

The Significance of Neoliberal Principles and Practices

Presently, funders of social programs have a powerful influence in shaping evaluation practices of voluntary sector organizations. Governments around the world today ground their policies in neoliberal principles, emphasizing the importance of trade, economic development and self-interest. Social programs and evaluation criteria are frequently shaped by these principles. International pressure for governments to make trade, profit, and economics their priorities has decreased financial support for voluntary and public sectors. These sectors are now treated and managed with private sector models, incorporating competition, innovation, and accountability into their practices (Hall et al., 2003; Jackson & Teplova, 2003; Scott, 2003; SPCO, 2003).

In addition, while governments and corporations provide little investment but have high expectations of the voluntary sector, the public relies heavily on voluntary services because of the residual role of governments, also a component of neoliberal ideology. In spite of this increasing reliance, there has been little or no increase in financial support for the sector. In fact, in Canada, government funding accounts for only 60% of voluntary sector resources. In the 1990s all levels of government severely cut programs and government spending, leaving many organizations without any government support (Scott, 2003).

Focus On Accountability

Numerous researchers have examined present funding trends globally, in Canada, as well as in Ottawa. Hall et al. (2003) conducted a national survey of voluntary organizations and funders across Canada, investigating trends in their evaluation practices. Scott (2003) conducted a study that was sponsored by the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD). The results of these Canada-wide studies were similar. Accountability to stakeholders was a high priority in the area of evaluation, however, while the term “stakeholders”, according to participatory principles implies that programs become more responsive to community members and service users, within mainstream discourse this term refers primarily to those with economic stakes in an organization (ie. funders) (Hall et al., 2003 & Scott, 2003).

Highly related to accountability, results-based management (RBM) shapes evaluation designs for voluntary sector programs. First adopted by the federal government of Canada, RBM focuses on logical, linear relationships between inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of programs. RBM calls for the frequent use of logic models, which map out these linear relationships. Incorporated into the RBM framework is the widening of expected areas of influence of programs. This is clear in funder requirements for logic models as part of evaluation criteria. Voluntary organizations in Hall et al.'s (2003) study reported that expectations for evaluations have shifted from solely reporting outputs (i.e. immediate products such as organization’s activities and numbers of participants) towards also requiring and focusing on outcomes (i.e. consequences of the outputs in people's lives) and impacts (broader and longer-term aims, such as impacts of programs on the lives of service-users and the community) (Guijt,

1998). Programs have the potential to create social change, to impact people's lives, and to transform society, yet this is a long-term process and requires sufficient, consistent resources. The fact that programs may be influencing social change and their ability to actually "prove" this social change are two very different concepts. Increasingly, organizations are pooling data and resources within cities in order to tackle this problem (e.g. Bank of Knowledge).

Funders have also shifted from providing long-term core funding to project-by-project funding over short periods of time (usually every six months), giving funders increased control over what organizations do (Scott, 2003). Even if a project is funded, the funding may not cover the time length of the entire project and the renewal of funding requires substantial reporting and paperwork. Project funding often leaves no room for core administrative costs, ignoring that money for basic administration is necessary for organizations to actually function properly. Frequently, funders expect that they are not the primary source of funding. Those applying must show that they have funding from multiple sources prior to receiving funding. This is referred to as "diversification of funding". Also, larger private foundations and sectors of government are becoming more focused around which programs they fund. They decide on their priorities and request applications for funding around their specific purposes. These specifications as well as the general decrease in government support of the non-profit sector have increased competition for limited resources (Scott, 2003; SPCO, 2004).

These evaluation trends are relevant locally. The Social Planning Council of Ottawa has conducted three community consultations in the past three years (2002, 2003, 2004) in order to determine local experiences of the voluntary sector. All three

consultations have determined that trends reported nationally are felt locally. The 2004 community consultation, entitled “Funding Our Future”, compared Scott's (2003) findings with local voices and found the same trends confirmed by local community organizations. These repeated consultations not only documented that Ottawa’s residents and community organizations are being directly affected by evaluation trends, but they have already begun to come together to discuss and take action around these trends.

Effects of Trends and Challenges Faced

From their own points of view, funders are simply ensuring that their dollars meet the priorities of their campaigns, that their money produces measurable results, and that they reduce duplication of programs. However, these motives and purposes do not make up for the detrimental effects that the trends actually have on community organizations. The voluntary sector may even support these principles but the reality is that organizations are not able to cope with this new funding regime and its adverse effects (Scott, 2003).

Differing reporting requirements that create instability. As stated above, financial resources continue to decrease and scatter. When applying to numerous funders for each project, service providers find that funders often have completely different reporting requirements and expectations. Writing mid-year reports is a consistent challenge, particularly because funders do not normally provide extra funding for administrative expenses (Hall et al., 2003; Scott, 2003; SPCO, 2003; SPCO, 2004).

When core funding is not in place and the money received varies from year to year, instability is inevitable. This volatility creates an uncertainty about the future of organizations. There is limited room to take risks because of fear of losing funding. In

addition, organizations have a greater tendency to “mission drift” in order to receive funding. When funders support organizations based on projects, the organization itself also begins to limit its vision to specific projects. There can be a loss of both vision and infrastructure. Also, support from one funder requires funding from other sources, and thus loss of one funding source may automatically mean losing other funders’ supports. This makes for an extremely fragile system. Organizations feel increasing pressure to be self-sufficient, and often feel in competition for funding from other organizations (Scott, 2003). Organizations find themselves catering to funders’ expectations as opposed to being credible in the community and focusing on long-term purposes. Receiving funding becomes a priority over following primary mission statements. Advocacy would be an activity carried out with the primary interests of community members in mind, as well as a goal for the whole of an organization. Since obtaining funding is key and advocacy activities may be detrimental to receiving funding, it is often avoided and downplayed. Governments have no reason to fund organizations that are contrary to, or critical of, their goals and public positions (Scott, 2003).

Organizations lack the staff, time and resources required to perform outcome-based evaluations. Jackson and Teplova (2003) stated that current challenges in the area of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) include under- and undeveloped evaluation indicators (particularly at earlier stages of projects), lack of evaluation tools, and lack of building evaluation and monitoring components into initial program designs. Although many of the effects of funding trends are difficult to tackle within the present funding regime, there are attempts to address the lack of resources and underdeveloped evaluation frameworks.

In summary, the principles and practices of powerful funding institutions have trickle down effects, impacting community members' lives. The Canadian governments' adoption of neoliberal principles has resulted in little support for the voluntary sector. The results-based management (RBM) approaches of the federal government have not only been used in government branches but they have been imposed on the evaluation frameworks of those organizations that receive support from the government. The resulting message is that organizations only deserve funding if they can prove that their programs are truly making differences in people's lives. Often this "proof" must be provided in a short timeframe, even when programs are tackling such increasingly complex issues such as poverty and racism. Organizations have resorted to simple survival, investing much of their time in applying for funding, program by program, and fulfilling tedious evaluation requirements of funders. These time-consuming tasks push aside the activities that do actually make a difference in people's lives, such as organizations' long-term vision development and advocacy for structural change.

Benefits To Measuring Outcomes and Impacts

As stated above, one of the main trends in evaluation practice today is the focus on "proving" the impacts and outcomes of social programs. This trend is related to RBM, accountability, and the use of logic models. The desire to effect social change and to impact the lives of community members is a common goal, which existed before this present funding regime. Jackson and Teplova (2003) cite the benefits of assessing impacts. When examining Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) projects, focusing on outcomes acknowledges that a program's goals are not about the numbers of

loans, clients, and workshops produced, but the links between a project and its economic, political, psychological, and social impacts in a community.

Although there is general agreement about the validity of requiring impact assessments, this requirement in very small periods of time is unrealistic. Real impacts can only be determined, if at all, over a significant period of time. Also, impact assessments require considerable resources, which is usually not taken into account by funders (Jackson & Teplova, 2003). If the implementation of principles are the difficulty, as opposed to the principles themselves, perhaps new ways of implementing these principles can be introduced. Jackson and Teplova (2003) suggested that Canadian non-profits and charities can take the lead in this area. They can initiate and drive the definition and shaping of frameworks, indicators and evaluation tools, rather than merely reacting to the requirements of funders.

Weiss (1993) stated, "It is important to improve the craft of evaluation so that we have greater confidence in its results" (105). Presently, financial survival for a voluntary sector organization means producing evaluations that show a program to be successful in ways determined by funders. This process needs to be reversed so that community members are not only heard, but actual control is shifted to voluntary sector organizations and grassroots communities. One solution is to adopt community member-driven evaluation frameworks as opposed to government-driven. At the Social Planning Council of Ottawa consultation (2004), a keynote speaker suggested that funders should be accountable to the organizations and the public as well. The relationship should be shifted, with more control in the hands of organizations. In response to current funder-

driven trends, study participants suggested that organizations collaborate and build partnerships in order to share resources and to problem solve collectively (SPCO, 2004).

Studies of visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa, particularly at the organizational and municipal level, include *changes in evaluation frameworks and processes*, as recommendations for action (Andrew, 2004; City of Ottawa, 2003, Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). This thesis is a contribution of grassroots indicators of change in the lives of visible and ethnic minorities. These indicators are a building block for the evaluation frameworks that will be used in the Bank of Knowledge, which will aid organizations in making that shift towards having more control of the evaluation process. To begin the process of developing indicators of quality of life of visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa, I first reviewed studies that have examined this area already, at the national and municipal level. The experiences of individuals in the following studies introduce some of the strengths, dilemmas and controversies of the complex area of diversity, which then must be expressed through indicators for evaluations of quality of life in Ottawa.

Visible and Ethnic Minorities

The direction of the discussions in the group interviews of this thesis, as well as data analysis, were driven by the responses of participants, as opposed to creating topics of discussion based on my knowledge from the literature. Therefore, my intentions when reviewing literature of visible and ethnic minorities were to summarize the general issues and discussions arising from the field. I narrowed my literature search by geography and demographics, and examined only studies from Canada and Ottawa. I also focused primarily on women and youth. Few researchers have specifically examined the quality

of life of visible and ethnic minority women in Canada. Those studies that do, identify multiple disadvantages as a result of being a woman as well as a minority, reporting cases of marginalization and discrimination (Mensah, 2002). At the same time, women's strengths, courageous struggles, and daily priorities also surface in the literature (McLaren & Dyck, 2004; Meadows et al., 2001; Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). I begin the following review by portraying the context of racism in Canada, particularly in the labour market. I continue to discuss the notion of human capital and visible and ethnic minority youth. I then broaden the discussion by adding gender and sexism to the discussion of racism, which is the reality of visible and ethnic minority women in Canada. I also explore additional areas of everyday life, such as intergenerational conflict, access, housing, as well as employment.

Racism In Canada

Racism is deeply rooted in Canadian society, yet it is often overlooked or ignored. According to Mensah (2002), racism evolved when foreign lands were explored by European nations. Capitalist states filled the need for cheap and submissive labour by exploiting people who were newly encountered in these lands (e.g. slaves from Africa). Hence, treating people differently because of race was introduced into Western societies, and racism and racial prejudice, as a set of negative attitudes and practices, became ingrained in citizens, and continues today (Mensah, 2002).

There are many allegations of unfair treatment and racism by individuals today, and these claims are reinforced by empirical evidence, particularly in the area of employment and income. As an example, in Canada, Blacks are over-represented in low-paying, dead-end jobs, with complete exclusion from some areas of the labour market

(Mensah, 2002). According to Mensah (2002) "if there is any key to the systematic privilege that undergirds a racial capitalist society, it is the special advantage of the white population in the labour market" (129)

People who experience consistent racial prejudice are deprived emotionally and psychologically as a result. At the same time, individuals are not affected equally by racism, nor do they respond in the same ways. Experiences, effects, and responses vary based on age, sex, country of origin, period of immigration, and education (Mensah, 2002). Some seek complete integration, while others request special treatment (Cushing, 2003). In Canada, racism is such an underlying, and sophisticated systemic reality that many of those who are negatively impacted may not identify racism as the cause of their circumstances (Mensah, 2002).

According to the Ottawa Mosaic (2004) most immigrants are highly skilled, and immigrants in Canada, as a group, have higher levels of education than non-immigrants in Canada. However, they face many barriers to employment. Skilled immigrants are extremely underemployed in the labour market, and immigrants have lower incomes than non-immigrants. The Ottawa Mosaic (2004) recommended that assets that aid in employment must increase in number, capacity, and accessibility to newcomers. Access to services was another key barrier reported. When accessing services, the writers stated that newcomers must obtain information on services, they must have the means to access services (e.g. transportation and child care), and they must have access within the services (e.g. cultural appropriateness and alternative services) (Ottawa Mosaic, 2004).

Human capital and visible and ethnic minority youth. Theorists use human capital to explain many of the inequalities in income and employment status in capitalist

states. Human capital includes qualities that are assumed to increase people's productivity, and chances of higher wages and higher status jobs, such as education, training, and work experience (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000; Mensah, 2002). From a human capital perspective, an immigrant's skills and education make him/her worthy and productive in Canada (McLaren & Dyck, 2004). Economic self-sufficiency determines the value of a person in the labour force, which transfers into the value we place on a person in general. Human capital assumes perfect competition. Job seekers have the same access to information, rational hiring is always based on merit, and all job seekers with the necessary qualifications have an equal chance at employment (Mensah, 2002). This approach ignores power relations such as classism, racism, and sexism, which profoundly impact the places of immigrants, particularly immigrant women, in Canadian society. This has been largely due to ever-dominant neoliberal principles in Canada, such as a residual government role, and decreases in funding social programs. Since the 1990s immigration and settlement policies have expected more from immigrants and in return immigrants have received less government commitment to their rights and welfare (McLaren & Dyck, 2004). Because of racial exploitation, certain minorities in Canada do not benefit from greater human capital. Regardless of high education levels, job skills, and work status in other countries, immigrants are not getting jobs commensurate with their qualifications. Controlling factors contributing to unemployment or low-paying jobs for Chinese and Blacks, such as education, age, gender, and occupation, researchers found that ethnicity and race were still indicators of job market discrimination once all of these factors were removed from the relationship (Mensah, 2002). The reality is that visible minority immigrants (Blacks, Arabs, Latin Americans, West Asians) must display

superior performance in education and work settings in order to be treated "equally" (Mensah, 2002).

Some may insist that education and job experience are only valuable if based in Canada, rationalizing discrimination when people do not have these assets. However, young people who immigrated to Canada at a very young age, or visible and ethnic minorities who were born in Canada actually have lower levels of employment than older immigrants. Integration/assimilation theory suggests that the more assimilated (extent to which a group or individual is ready to maintain or lose cultural identity) and integrated (degree that one values relationship with member of other groups) an individual is in Canadian society, the more access that individual will have in the Canadian economy, manifested in better jobs (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000). Thus, visible and ethnic minorities who were born in Canada or immigrated to Canada at a very young age would be assumed to benefit from their much stronger integration and assimilation because of better proficiency in language, more compatible education, easily recognizable credentials and less cultural barriers. Yet, statistics show otherwise. In fact, the second generation of immigrants (those who were 0 to 9 years old when arriving in Canada) have lower employment rates, and lower levels of full-time employment when compared to immigrants who were older when they arrived in Canada (20-30 years old) (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000).

Canadian education does not produce the same output for immigrants as it does for non-immigrants (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000). Mohamoud (2004) concluded that immigrant youth are not engaged sufficiently in Ottawa's labour force when compared with the entire population of that age group. For example, less than one half of

immigrant women aged 15-24 are employed, compared to 73% of Canadian-born women. The employment situation in Canada for visible and ethnic minorities (women and youth included) is thus filled with cases of discrimination, affecting all areas of life. At the same time, immigrants and visible and ethnic minorities are highly skilled and incorporate many assets.

Visible and Ethnic Minority Women in Canada

Visible and ethnic minority *women* have further disadvantages in their lives, in addition to the above experiences of visible and ethnic minorities in general. Women in Canada face systematic sexism (e.g. feminization of poverty, lack of support of single mothers, negative stereotypes of stay-at-home moms), which is compounded in the experiences of visible and ethnic minority women (Mensah, 2002). As an example, Somalis in Canada presently face many settlement difficulties. These include challenges in accessing public services due to language, imposed stereotypes around their lifestyle, and discrimination in the labour market. In addition, though, Somali *women* face further discrimination in the labour market, often attributed to their choice of dress (ie. hijabs) as part of their Islamic practice.

Visible and ethnic minority women in the labour market. Black women in Canada and the average Canadian woman (including all ethnic groups) have similar education levels and language abilities, but Black women have a far worse employment status, lower income levels, and greater government dependence (Mensah, 2002). Gender and race interlock, accentuating inequalities for certain groups of visible and ethnic minority women (Mensah, 2002). The immigrant women in McLaren and Dyck's (2004) study felt that there was no link between their skills and resulting jobs. They reported great

struggles in job searching, and they worked hard to continuously improve their English skills. Employment was a primary means for securing a sense of belonging and self-sufficiency. They also expressed their desire to integrate, and to contribute to Canadian society.

Some researchers, governments, and civil society claim that visible and ethnic minority women are not disadvantaged in the labour market because of their gender. The literature certainly shows contradictions in this area, which further enforce the complexities of race and gender. This claim has been made specifically when comparing Black women and Black men. Hum and Simpson (1999) conducted a study in which they examined employment of visible minorities in Canada, comparing various age groups and ethnic groups. They did this by analyzing the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics. When comparing Canadian-born visible minority groups with non-visible minorities, they found that only Black men had significantly lower wages than other non-visible minorities. When comparing visible minority immigrants to Canadian visible minorities, men in the first comparison group had lower wages than the other men. These differences were not found in women. In addition, Canadian work experience also impacted wages for visible minority men but not for visible minority women. Non-Canadian work experience had no impact. Researchers have reported that many highly educated and experienced men come to Canada and find severe discrimination when compared to Canadian-born men with the same education and work experience.

Mensah (2002) recognized that popular belief may suggest that Black women do better than Black men. However, in his study, when compared to Black women, Black men have better education and language, as well as lower unemployment rates, and

higher income levels for both part-time and full-time jobs. Both women in other countries, and in Canada, have lower income levels than men with the same country-of-origin. Immigrant women are more likely to come to Canada under the family class than men. Women often set aside careers or only work part-time when they have children. Gender and race certainly intersect in complex ways when comparing visible minority women to other women as well as to Canadians in general. Multiple factors affect the place in the Canadian labour force of both non-immigrant and immigrant women, as well as immigrant men.

Health and well-being. Visible and ethnic minority women have many concerns and priorities due to their unique positions in Canadian society. Meadows, Thurston, and Melton (2001) collected qualitative data on immigrant women between the ages of 40 and 65, who immigrated to Canada as adults. The researchers were interested in how the participants perceived their health (emotional, social, cultural, spiritual and physical well-being), and the effects of the immigration process on health. The participants identified many stressors in their lives, such as having foreign credentials recognized, finding employment, housing, social isolation and learning a new language, which impacted health. The impact of these stressors (or, a lack of buffering these impacts) on women's lives was largely due to the context of Canadian society. In Canada, a productive labour market is a priority, and people compete for success and wealth, with little regard for disadvantages or inequality. At the same time, participants did identify those factors in their lives that aided them in overcoming stressors to their health and well-being. Social support and immigrant-serving agencies helped them to maintain good mental and

physical health. Spirituality, which the participants operationalized as their daily prayer times, was also a priority for health (Meadows et al., 2001).

The participants further stated that extra stress in their lives when adjusting to a new country often led to depression, crying, and body aches. They did not necessarily want to adopt new values from Canadian culture and they struggled with their children who were growing up in a new society that particularly held different views of women's roles. Often women's primary concerns were the health of the family unit and ensuring that children's needs were met. Women's personal health was their secondary concern (Meadows et al., 2001).

Concern for children and cultural tension. Women's strong concern for their children was reported in other studies as well. From the discussion above, visible and ethnic minority parents hold many concerns, including their children's future employment. Horaneih (2004) wrote a report of a study that was conducted by Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa (Cayfo). Participants (youth and adults) considered how the principle of multiculturalism was actually manifested in Ottawa. They collected data through a youth advisory group, a symposium with numerous stakeholders, and consultations around best practices of voluntary sector programs. Children's, parents', and educators' points of view around issues faced by visible and ethnic minority youth, were collected. Because of pressure to fit in, children often adjusted more to Canadian cultural values and lifestyles than their parents did. Parents fear losing their roots and try hard to hold on to their values and their traditions. As a result, parents and children find themselves in tension, and conflicts arise that actually lead to feelings of isolation and mental health issues such as depression, for both parents and children.

Youth reported that they did not receive information on programs or aids in settlement when they first arrived in Canada. Parents in this study also said that bullying in schools is a big problem, and children often target peers with accents or unfamiliar origins. Parents also suggested that school curriculums should change in order to reflect schools' diverse populations. Parents' perceptions of schools in their country of origin was different than parents' roles in schools in Canada. And, schools reported that immigrant or refugee parents did not attend school meetings or sit on school councils (Horaneih, 2004).

In the transition from one country to another, families adapt and re-build their ethnic identity and values. In particular, during adolescence, children of immigrants often evaluate and have concerns about their ethnic identity, which strains their relationships with parents. When the immigration process is abrupt (e.g. in the case of refugees), parents are more likely to hold strongly to the values from their countries of origin, causing more generational differences (Dion & Dion, 2004; Kwak & Berry, 2001). In addition, Dion and Dion (2004) stated, immigrant parents may place more pressure on their daughters to adhere to the values and practices of their country of origin, particularly when their children were born in the receiving country (ie. Canada). This pressure is attributed to parents' fears of a new country threatening their family values. Instead of having a resulting disregard for their culture, young women were reported to have strong self-identity and feelings of uniqueness when considering their ethnic identity, as opposed to young men of the same age, who did not relate as strongly to their country of origin. However, overall, even though children often develop cultural values

that are different from their parents, children still maintain a high degree of family unity and cooperation with their parents (Dion & Dion, 2004; Kwak & Berry, 2001).

The women from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea and Iran, in McLaren and Dyck's (2004) study, invested in their children's schooling, even sacrificing certain jobs to see them do well. Often women's investments in their children's futures is not recognized by other family members, the government (providing sufficient support), and society in general (stereotypes and attitudes around stay-at-home moms). The participants' reasons for this investment were to make sure that their children gained the necessary skills and education to attain high levels of human capital, necessary to be successful in Canada. Because of disappointments with their own circumstances, the women had many hopes and dreams for their daughters. This often led to tension and between mothers and daughters. The women saw better opportunities for their daughters in Canada, as working women. They spoke of oppressive treatment of women in their home countries and did not want that for their daughters (McLaren & Dyck, 2004). From the above studies we can certainly see that visible and ethnic minority women invest much of their time and emotions towards ensuring the present and future well-being of their children.

Ethnic-specific neighbourhoods. In the 1990s, poverty has risen across the industrial world, and racial and ethnic cleavages have also hardened, particularly in poor neighbourhoods. Compared to the United States, in Canada the spatial concentration of poverty has gone relatively unnoticed (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000). Ethnic-specific neighbourhoods in Canada are sometimes attributed to racial inequality, and at other times attributed to cultural preference or the strengthening of smaller communities (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000; Novac, 1999). Novac (1999) wrote a report in which she

considered whether immigrant housing enclaves were products of racism and exclusion or products of immigrants' choices and desires for familiar community. Through case studies Novac (1999) concluded that sometimes immigrants and refugees celebrate their cultures together and appreciate their communities once they do find themselves among people of similar ethnic origin. However, the cause of this coming together is often discrimination and racial inequality. In addition, these neighbourhoods often result in increased stigmatization, social exclusion, and growth of racist and anti-immigrant sentiments (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000). Novac (1999) explained that discriminatory practices overlap in the area of housing for immigrant and refugee women. Gender, nation of origin, presence of children, employment status, and income level are intersecting factors behind immigrant women and refugee women's housing stories. Female-headed families, lone-parent families with children, women, common-law families, young adults, and the elderly are over-represented in low-income neighbourhoods (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000; Novac, 1999).

Access to services. The same factors that affect women's housing situations also impact women's access to services. The Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services in Ottawa (2001) conducted a research project that focused on facilitators and barriers to women's access to city services as well as their access to employment. Researchers conducted twenty focus groups totaling 162 women, and included young women, those with disabilities, and immigrant women. Overall, participants reported a lack of information about the services available to them. They also reported barriers to accessing childcare, such as not knowing how to access subsidized spaces. Word of mouth and networking were the most prominent facilitators

of access. Immigrant women were one of the participant groups who reported the strongest feelings of disempowerment when attempting to access services. They cited barriers based on language difficulties, and a general lack of orientation or settlement information around Canadian culture and systems. Suggestions for overcoming these difficulties, included the City of Ottawa hiring more staff from various ethnic groups, who may be better able to understand women from a specific culture's needs. In addition, they suggested that City staff receive sensitivity training, and that services provide information in more languages than they presently do.

Concluding Remarks

Once I began the literature search for articles around the experiences of visible and ethnic minorities, specifically women, I found that racism was a theme in many of the articles. In addition, issues of employment and income dominated many of the articles. As a result, if I was to be biased in any way during data collection, these were areas (racism and discrimination in employment) that I expected would be reported as areas of importance in participants' experiences. The case for racism in Canada is strongly supported by statistics of income levels and job status of visible and ethnic minority men, women, and youth (Mensah, 2002). Because Canada's racism is systemic, theorists of human capital and integration/assimilation would dismiss claims of racism and instead attribute inequalities to lack of Canadian experience and education. However, studies have controlled for education and immigration status, as well as age at time of arrival in Canada, and have found that discrimination can often only be explained through racial prejudice (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000; McLaren & Dyck, 2004).

In addition, studies have shown that visible and ethnic minority women have unique experiences themselves, as a group. They have identified many stressors that are unique to them as a group, which affect quality of their lives. They face discrimination in employment, as well as high levels of concern and stress when managing the future of their children (Dion & Dion, 2004; Horaneih, 2004; Kwak & Berry, 2001; McLaren & Dyck, 2004; Meadows et al., 2001; Mensah, 2002). Stories of visible and ethnic minority women's priorities often lead to their children's experiences, such as their children's employment and intergenerational tension. The interaction of racism and sexism was also displayed in studies of housing discrimination. Being a single mother, a woman, and an ethnic minority, and having a low income, have all been shown to decrease housing options. For visible and ethnic minority women these factors are all interrelated (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000; Novac, 1999). Finally, language and cultural barriers, and needs for child care and transportation, are factors affecting women's access to services, as a result of race and gender combined. Women in Ottawa have specifically reported difficulties in the area of access (Working Group, 2001).

From this section of the literature review I found that, generally, visible and ethnic minority women's experiences of racism and discrimination are plentiful in the literature. But, how do visible and ethnic minorities themselves experience discrimination or inclusion? What does overcoming these barriers look like in their everyday lives? The evaluation situation for voluntary sector organizations in Canada requires much research and advocacy in order to counter oppressive trends, such as those experienced by visible and ethnic minority women. One way to do this is to create

centers of collaboration and action for organizations and to network across stakeholder groups.

Rationale and Approach to Indicator Development and Project Design

When looking at diversity and visible and ethnic minority issues, Davis (1992, p. 62), summarized the message well:

Culturally relevant and sensitive evaluation models must be utilized if programs in minority communities are to be thoroughly examined. Furthermore, decisions about the cultural appropriateness of an evaluation strategy must be coupled with an acknowledgement of the cultural integrity of such groups as African Americans, whose ability to contribute to the development and evaluation of programs, in their communities must be recognized.

In previous sections, I have established that various bodies in Ottawa are moving towards tightening evaluation frameworks of voluntary sector programs (Abdulkadir, et al., 2004; City of Ottawa, 2003). This is one response to the present funding crisis of voluntary sector organizations, characterized by a lack of stable funding, and results-based requirements that illustrate impacts in people's lives (Jackson & Teplova, 2003; Scott, 2003; SPCO, 2003). Increasing diversity of Ottawa's population has called for voluntary sector organizations and governments to respond with plans to overcome effects of systemic racism presently faced by groups, such as barriers to employment, housing discrimination, and access to services. This need is particularly pertinent for visible and ethnic minority women (Kazemipur & Hallis, 2000; Mensah, 2002; Novac, 1999; Working Group, 2001). From a global perspective, poverty, inequality, and unemployment seem to be growing and it is more important than ever that social programs and interventions impact these areas. Despite less funding and resources, service providers and voluntary sector organizations are responding to these global funding trends with innovative ways of evaluating long-term outcomes of their programs.

Some organizations have focused on the capability of community members to be the experts in interpreting their social situations. At this point I have established the place of my thesis project within these contexts, as a contribution to the SPCO Bank of Knowledge. The above quote (Davis, 1992) summarizes my approach to *how* I developed the indicators in order to contribute to evaluation frameworks of the Bank of Knowledge. In this project I have drawn on the expertise of visible and ethnic minority women. I used their stories to drive the development of indicators of quality of life in Ottawa, providing insight into possible long-term outcomes of social programs.

History and Definitions of Community Indicators

Developing indicators of long-term outcomes of social programs is another global trend in evaluation practice today. Along with the often-required use of logic models, the need to measure outcomes and impacts of activities calls for new measurement tools. Whenever goals are stated, for a community, a social program, or a policy, one critical question can be: How will achievement of these goals be determined and measured? If a goal includes impacting the community in some way, evaluators should include community members and service users in interpreting the successful achievement of the goal. People can affect both indicator development and impacts, if given the opportunity. Indicators are not assumed or static; rather, there is room to continuously question, revisit, and develop them in new ways.

When properly designed, [indicators] can forewarn a community about a potential problem or negative trend before its effects become irreversible. They can demonstrate the linkages among large social, economic, and environmental systems and help to identify the causes of complex problems. They can measure the effectiveness of policies and projects. Most of all, they can simply, yet comprehensively, track a community's progress toward its goals" (Besleme & Mullin, 1997, pp. 50-51).

Guijt (1998) defined an indicator as “a quantitative or qualitative characteristic of a process or activity about which changes are to be measured” (17). Indicators are aids for communicating complex processes, events or trends. Guijt (1998) placed priority on the local relevance of indicators as opposed to perfecting them in detail, leaving them set in stone without flexibility. This priority illustrates a trend towards creating “community indicators” or “grassroots indicators”. Besleme and Mullin (1997) also noted that indicator sets must be focused on a clearly stated purpose and incorporate the values of the community. Community indicators stimulate community vision and unite different interests. The move towards using community indicators over the past forty years is discussed below.

We must remember that indicators do not substitute for action and do not bring about change in and of themselves. They only attempt to measure change, however they can act as an "information base for a larger advocacy and action strategy that utilizes existing resources in a community" (Besleme & Mullin, 1997, 52). Guijt (1998) pointed out that identifying indicators is perhaps the most difficult step in setting up a monitoring system because of countless possibilities. Each activity can be monitored using any number of indicators. A solution to this difficulty is to accept that monitoring and evaluation only ever show a partial view of the world. Therefore, we consciously decide which view we will show and accept the subjectivity involved. In her study of voluntary and non-profit organizations, Scott (2003) explained that the challenge to identify appropriate indicators was primary. Organizations working with vulnerable populations could not simply review quantitative outputs. And, measurable outcomes take a long time to become evident. Also, circumstances change frequently in organizations. As a

result, evaluators must continuously revisit existing indicators, and governments and funders must somehow allow for flexibility in measuring and evaluation tools. Often neither of these occur (Scott, 2003).

Indicators reflect what is important to an organization, to policy makers, or to a city. Inevitably, this excludes the measurement of what is considered unimportant (Bennett & Roche, 2000; Jackson & Teplova, 2003). Scriven (1991) distinguished between intended and unintended benefits of a program. Indicators often exclude the unintended benefits of a program, and this is problematic. Funders usually require organizations to determine the outcomes of programs at the outset, when requesting funding. This is positive because programs should be developed based on program goals, but it also reveals the limitations of indicators. Organizations develop logic models and indicators of long-term outcomes and impacts of their programs on the community, at the outset, and exclude the unexpected, or “side-effects” of a program, when the side-effect may be the most significant achievement of the project. Because of this need to include the side-effects, or unexpected results, in the goals from the beginning, there is a move towards community-driven indicators. When community’s perceptions of an achievement or success are determined, and when the process is more open-ended, these side effects are more likely to be predicted.

Emerging Trends in Indicator Development

Community indicators, also known as grassroots indicators, are derived from individuals, households, and communities, and focus on the diverse and ever-changing characteristics of individual communities. Developers of community indicators take some of the traditional social indicators (e.g. income levels, poverty levels, gross national

product) a step further to more fully reflect the diverse values of individual communities. These require community members to contribute to development, including as broad a spectrum of citizens' perspectives as possible (Abbot & Guijt, 1998; Besleme & Mullin, 1997).

A consideration of more qualitative ways to measure social change has also emerged in indicator development. These approaches challenge the exclusive use of quantitative approaches, which so often measure only what is easiest to conceptualize and quantify, collecting what is considered the "hard" data. Indicators that are qualitative are seen as more expensive and difficult to collect, analyze, and compare. However, they take account of people's everyday life experiences in more in depth ways (Bennett & Roche, 2000).

Researchers who develop indicators attempt to make sense of complex social systems, environmental issues, and poverty trends. Thus, indicators tend to be created based on theoretical approaches to conceptualizing a social or environmental issue (Bennett & Roche, 2000; Jackson & Teplova, 2003). Indicators and the theories behind their development form the rationale for creating social programs, create paradigms for viewing the social world, determine how we analyze social programs and solutions, and shape what we deem to be valuable (Maguire, 1987).

Along with the emergence of community or grassroots indicator development, participatory approaches almost inevitably emerged as well. There are many examples across the globe of communities taking the initiative to develop their own indicators based on goals that the citizens have for their cities or neighbourhoods. Some of these cases will be examined further in this review (Besleme & Mullin, 1997). Participatory

research and development emerged as a theoretical framework in the 1970s. It is difficult to separate the influence of participatory approaches with grassroots indicator development. Both approaches emerged at the same time and are quite interwoven. Participatory approaches may be categorized as one way of carrying out community-based indicator development, adopting specific principles and techniques. These approaches are perhaps one of the most open-ended ways to develop indicators. In a more participatory process, local people can be involved in designing the evaluation system, the indicators, and the ways that data will be collected (Guijt, 1998, 13).

Participatory monitoring and evaluation can be quite time consuming. In these processes, community members participate in all aspects of evaluating social programs and social change, and thus, these approaches are more conducive to smaller programs and groups. At the same time, there is work being done on scaling up participatory monitoring and evaluation as well. Participatory approaches to indicator development appear to be practical alternatives, when funding and resources are limited, and when measuring social change at broader scales (e.g. across cities or in large organizations with many programs).

Some emerging trends in indicator development that are particularly relevant to this thesis are the use of qualitative indicators in addition to quantitative indicators, and participatory approaches to development. For this thesis project I did not develop the indicators based on a theoretical framework, but I did compare the participants' perspectives with the theories social capital and social inclusion, in order to determine whether these theories appropriately reflect the emerging values and goals of the participants. The following case examples illustrate some of the above trends, citing

concrete ways that they were implemented. The purpose of reviewing these examples is not to compare their findings or resulting indicators to this project, but to examine cases of organizations undergoing a similar process of indicator development. These studies informed the methods of data collection, and indicator development for this thesis study. I use international, national, and local illustrations.

United Nations Human Development Reports. The United Nations recently developed Indexes of Human Development, which are comprised of sets of indicators. These Indexes illustrate that subjective considerations of quality of life are reaching international levels, showing trends away from purely monitoring economic growth and numbers of services, towards conceptualizing poverty and exclusion as multi-faceted (Bennett and Roche, 2000). In addition, the indexes contain measures that expand more traditional ways of measuring poverty. For instance, instead of measuring life expectancy at birth, the indexes measure numbers dying before age 60. This takes the concept a step further to make the precedent a long life instead of infant survival. In addition to adult literacy and school enrolment, the indexes also considers "functional illiteracy". The Indexes measure gender differences as well, such as the number of women in political positions. Based on one of the Indexes, the Human Development Index (HDI), country results may look quite positive. But, the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) may suggest quite different stories (Bennett & Roche, 2000).

Success Measures, Development Leadership Network (Boston). The Development Leadership Network (DLN), in partnership with the McCauley Institute, created the Success Measures Project. Hundreds of practitioners of community

organizations in the United States had input into the development of this project. It is now a web-based resource centre that encourages local input and locally relevant indicators. This project focused on indicators of outcomes of social programs, as opposed to solely outputs (DLN, 2000). One key question asked in the project was: How does success in one community look different from success in another community? Practitioners draw on what is relevant from place to place, and they recognize the need for cities and regions to understand the unique experiences of their people, as opposed to assuming universality. The Success Measures' web-based center was described as a place for identifying, measuring, tracking, reporting, and aggregating outcomes. Practitioners emphasized that developing “success measures” or ways to measure long-term outcomes is not just about obtaining funding, but sustaining organizations (DLN, 2000).

The Success Measures Project was launched in 1997 and the Success Measures Guidebook was developed. Similar to the goals of the Bank of Knowledge, this guidebook outlines categories, topics, and indicators under each area of focus. The guidebook even provides instruction around how to use indicators. Communities can choose which indicators are relevant to them, and the guidebook and web sites provide models as opposed to exact ways that they expect other communities to measure constructs. The idea is for community organizations to use the resources as helpful outlines in measuring long-term outcomes of their programs. Developers assumed that there are shared indicators despite local dynamics, but they must also be locally-relevant.

The methodology for developing the guidebook and web base consisted of consulting with stakeholders on selected topics, in the form of working groups. This methodology and the web-based center are congruent with the intentions of the Social

Planning Council of Ottawa for the Bank of Knowledge. There is much value in providing models of indicator development and measures for organizations to use. Many practitioners are not experienced in designing surveys and ways of measuring and evaluating, and thus, easily accessible centres for frameworks and indicators would be highly beneficial.

In the area of housing programs, specific indicators used were based on the goal of providing affordable, good-quality homes. Long-term impacts of housing programs would be to develop wealth to hand down to children or the next generation, to enhance the property value of communities, to strengthen the sense of community, and to build capacities to address problems. From these examples it is clear that the Success Measures project values qualitative and quantitative measures, as well as objective and subjective measures. Additional indicators of long-term outcomes for housing programs could be changes in individuals and families from owning a house or renting at a reasonable price, and/or in a safe, inviting community. Improved aesthetics, job creation, and adding to the “social fabric” are also restored through housing programs. Discussions around indicators of housing programs, when conducted with a community in an open-ended process, revealed these dynamics and numerous possibilities for measuring “success”.

Community Quality of Life Project (Metropolitan Toronto). Raphael, et al. (1999) conducted a study of two communities based in Metropolitan Toronto. Their approach was participatory and community-based, including a focus on qualitative ways to interpret quality of life. Researchers asked community members, service providers, and elected representatives to consider community factors that affect community members'

quality of life. Overall, the study sought to define quality of life from the perspective of its members, identifying issues that community members themselves saw as affecting their health and well-being. Hence, it was a consideration of community quality of life within the framework of individual functioning and well-being.

Researchers focused on community members' perceptions in focus groups. They asked the following questions:

- What is it about your neighbourhood or community that makes life good for you and the people you care about?
- What is it about your neighbourhood and community that does not make life good for you and the people you care about?
- What are some of the things in this neighbourhood or community that help you cope or manage when you or your family have problems?
- What would you like to see in this neighbourhood that would help you cope or manage when you have problems?

(Raphael et al., 1999)

They also interviewed community workers and politicians from these areas, asking similar questions. In some situations, community members interviewed other community members. Using the constant comparative method of analysis, they formed categories based on the findings. These categories were used as case studies, showing the uniqueness of communities, and the ideals that communities would like to achieve. This case study informed the development of my research questions around how to draw out individuals' perceptions of quality of life.

European Project on Poverty Indicators. The European Project on Poverty Indicators started development of indicators by reflecting the experience of people living in poverty. Researchers began with people's everyday experiences even though the project spanned the European Union and was used to determine indicators of poverty at a country-wide level. Similar to the Success Measures Project, this project encouraged six

countries in the European Union to develop their own participatory methods and to be locally relevant. Developers of this project recognized that the local sphere is most relevant to individuals and thus can be interpreted by individuals most easily.

Participants shared their concepts and constructs of poverty from their life experiences, and they answered the question: What does "being poor" mean to you? (Hacourt, 2003).

One category of indicators in the study was Obstacles to Accessing Employment based on Discrimination issues. Indicators in this category were the 'number of persons prevented from accessing employment by child care problems', as well as the 'number of persons prevented from accessing employment based on mobility difficulties'. Both would be determined by an employment survey. In another category based on housing, indicators included quantitative measures of poor housing, as well as 'persons dissatisfied with their housing' (housing quality and the quality of the environment). Seeing this indicator used at a national level encouraged me, in my thesis, to recommend indicators based on community members' reported feelings, perceptions, and dissatisfaction. As examples of measuring participation, indicators for the category of Participation included: knowledge, a voice, debate, and decisions. Another indicator of participation was that low-income individuals are connected with a sports club, cultural association, trade union, network, consumer/service user group, or local independent organization (Hacourt, 2003). Hacourt's report provided me with relevant examples of the range of indicators that result when participatory methods and principles are applied to development.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Participatory rural appraisal is a form of participatory research and development. PRA methods “shift the normal balance from closed to open, from individual to group, from verbal to visual, and from measuring to comparing” (Chambers, 1997, 104). There are many methods in the PRA process, but they share common characteristics, such as visual representations, group work, and being open to unexpected and surprising results. Actual methods include creating maps, impact flow diagrams, matrix scoring, documenting daily routines, creating visual rankings, and card sorting

Chambers (1997) provided examples of using PRA techniques when developing indicators of wealth and well-being. Well-being is conventionally determined by economic welfare, measured by income level, collected using questionnaires, and compared based on pre-determined income-poverty lines. PRA has revealed alternative, multi-dimensions of well-being. Some members of rural communities placed cards representing each household in their neighbourhoods in piles, ranking their wealth and well-being. Reasons for the rankings were discussed among participants, often revealing many dimensions of well-being. Another example was of local community members producing a matrix of “sources of income”, showing that much less importance was placed on obtaining a higher income when compared to having more time at home, or involvement in neighbours’ lives.

Households revealing high well-being measures based on PRA methods have often had low scores based on income measures, showing that income and other measures of well-being are not necessarily related. In one example, Chambers (1997) reported that local community members felt that individuals living in “better housing” were perceived

as less well off because they were renting, while individuals living in cardboard houses owned their property, and were considered better off.

Some indicators of wealth and well-being, as a result of PRA processes, have been quality of housing, number of items of clothing or furniture, land-holding size, physical health, and mental well-being. Also, social constructs such as prestige, respect, conduct, local political influence have also been identified as important measures of wealth and well-being using PRA methods. Chambers (1997) as well as Guijt (1998) informed the application of PRA techniques in this thesis.

Conclusion of Literature Review

When developing the methodology for this project I was encouraged to read many examples of developing local indicators, drawing on perspectives and goals for quality of life of community members who were most immediately impacted by social programs. I used these case examples to form my research questions, to understand the possibilities within the Bank of Knowledge, and to reason that it is possible for people's everyday life stories to drive development of indicators. Hence, this drives the development of evaluation tools. I was encouraged to see that qualitative approaches have complemented quantitative approaches, and that participatory techniques, such as PRA, are suitable when developing local indicators.

Funders presently request evaluations that display the impacts of social programs, asking for proof of change in people's everyday lives (Hall et al., 2003). I found when conducting this literature review that practitioners of the community indicator approach have developed systematic ways for voluntary sector organizations, and various levels of government, to draw out people's life circumstances. In this way, organizations stay

accountable to funders, but they also account for communities' priorities in their evaluations.

I used my literature review of visible and ethnic minorities, particularly women and youth, to provide me with background knowledge of issues that the participants of the group interviews might describe. I later referred back to this literature review in order to confirm whether my findings were consistent with those of other researchers. At the same time, I strove, first and foremost, to develop indicators based on participants' responses. The credibility of this study is enhanced by the comparison of participants' responses with those of other researchers, but the indicators were also locally-based. I was astounded by the reports of discrimination and marginalization of visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa-based and Canada-wide literature. This increased my desire to document women's stories locally and to use them to influence social change in ways that the Ottawa community is already moving in.

5.0 Methodology

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the research design and data analysis of this thesis project:

How do visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa perceive the quality of their lives?

How do visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa perceive the effects of social programs on the quality of their lives?

Research Design

I chose a qualitative design for this project in order to collect detailed information of visible and ethnic minority women's perceptions of quality of life in their own words. These perceptions could then reveal new categories and concepts, which may not yet have been considered when measuring quality of life in Ottawa. Qualitative research is a particularly "useful approach to research when the purpose is to understand meaning and perceptions from those under study" (Meadows et al., 2001).

I used participatory research techniques in the three group interviews that I conducted. For data collection I incorporated Participatory Rural Appraisal diagramming and card sorting activities into the group interviews. I used open-ended, broad research questions in order to capture the "unexpecteds" of responses as well (Chambers, 1997). The approaches that I used did not direct the participants to respond in ways that they thought might be acceptable to researchers or outsiders. Instead, I designed the group interviews so that they would provide information based on their own thoughts around their everyday living.

Recruitment and Sampling

I used purposeful sampling techniques for recruitment. According to Patton (2002), researchers use purposeful sampling to select participants that will provide rich information to the study, and provide insight that is of central importance to the purpose of a research study. I used homogeneous samples and criterion-based samples, which are conceptualized as subtypes of purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). In each group interview, participants were culturally homogeneous, based on either country-of-origin or language. This ensured that women attending had relatively common cultural backgrounds, which I assumed would encourage easier interactions and knowledge sharing among one another. In each of the interviews, the participants knew each other, which was also beneficial for the same reasons. I established the following additional criteria for sampling as well: participants were immigrant and refugee women who were able to communicate in English, and participants were from groups who were in Canada for various time periods (five to twenty years), from countries of origin from different continents, and with various immigration histories (e.g. immigrants and refugees).

For recruitment I also used snowball sampling (Patton, 2002). I contacted community leaders and community developers in Ottawa, who were connected with local community health centres, local agencies serving immigrants, and ethnic associations. I began by contacting individuals that I already knew in the Ottawa community, based on a past community-based research project in which I had been involved. I also contacted individuals recommended by my Carleton University supervisor and second reader. These initial contacts provided further information about other community leaders. Because some contacts did not result in group interviews for various reasons (e.g.

individuals were too busy or community group members were not in close enough contact with each other to organize themselves), I could not predict completely which groups I would interview and which I would not. As a result, I was not able to fulfill some additional criteria that I had originally desired. For instance, I sought to interview groups from ethnic communities that were of various sizes in Ottawa. The resulting three groups that I interviewed were from ethnic communities that were quite large in Ottawa. In addition, I did not interview groups who were not immigrants or refugees (born in Canada), which was another possibility for groups to include that I had originally considered.

I introduced my project to community leaders, orally as well as through a project information letter (see Appendix A). The community leaders then chose to (or not to) organize participants for a group interview, based on the selection criteria for the interviews as well as their availability. These key informants also provided me with advice about cultural appropriateness during the interviews (e.g. tape recording and discussing personal issues). I contacted many community developers who encouraged me and told me that research around developing grassroots ways of evaluating quality of life was definitely worthwhile and a current need in the voluntary sector in Ottawa. They often provided me with additional community leaders' names and contact information. Three of them brought together women in their communities to form the group interviews for this project.

In each of the resulting three group interviews, participants were women who were from the same ethnic or language group. They were a group of four Somali women from a local community health centre, four Arabic-speaking (Middle Eastern) women

from a local community health centre, and three Vietnamese women from a local ethnic association. In the interviews, the community leaders were given the option of participating, and all chose to participate. Hence, they are included in the sample sizes. The entire sample size for this project was eleven women. All of the participants were mothers, most were married with husbands in Ottawa, and they were between the ages of 25 and 50.

Data Collection

Participants attended one group interview, which was two and a half hours in length. They decided as a group whether they wanted to be audio taped. The Vietnamese women agreed to be audiotaped, whereas the Somali group and the Arabic-speaking group declined. All of the interviews had a note taker, and I acted as facilitator. The Somali and Arabic-speaking group interviews took place at a community health centre, which was where the participants met regularly. The Vietnamese group interview took place in the key informant's home.

At the beginning of each group interview, participants were provided with an information sheet and a written consent form, which community leaders translated orally if they did not understand (see Appendix A). The participants were then given the option of signing the consent forms (written consent) or providing oral consent. There was no deception in this study. I explained all aspects of this study to the focus group participants. The women agreed at the beginning of each interview that they would not share personal information outside of the interviews. I explained that anonymity and confidentiality would be maintained in the written reports. I did not use anyone's name

and I did not identify the participating organizations and groups. Data were kept in a secure location to which I had sole access.

The main activities in the group interviews were diagramming, card sorting, and expressing what makes life good or not good for the participants, their families, and their ethnic communities in Ottawa (please see the Participatory Workshop Facilitator Guide in Appendix C for an outline of the group interviews). Following introductions (participants used one word to describe themselves), the women thought about a typical day in their lives and recorded individually, in words or pictures, what was meaningful and important to them in a typical day. They then shared these with the group. Following this warm-up, the first interview question was stated: In your everyday lives in Ottawa, what makes life good or not good, for you, your families, and other women from your ethnic or language community? In the first group interview, the Somali women had difficulties answering this broad question. In order to address this difficulty, in the following Arabic-speaking and Vietnamese group interviews, once I posed the question, I told the participants that I would also provide them with steps to answering the question. These two groups were first invited to discuss, as a group, how to order and categorize their answers, based on the open-ended research question. Following this decision, I asked them to draw a diagram to represent their categories, using pictures and words in English and their own languages. In the Somali group I had simply posed the question and then asked the women to draw a diagram answering the research question. The women were given markers and flip chart paper. I showed an example of a diagram to the Vietnamese group of women. I did not provide an example to the other two groups because I created an example in response to the Somali women's difficulty with the

requirement, and the Arabic-speaking women did not require the sample because they began diagramming immediately. Because I believed that the participants had ownership of the data, I made the diagrams available to them at the end of the group interviews.

The second research question was: What are aspects of Ottawa that impact whether life is good for you or not? When I posed this question, I used the terms *services*, *social programs*, and *institutions* in order to specify the aspects of Ottawa that I was aiming for. The women discussed their responses to the first and second research questions using the diagram as an aid.

For the card sorting activity each participant was given four q-cards. On each q-card they were asked to write one priority that emerged anytime throughout the interview (e.g. children's education). The women then placed their cards on the table, where similar topics were combined and various meanings were discussed (e.g. children's well-being, children's education, and children's health were combined under the category "children"). Following this, the participants were given eight pennies, which they were requested to place on the cards, representing their priorities, with more pennies meaning higher priorities. Finally, the women discussed the resulting distribution of pennies.

Analysis

Throughout the analysis, I sought to conduct, first and foremost, emic analyses, which begin with participants' perceptions (Patton, 2002). I felt that this process reflected a participatory approach, valuing the expertise of participants of the project as a first priority. I divided the analysis into two components. The first piece was a case-by-case analysis, in which I developed case records of each group interview, based on the transcripts and notes. The case records allowed me to pull together and organize the data

into comprehensive summaries (Patton, 2002). These case records were formed based on the categories that participants created in the interviews. Patton (2002) described this type of case record as *inductive*, and identified that the emerging categories were *indigenous typologies*. In the case records, I did not introduce my personal ideas, outside theories, or past research, although inevitably my own perspectives and interpretations were involved. But, I was simply more aware of prioritizing the participants' stories and perspectives above my own understandings.

For the second phase of analysis I combined the case records in order to present the complete results of the study. I began this process by developing two matrices. Miles and Huberman (1994) encourage the use of matrices in order to analyze and order qualitative data and also to display data in simplified ways for readers. In the first matrix I drew out categories that all participants referred to, either in discussions, card sorting, or diagramming. I then noted what each group discussed within these categories. Following this matrix, I developed findings statements from each category. I then developed a second matrix in which I determined which group interviews contributed to these findings, literature that reinforced these findings, and whether social inclusion or social capital theories further explained the findings.

By combining the cases in the second part of the analysis, I created a picture of some visible and ethnic minority women's perceptions of quality of life in Ottawa, combining life experiences of women from various backgrounds. Although I could not use all of the categories that the women created in this analysis (the categories were entirely different from group to group), the process was still primarily inductive because I drew on topics that the women identified and named in the interviews, including those

identified in the card sorting activity. Following the exhaustion of categories identified by the participants, I added additional categories that I found in the case records, which the women did not necessarily name as categories, but that I felt had emerged as key themes throughout the discussions. I compared my resulting categories and findings with the literature and social theories (social inclusion and social capital), as they were relevant to various findings.

As a final piece of analysis, I developed the indicators of quality of life of visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa. I based these on the perceptions of the participants, and focused on producing indicators that were a balance between grasping the actual long-term outcomes of social programs, which indicate changes in the everyday lives of individuals, as well as indicators that may be more easily measurable or accessible by community organizations (e.g. surveys, data sets, Statistics Canada censuses).

Ensuring Quality

Researchers, theorists, and evaluators have developed numerous approaches to ensuring the quality of a research project, often using sets of criteria to ensure that a project meets selected standards of quality. In quantitative research these criteria are validity (the extent to which a project/instrument accurately measures the concept that it is intended to measure) and reliability (the ability of a project/instrument to yield consistent and stable results with repeated use) (Patton, 2002). Ensuring quality in qualitative projects often involves criteria that are similar to the concepts of validity and reliability (e.g. credibility and transferability), as well perspectives and theoretical frameworks that are completely different when compared to validity and reliability, such

as appropriateness, utility, practicality, accuracy, propriety, and relevance. Many of these latter qualitative criteria are situational and context-bound. Patton (2002, 1997) claimed that criteria for judging quality vary from project to project, and depend on the intentions of the inquiries and the users of the research or evaluation. I ensured the quality of this present thesis project using the criteria of credibility, utility, relevance, dependability, confirmability, and integrity.

Credibility is similar to validity; it is the correspondence between the participants' perceptions or realities and the researchers' reports. I used the following strategies in order to ensure credibility of this thesis project. I confirmed the main issues and categories that I interpreted during the group interviews, by inviting feedback throughout the interview process. Participants stated their priorities and concepts in numerous ways in the interviews, through the warm-ups (describing a typical day), the discussion, diagramming, and card sorting activity. By using visual techniques, such as diagrams and charts, the process was more visible for the participants, leaving opportunity for scrutiny and fine-tuning.

I also provided participants with copies of the case records in order to enhance credibility (i.e. member check). I did this by emailing the case records to the community leaders, and requesting that they pass the records on to the participants. I then asked that they review the records and provide feedback around any concerns that they may have about the accuracy of the case record. I gave them a deadline (two weeks) to respond by and said that I would assume that they were in agreement with the records if I did not hear from them by that time. I received feedback from the Vietnamese women, who confirmed that one of their participants was an immigrant, as opposed to all of them

being refugees (which I had assumed). Besides this change, they confirmed that they were in agreement with the contents of their case record. Finally, I also checked for consistency and credibility by checking the findings of this study with the existing literature.

I also used the criteria of utility and relevance, which are key when conducting utilization-focused evaluations (Patton, 1997). The intended user of this project is primarily the Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPCO). I discussed the project design with the intended user prior to collecting data, and the design was based on the information needs of the SPCO.

Dependability and confirmability require thick description, and so I detailed and recorded each step of the research process, and I also tracked the change process, in order to ensure that data and results could be tracked to their sources. I sought to document the process in detail so that the reader could follow the interpretations and indicators that were the products of this project (Mertens, 2005).

Overall, I acknowledged that all texts are incomplete and represent specific positions on an issue. I sought integrity in analysis, by making biases clear and explicit, searching for alternative themes and divergent patterns, and searching for the best-fit solutions as opposed to the perfect fits. These criteria aid in keeping the project in the appropriate context of the researcher and the outside conditions of the project (Patton, 2002).

6.0 Case Records

Group Interview #1 - To Love Life and Have Hope

Four women attended this group interview. All were from Somalia and had arrived in Canada as refugees approximately ten years prior to the interview. We met for the interview at a community health centre in Ottawa. They all knew each other prior to the interview. This familiarity was apparent because the session held the atmosphere of a social gathering, with participants immediately comfortable sharing their life experiences.

Interestingly, as a warm-up, when asked to use one word to describe themselves, one participant used the word "informer". The women produced a plan around how they would convey what is meaningful for Somali women in Ottawa, in response to the first research question (In your everyday lives in Ottawa, what makes life good or not good, for you, your families, and other Somali women women?). They based their responses only on the knowledge of women that they knew, and even more specifically, their families. They did not want to claim to be experts on the experiences of all Somali women in Ottawa. They decided to order their responses based on four age groups. These were young Somali women (aged 18-25), the early middle generation, the late middle generation, and senior women (aged 61 and over). They did not divide the middle generation based on age group. Instead, they based this division on childbearing years. They said that the early middle generation birthed most of their children in Canada, while the late middle generation already had children when they moved to Canada and most of their children were presently teenagers.

Prior to discussing category-specific details, the participating women decided to brainstorm some words that they felt described Somali women in general in Ottawa.

These words were: selfless, stressed, overwhelmed, briefcase, business, ambitious, demanding, busy, worried, distressed, family quality time. Their final descriptions were "love life and have hope."

Young Somali Women (18-25 years)

Between cultures. The participating women were all mothers and spoke as mothers when sharing ideas about young Somali women in Ottawa. They were clearly thinking about their own daughters and nieces in particular and shared stories from this perspective. They perceived that Somali women in this age category were experiencing a tension between Canadian and Somali cultures. The women in the interview said that young Somali women are Canadian, indicating that their daughters reflected mainstream Canadian society predominantly.

The mothers felt a distance between themselves and their daughters, producing strained mother-daughter relationships. One area of contention was around issues of sexuality and dating. One participant said that she is observing many divorces in their community, particularly when a Somali woman marries into another culture. Somali parents would like their daughters to marry Somali men, yet daughters are not accepting arranged marriages. One mother said that her daughter came home one day and asked her if she could bring a boy home. Her argument was that she did not want an arranged marriage or to marry a man that her parents would recommend. Therefore, how was she expected to meet someone? Her mother said that she could bring someone home when she turned twenty, an example, perhaps, of necessary compromises made between cultures, among mothers and daughters. In conclusion, though, the women said that they usually do not feel comfortable talking about issues of sexuality with their daughters.

The mothers stated that young women feel uncomfortable sharing their thoughts with their mothers because they think that they will not be understood. The participants said that it was their fault because they are not open to hearing new things. However, sometimes daughters' perceptions of their mothers are not necessarily accurate. For example, one of the participants' daughters revealed to her mother one day how young Somali women depicted their mothers behind their backs. She said that they categorize their mothers, and identify them by different Canadian and American police or civil service departments. For example, some mothers are categorized as the *911*, others are the *FBI*, and others are *CNN*. Some mothers phone each other if they know of a daughter misbehaving, other mothers investigate, other mothers report the information to everyone, and so on. The participants of this group session laughed at the story. They said that they are not like this. They do not have time to be like this. They did, however, say that they are strict with their children. When they were growing up in Somalia they changed with the trends that came along (e.g. afros and bell bottoms). And yet, mothers in Canada have more fear of their daughters losing their culture and are therefore less open to changing trends in Canada.

The participating women highly valued family time. In Somalia they had consistent schedules for eating as a family. At this time everyone would share stories about their daily affairs. Along with their distance due to varying cultural values between mothers and daughters, the mothers also said that they feel a communication gap in Somali families here in Ottawa. It is more difficult in Canadian society for families to arrange time together. When they do have time together, hi-tech things like cell phones, the internet, and television become distractions and spread them apart. This breakdown

of family was also reported on a wider scale, with parents and children divided between Somalia and Canada. Many Somali youth here in Ottawa are growing up in single parent families. Many fathers of Somali women in this age group are still in Somalia.

Discouraged in their search for employment. The participants reported that young Somali women, however Canadian they may seem, do have unique experiences when compared to other young people their age. For example, compared to mainstream youth, the participating women observed lower morale in their young women. They see their schoolmates, who are not Somali, getting good jobs (e.g. government jobs), while the young Somali women are not being hired in the same positions. They feel that there is no point to being ambitious because they have the same education and they are not getting these jobs. The younger Somali women have better chances at getting jobs than other Somali women of different ages because of their "access to knowledge", but not compared to mainstream youth. Because of the difficulty in finding jobs, they continue their studies and go on to achieve other degrees. Meanwhile, school loans are also a difficult burden for families to carry. They are also quick to take advice from others about the job market. For example, they may switch areas of study based on which careers they are told will lead them to better job opportunities. They are often in transition because they get feedback that the field they are in will not lead to jobs. At the same time they may receive mixed messages or misinformed advice, while trying very hard to meet the job market.

Early Middle Generation (Child-bearing age)

When the discussion turned to this age category, the participating women emphasized that this group of women is perhaps facing the greatest challenges in Ottawa

at this time. Their lack of support and isolation seem to be extremely difficult. One participant stated, "They're really suffering".

Young children and young marriages in a new country. These women appeared to be doing everything on their own. According to the participants, they have no family planning (i.e. no space between their children). The participants said that Somali women were more knowledgeable of family planning when living in Somalia. In addition to having many young children to care for, the women do not have family support from extended family, which was always available in Somalia. Husbands also have limited parenting skills and are not supporting their wives in child rearing. This was also attributed to a lack of extended family because often parenting skills are learned from extended family, and this teaching is no longer present. Childcare is needed but women are not accessing childcare, particularly because they cannot afford it. These difficulties add more and more expectations on wives and mothers.

The participating women said that they have a lack of conflict resolution skills in their marriages. However, they are not accessing resources, such as counseling, for help. They do not use the community resources (i.e. Somali resources) and they are not comfortable using mainstream services either.

Employment and child rearing choices. The early middle generation women also struggle with personal development. They do not go to school because they have to decide between having children or improving their own education, and they choose their children. The participants did report, however, that Somali women seem to have better chances at employment than Somali men. The men get very frustrated with the lack of

jobs. The women's explanation for this was that "black men" have a very hard time "moving up the ladder".

Late Middle Generation

When participants reached this category in the discussion, they said, "This is us." They all identified themselves in this category and spoke about themselves when sharing ideas around what makes life "good" and "not good" for the "late middle generation" of Somali women in Ottawa. They began by describing their situation when they arrived in Canada. Many were mothers with young children (usually with many children, approx. six), often as single mothers because their husbands were not with them. Thus, they were forced to depend on social assistance and live in social housing. Many were educated in numerous languages.

Understanding the Canadian education system. They did not know anything about Canada when they arrived. One participant spoke about the Canadian education system in order to illustrate their lack of familiarity. In Somalia the teachers were expected to take on most of the responsibility for their students' education. Teachers monitored whether their children were doing their school work and sought them out when they were not doing well. The school was responsible if children's work was not done. In Canada, the system is quite different. The responsibility is left to the parents to make sure that their children are doing well in school. They are expected to take the time to help them with school work. Parents need to be involved in the school and to participate in their children's schooling, but as one mother said, "We did not know". Children are affected by this confusion.

Another example of this lack of information was the streaming system in Canada. Children choose the stream that either leads to university or the stream that leads to either college or no post-secondary education. Because the Somali parents did not understand the system, their children were placed in streams in which they could not attend university. The mothers found out when it was very late. Because they did not understand the implications for the different streams, the children arrived at the end of high school and had to take extra courses because they were told that they could not yet go to university.

Information sharing and community learning. When reflecting on their initial experiences in Canada compared to the place they are at now, the women made comments such as the following: "We now know," "With time we change," and, "The community learned." They have learned more about Canadian systems, and they noted that there are many activists in their community. For example, people often tell each other what they need to know, learning through informal networking. In addition, participants felt that some outside bodies have made a difference in the Somali community in Ottawa, such as Multicultural Liaison Officers¹, city leaders, and educators.

The women noted that their children have also grown now, and observed some effects on their children, saying, "We worry for them." They noted a cultural difference in diet, stating that their children eat fast food and do not necessarily get enough nutrients. They also said that their children do not work as hard as they do, and that these

¹ The Multicultural Liaison Officer Program is an initiative of the Ottawa Community Immigrant Serving Organization (OCISO) www.ociso.org. Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLO's) are assigned to schools in order to address the settlement needs of students and families who are newcomers to Canada.

were differences in work ethic. They said that their uncertainty about Canadian culture and their fears have had negative effects on their children.

Various employment experiences. When discussing their experiences in employment, they shared information about their own jobs. One woman was lucky and obtained her Canadian qualifications quickly, however, they noted that some women must start at the very beginning, with ESL classes and then completing a high school diploma. One participant was a teacher in Somalia, and she did not know how to get her credentials when she arrived and so she did “odd jobs.” In addition, she said that her husband's education and qualifications made them ineligible for social assistance, which was a problem for them. Another woman was a public health professional, but had not had a chance to go back to school because she was busy with her family. And another participant began working as an interpreter here in Ottawa. They said that they are still learning.

Central role of religion. When doing the warm up activity for this interview, the women all shared that reading the Qur'an was an important part of each day. I have chosen to place this point under this category because I do not know if it is a major part of the younger women's lives. The women noted that they rise early in order to pray and read. One woman wakes at 4am and studies the Qur'an for two hours. One participant gave Qur'an lessons to children, which was very rewarding to her. She said, "I feel happy knowing that I've helped the community".

Seniors - The Older Generation (Aged 61 Years and Older)

Isolation. The participants explained that in Somalia all women (including those without a formal education) play significant roles in the community. They work hard and

they are community developers, but it is different here, particularly for seniors. They feel less useful and cannot be involved in the community as they would like to be. The seniors were described as having a loss of independence, receiving no appreciation, feeling like they are losing their culture, inactive (health problems because of no activity), longing for home, and isolated. They feel as though they are losing their value. No one speaks to them or listens to them, which makes them feel unappreciated.

Lack of understanding of English or French was reported to be a huge barrier for seniors and a significant challenge because not knowing the language affects all aspects of life. Even if seniors can do everything, and even if they are healthy, the language barrier is an isolating factor. Participants shared that seniors feel happy when they can reconnect with children and families, and they enjoy gatherings of the Somali community in Ottawa. Although mainstream seniors' programs exist (e.g. bingo), these do not attract Somali seniors, while programs are needed that are more specific to their cultures. The participating women also mentioned the importance of the mosque and prayer to the seniors.

Social Housing

When asked the second research question (What are aspects of Ottawa that impact whether life is good for you or not?), the participants had already provided much information on social programs. They added information in the area of social housing, which had not been previously discussed. First, they mentioned that there is a lot of Diabetes in their community, and then moved on to discussing social housing because most Somali families in Ottawa live in social housing. The stereotypes and stigmas of social housing weigh on the children in particular. The police are always around, often

do not listen, and sometimes approach Somali youth for no reason. Neighbours (who are not in social housing) are not welcoming, and do not respect them or speak with them. They "name call" their children and tell them to go back home. Participants said that is often the adults who act like this, noting that neighbours are hostile in community meetings. They do see that their children benefit from the diversity, however, in that they have friends from all communities.

They mentioned that in social housing there is a lot of drinking and drugs. When they tell the police, they do not listen or follow up. There are many negative stereotypes. One participant reported a story, where at one neighbourhood meeting everyone was openly complaining about the Somali refugees. One Somali woman spoke up and said that they were guests in Canada. If the neighbours wanted them to go home to Somalia, she suggested that someone buy a plane ticket for them and they would go home. This woman said that they should have a chance to get to know Canada. She said to give their children ten years and see how the Somali community was then.

The participants said that they wished they had known what came with living in social housing when they came, for they have had to advocate for the rights of families living in these neighbourhoods. They said that although, overall, these neighbourhoods are fine, it is often their reputations and stereotypes that are the problem. They wish they had told prior to coming and that maybe the reputations are from things that happened long ago, but it is not so bad anymore.

Group Interview #2

*"Some consider their homes, families, their first priority.
I am one of those."*

This group was comprised of four Arabic-speaking women. When recruited, the women were identified as a group based on their language as opposed to their country of origin. It is important to point out, however, that these women were immigrants from the Middle East (Saudi Arabia and Lebanon). Hence, their origins and immigration experiences were distinct from the Somali group (who were Arabic speaking as well as Somali speaking). At the end of the group interview the women, all of whom knew each other, said that they enjoyed themselves and all appeared relaxed throughout the session. The community leader who had organized the women to attend the group interview, interpreted the consent process and parts of the interview for participants who asked for interpretation. The other participants attended common programs at the community health centre, where the group interview was held. Although the women did not identify their specific ages, all were mothers between 25 and 50 years old.

When completing the warm-up exercise, describing a typical day, one woman admitted that she did not follow instructions, but she wrote the following paragraph (in English) that revealed her perspective on what is meaningful to her:

I believe every person in this life looks at him/her self in different way. When I want to be more specific and talk about women, some women believe they can be useful when they are out of their homes, some consider their homes, families, their first priority. I am one of those. I look at my kids as first priority. So after I left my previous job I couldn't find the suitable job I am looking for where I can really fit in. I chose to stay with my kids as a normal typical mother and housewife.

The women considered how to order their responses to the first research question, by initially designing a diagram to lead the discussion. At this stage of the interview, the

women felt it was important to note that many of their experiences in Ottawa and meaningful aspects of life were not necessarily exclusive to them as Arabic-speaking women. They identified categories that expressed this stance. These categories were "Canadian", "Immigrant", and "Arabic Women". They also included the category of "Women" originally but did not include it in the diagram or with any further discussion. Please see Figure 1.0 for the resulting diagram that the women drew of these categories. In the following case report I note the discussions that the women had that fit into these categories. I then add notes on issues that they did not identify within their categories, but which they discussed in the interview.

Canadian

The participating women did not discuss extensively certain experiences within this category. They mentioned that the difficult weather is an issue affecting all Canadians, as well as financial issues and stress around taxes. Even though this category was not discussed in depth, its very presence and identification shows that the participants were concerned about acknowledging that many Canadians share experiences, whether they have lived in Canada for a long period of time or whether they have only recently arrived. They did not want to claim that their experiences were always unique.

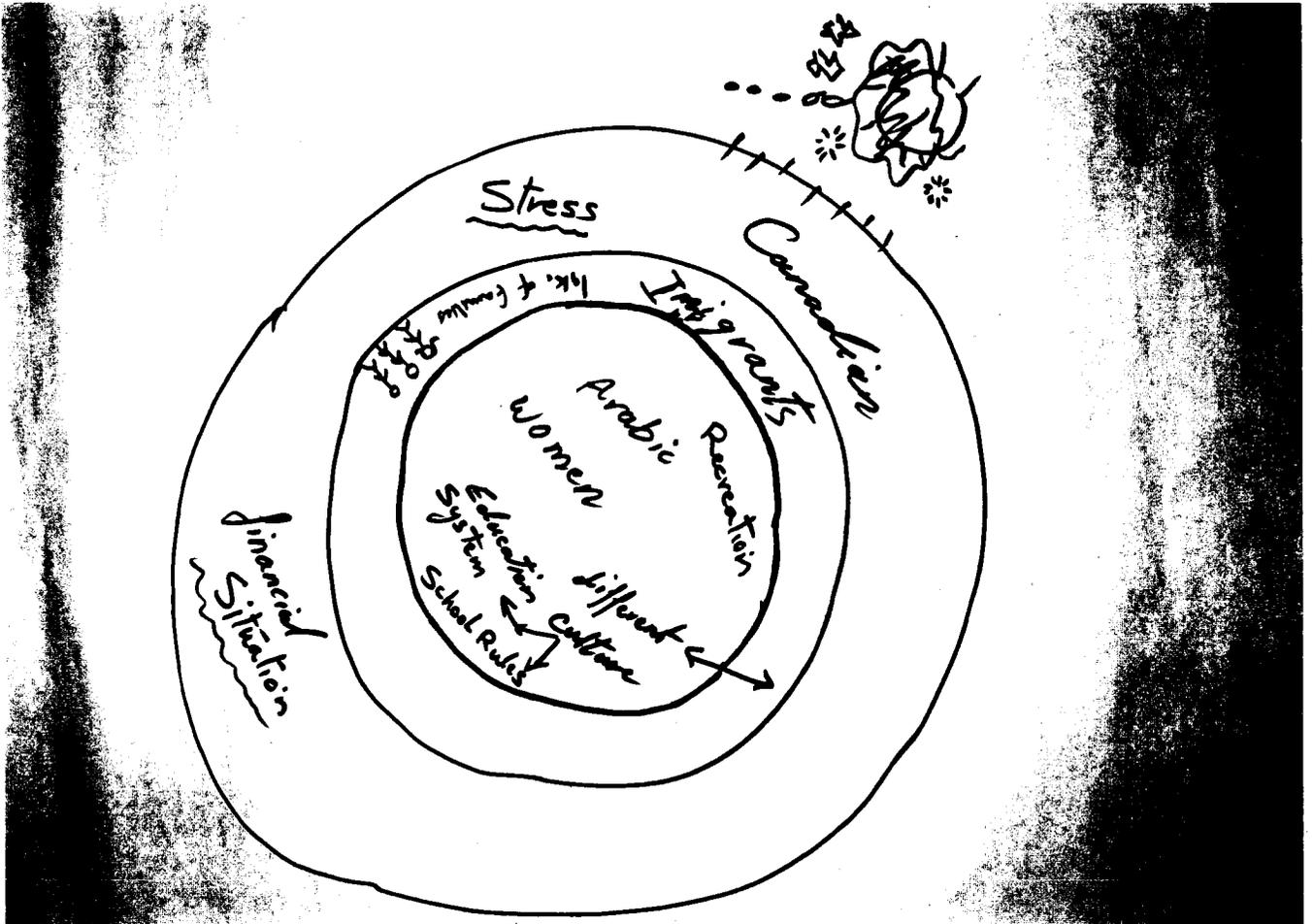


Figure 1.0. Photo of the Arabic-speaking women's diagram, distinguishing groups impacted by various social issues.

Immigrants

The participating women noted that all immigrants struggle financially and emotionally when they come to a new country. Immigrants also experience isolation from their extended families. One participant said, "Most people care about their home culture". The women discussed an important and recent policy change - immigrants can now bring their family members as landed immigrants in one year following their own immigration, something that used to be a ten-year process. Immigrants miss their families enormously, and it is "too, too important" that they find people to help them when they arrive.

Arabic Women

Children and the Canadian education system. The participants stated that handling cultural differences is a continuous tension that all immigrants face. However, they illustrated this point by discussing an example that they personalized under the category of *Arabic women*. The women were concerned for their children in Canada's education system. All agreed that they find it challenging to handle the differences between how they raise their children at home and the Canadian education system and schools' rules around discipline.

They returned to this topic continuously, particularly because one woman spoke personally about her struggle for her son within this system. At the time of the group interview, she had been dealing with conflicting perspectives (between her and the school's teachers and principal) regarding how her son should react to bullying situations in his school. This conflict resulted in this participant removing her son from his school

and opting for home schooling, although if she could have afforded private school she would have sent him to a culturally-specific private school.

More specifically, the school (principal and teachers) told the boy to walk away when he was bullied. The mother believed that this was not acceptable. In this group interview she said, "Right is right and wrong is wrong". She believed in self-defense and that if someone hits you, you should strike back. If someone takes something from you, you can take it back. She said that children fight when they have rest time (recess). But, if children tell the teacher, the teacher does not do anything. Therefore, her son did not trust telling his teacher, and when he defended himself, he was removed from school for two days, while the one who bullied in the first place was not punished. The son did not want to be bad, but was pushed to do this. In one incident her son's head was put in the snow and he could not retaliate. She asked, if she lost her son, would she be compensated? She spoke of a girl who hung herself because of bullying at school. She was afraid that if her son did not retaliate, he could die.

The women agreed that bullying is a very big issue in Canadian schools, and it is not a problem in the Middle East at all. In Canada people learn to be bullies, the bullied, or bystanders. One woman said that the Canadian system encourages a "Jungle Law" in their eyes and it is "not a fair system". In the Middle East their education ministry is called the "Ministry of Discipline and Teaching". This is not *discipline* in the negative sense, but involves positive values. As another example of conflicting cultural expectations, one participant said that her son was given a condom at school. The education system in Canada teaches about sexuality much differently than the

participants would like their children to learn. They believe that this should be taught at home and that they should not be taught everything all at once.

They continued by discussing their observations about seeing morals taken out of the school system. Schools do not teach children values, and as a result, they see that there is a lack of respect in schools. For example, their children learn to use informal names for their teachers, and this affects the home environment as well. The participants felt that due to influence of Canadian society there is no special place for parents in the family anymore. In Arabic culture, the teacher is honoured and parents are well respected. Here mothers feel that they are not compensated as they see their children struggling, and mothers feel as if they are not doing their job. Mothers are seen through the eyes of their children; they are reflected in their children and their identity is in their children. Therefore, when their children are struggling in the Canadian system, they feel as if they are losing a part of themselves.

At the same time that the participating women were conveying their distress, they said that they did not believe their negative experiences reflect Canadian society as a whole. They attributed these experiences to specific schools, principals, and teachers. Often there are moral values on which everyone agrees and yet that are not enforced.

While distressed when discussing this problem in schools, the participants did present reflections around solutions. They said that bullying problems must be solved at the roots instead of spending money on correctional institutes. They suggested that recreation centres could set up meetings "to make the gap smaller between us and them." One purpose of this would be to share the way that people think, which would help to

solve problems. They said that meetings should happen every two to three months instead of letting a problem accumulate throughout the year.

Cultural comparisons in religion and employment. The participants said that all immigrants miss their extended families but they also felt that they had stronger attachments to their home cultures than immigrants from other countries. They believe that this had to do with their religion (Muslim). One woman noted that reading from the Qur'an was an important daily activity to her. She thanks God for where she is in life, and at work she prays in chaotic situations and it helps her to calm down. They also do not feel that it is difficult here to follow a religion. They noted that their religion and culture were not prohibited and this was good. In contrast, in other countries (e.g. France) wearing a hijab is prohibited. One participant experienced being stared at in a German Airport due to the way that she was dressed, but they felt that in Canada no one interfered with their religion. There were, however, other problems arising when cultures clashed (e.g. educational approaches), which had undertones of racial problems. One participant relayed an experience of subtle racism in a job interview. The interviewers asked her if she would be wearing the same clothes in the workplace that she wore to the interview (i.e. long blouse/dress and hijab), and she said yes. Even though she was qualified for the job she was not hired and she believed that the reason was because of the way that she dressed. Racism is in every country and it is subtle; here in Canada they did not feel that racism is "noticeable".

Although they did say that all Canadians experience financial strain, they also identified some experiences that were unique to them as Arabic-speaking women and their families. They noted that they often had to deal with husbands working shifts. This

meant that women often had to do some of what was known as men's roles. Because of difficulty having their credentials recognized and not finding employment, fathers have ended up going back to the Gulf and mothers have stayed in Canada, struggling with children and finances. This is extremely difficult because family is very important in their culture. They said that family is the focus, and to be a single mom is very difficult. People often return to the Middle East in these circumstances; they want to earn money and to not use welfare.

When it came to working, they stated that their degrees were not recognized because they were women; their expertise is not recognized in Canada. Therefore, they do not work and stay at home. Also, importantly, they do not want to have debts, such as OSAP. In their culture and religion they are to "take no interest and give no interest." Hence, it is extremely difficult for them to attend school.

They must pay money in order to come to Canada as immigrants, and, they pay the money because they have hope of a better life. It is a struggle to come here, and once they come they must start from scratch, whereas where they came from they had material goods, such as a car and house. When they first arrived they did not even have a car, and felt that quality of life worsened.

Social programs. When discussing social work degrees in particular (because they asked about my own background) one participant said that she is interested in social work because there is a need for social workers to work with clients from the same culture, in many cases, which goes beyond just cultural sensitivity. They noted that they need capable institutions to fund activities and programs for Arab women. They felt it was very important to have workers from specific ethnicities to work with clients of those

ethnicities. They did recognize Multicultural Liaison Officers (MLOs) in schools as an example of a good program. They suggested ensuring that the right MLOs are in the right areas of the city, matching ethnicity and language. Sometimes cultural sensitivity is not good enough, however; sometimes there is a need for someone from that specific culture.

Women-only recreation opportunities. Recreation programs in the city were not conducive to the participants' need for privacy. They stated this as a "minor problem" and said that they would like affordable spaces for women only. They suggested that recreation centres open only for women for half a day. One participant used to be a member of Good Life² for women, while she had a job. But, many women cannot afford Good Life memberships and she came to the point where she could not go anymore.

Card Sorting Activity

The following (Table 1.0) summarizes the results of the card sorting activity. See Figure 2.0 for a photograph of the card sorting activity. Each participant decided on their areas of priority, wrote them on cards, and all participants combined their cards, while discussing meanings and wordings of their resulting categories. They had difficulty distinguishing between what they meant by "culture" and "quality of life". In the end they combined this category. Participants then placed eight pennies each on the cards, with more pennies representing higher priorities.

² *Good Life* is a corporation of fitness clubs across Canada, offering exercise equipment, group fitness classes, personal trainers, and additional fitness facilities. Selected clubs are for *Women Only*. www.goodlifefitness.com

"School's education system" "Kids - education, school"	11 pennies
"Work, recognition of credentials, and not enough jobs" "Work - don't accept Arabic certificates"	8 pennies
"Quality of life"/ "Difference in the culture" (combined) OR "Quality of life" "Difference in the culture"	7 pennies 4 pennies 3 pennies
Building connections with mainstream society	3 pennies
"Society - miss family and friends"	0 pennies
Weather, too hard, too long	0 pennies

Table 1.0. Summary of card sorting activity with Arabic-speaking women.

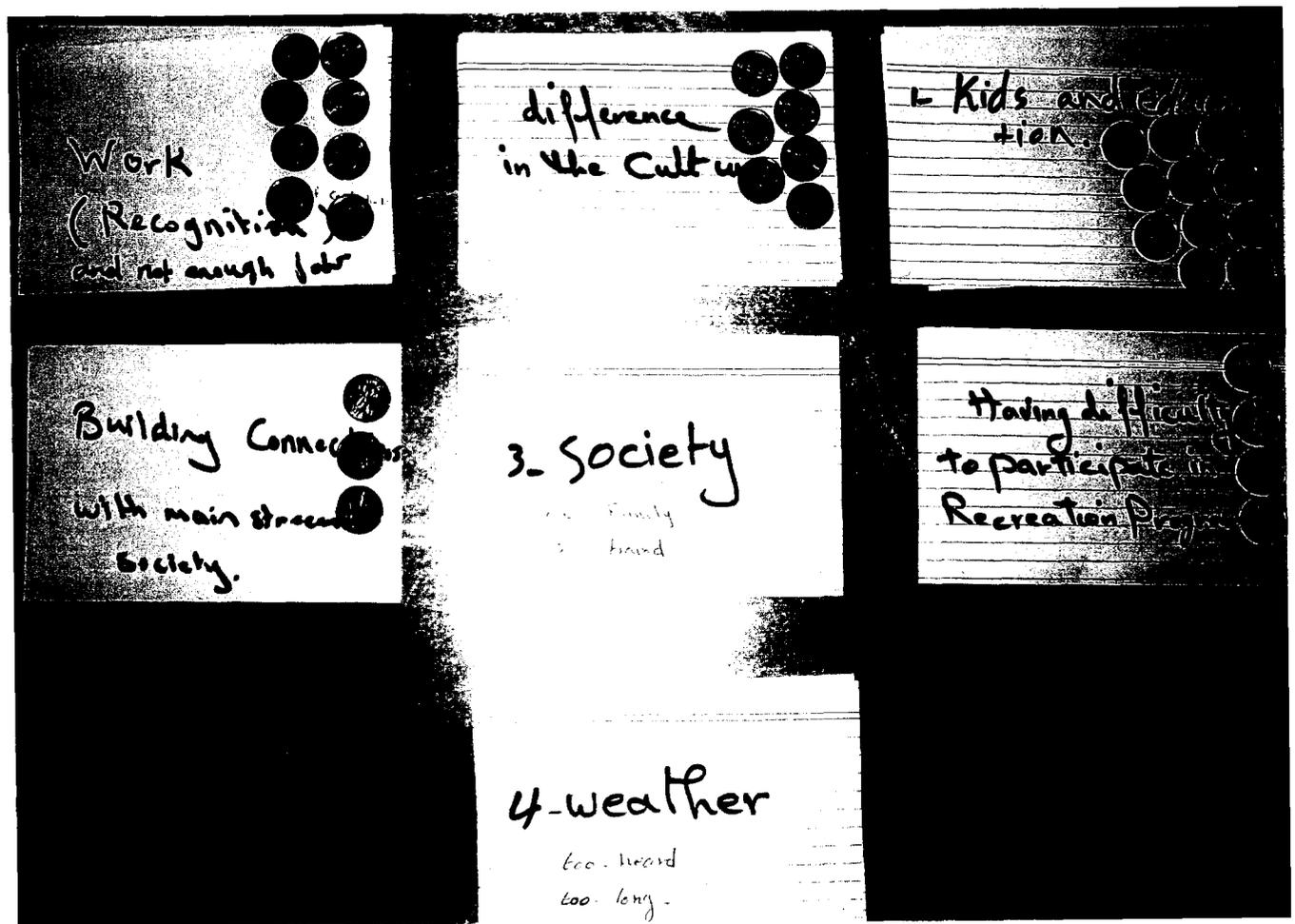


Figure 2.0 Photo of Arabic-speaking women's card sorting activity.

Group Interview #3

“If I can do something new a day it’s very valuable to me.”

Three Vietnamese women participated in this group session. With varying circumstances bringing them to Canada (some were refugees and some were immigrants), all had been in Canada for ten to twenty years, were Canadian citizens at the time of the interview, and all were friends with each other. The contact person was a community leader in the Vietnamese community in Ottawa. The interview took place in this participant's home. At the onset of the interview the participants decided that it would be helpful throughout the session to respond to questions from two perspectives: their experiences as Vietnamese women in Ottawa today, and their experiences when they first arrived in Canada.

The categories used for ordering their responses to the research questions were not established entirely at the onset. Alternatively, they emerged throughout the discussion and were written on flip-chart paper gradually. These main categories were *Family, Career, Health, and Social*. Please see Figure 3.0 for a photograph of the women's diagram, representing these categories.

One participant stated that she hates the minority distinguisher. They want to blend into society and often used the term "integrate" throughout the interview. One participant illustrated this feeling with a metaphor. Putting herself in a Canadian perspective, she said “I don’t like the idea of you changing my home.” She would welcome you into her home and make you feel comfortable. But, she would be offended if you tried to change everything in order to accommodate yourself. She said, “We have to come to a compromise to have a balance and not try to take over others’ space.”

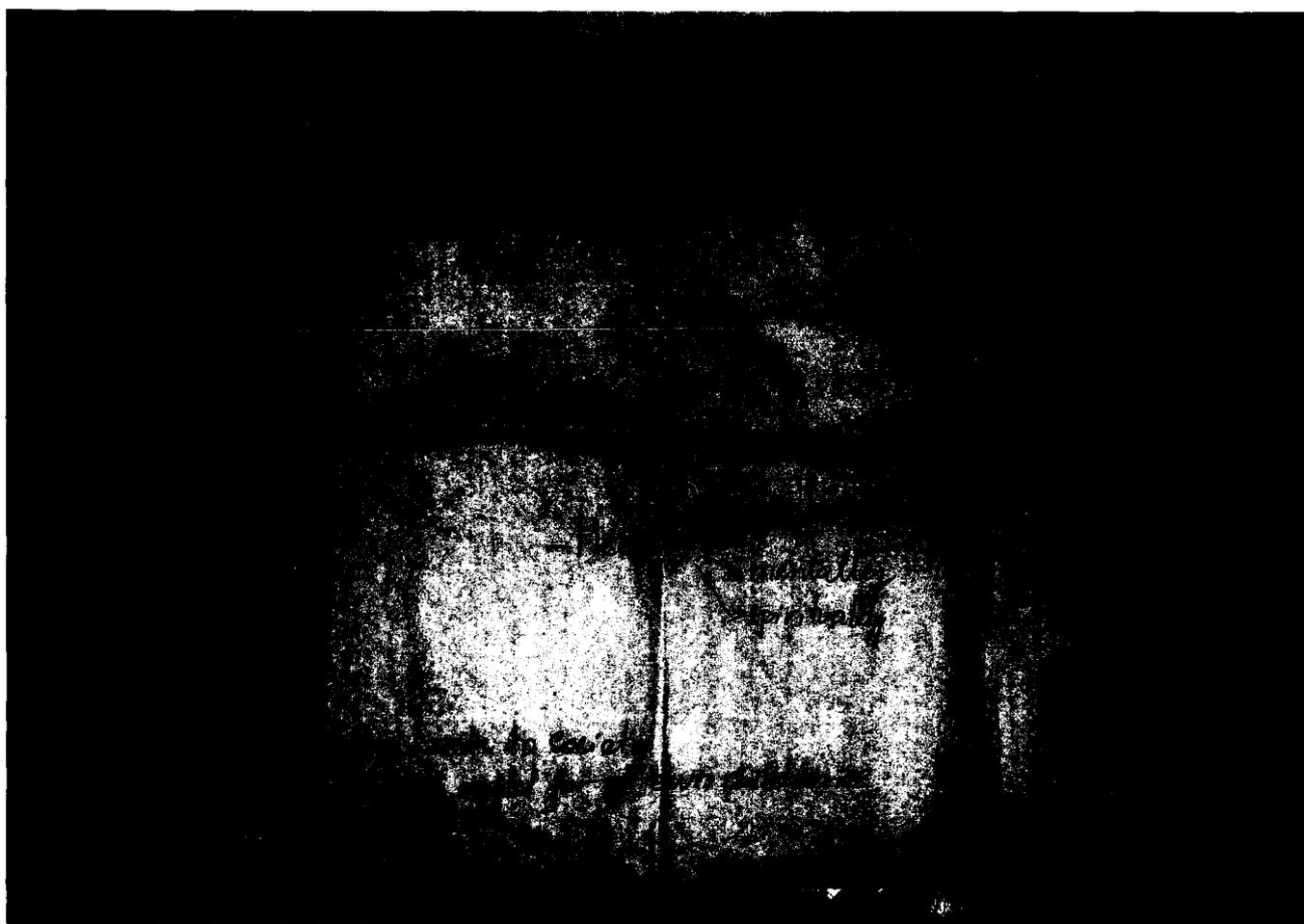


Figure 3.0 Photo of Vietnamese women's diagram, representing categories of what makes life good or not good.

It's like bad *feng shui*, changing the whole structure of other people's belongings to make it your own. As another example, she said that not being able to say "Merry Christmas" and replace it with "Happy Holidays" is taking away the freedom to express that religion.

When speaking of integrating, another participating woman reflected on when she first arrived in Canada, and said that one of her main concerns was to "get integrated.... in communication, language training, so is very critical to get integrated." Another woman said,

When I first came, I started as a newcomer, and I lived here all by myself...what was important to me at the time was to be able to fully understand English...And, to be able to understand the Canadian customs. I wanted so bad to be able to blend in, to not stand out and, you know, to be able to have a normal life. To me, normal life means that you'd be able to do everything that everyone else that you are seeing and feel that you understand what they are doing so. And another thing was to be able to blend in and that was required for me if I wanted to have to look for work.

Career

All women shared their experiences with employment in Canada when they first arrived. One participant shared, "From the time that I came to Canada until now I always wanted to have a good job and in order to do that then I have to work hard for myself... and in order to have a good job, I have to have a good education. And I have to have good English to find a job."

Another woman said,

When I was a newcomer to Canada that would be the most important thing is that to find a job. We want to be, you know, self supporting and independent and we don't believe in welfare because we have energy and with the level of knowledge that we have we can work so that is why we want to go back to school and education is really important. And for many years the way ... that we have driven all our life is that you have a good education.

And, another participant added,

The depressing issue for me as a newcomer is that I have to look for work so that I would be able to be self-sustained and not leaning on social assistance. That was one thing that I was not brought up to believe. It's not that I don't believe in the welfare system. It's just it's customary. I come from a different culture where there is no such thing as welfare so the whole idea is really new and very very difficult to get accustomed to. I want to be able to sustain myself and to be self support. To find some meaningful work. That means that I need education, and yes, I could not get it. I can't with the school because if I go to school, who's gonna support me? You know, all by myself... Just very simple at the time was, perhaps it would be two things to be able to .. understand English and to be able to go to school.

When reflecting on what is meaningful to them today, they discussed the balance between family and career, such as sacrificing family time in order to work towards "executive positions". They looked for a "normal" balance. One woman reported that she wanted to do well in her career. She did not go to school to "file knowledge". She achieved a career and wanted to find a balance, while not taking family for granted.

"To have a career and a family. And as a woman you have both of them. I don't think you can do it 50 and 50. Sometimes you have to do it 60 and 50." This participant said that it would be a good idea if women could work part-time from home. "I want to have a career and a family. So maybe what would make life easier would be if I could work at home." When speaking of what makes life good for her, she said, "For me it's to do the best at my job. You live life in order to just to give 120." And, another participant said, "I'm always thinking of having a good job."

Health (physically, mentally, spiritually)

This category was not discussed in depth but it was placed at the centre of the diagram that the women created. One participant shared, "I am concerned about my health. It doesn't matter if I'm young or now. I try to be fit...So, I feel that that is

number one priority because if I am strong then I can help others.” The women said that health included physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of well-being.

Family

When they first arrived in Canada, finding employment was their primary concern, but family was their primary concern at the time of the interview. One participant expressed this, saying, “My family is my life.” When they first came to Canada, the participants' families in Vietnam were a large concern. A participant said that it’s “the hard one because being here all by myself and then to have to think about the family that’s you know, my parents that I left behind.” Now they have their own families to be concerned about. “At the end of the day I would like to have a dinner with my family.” A participant said,

As a Canadian now, to me, I’m at this stage of my life where family is the most important thing to me. So, at the end of the day...I want most to be able to go home and have a meal with all my children sitting down and talking. And then we can talk about what happened during the day and how things were at school. And we still can definitely appreciate the day that we can do that together.

Education for children. Some participants had children who were graduating from high school. One participant said, “My children’s education is always in the back of my mind and I think, you know, to the point where I have to learn to relax because it’s upsetting to me...and then to ... not just education but I want them to be well rounded.” And, another participant said, “My concern, my worry, is that I would like to see my two children have a good education.”

Balancing cultures. The women agreed that they are constantly learning how to maintain their Vietnamese upbringing and cultural values while also integrating into Canadian society. They further discussed their concerns about passing on their

Vietnamese cultural values to their children. This was a very important issue to them and they discussed it for a large part of the interview. On the diagram that they created, the women placed this issue under the heading *family*. They also brainstormed suggestions for each other, giving advice, as opposed to only providing me, the researcher, with information.

One participant said that at dinnertime she tells stories and talks about Vietnamese customs. Her children also spent a lot of time with their grandparents at one point. She also said that she is not sure herself about certain customs, so, she asks others and learns as well. Customs vary from place to place even within countries. Parents remind their children not only of the myths and legends, but also of insights into everyday life, which increases awareness of their roots. Around the time of the New Year's celebrations, they explain reasons for certain preparations. In this way also they become more aware of other ethnic groups and more tolerant. The women were concerned that their children know how to address people, such as the elderly and middle aged. It is offensive to these Vietnamese groups if they are not addressed respectfully. In Vietnam you always respect your elders and do not question them. One participant noted that here in Canada children are encouraged to think for themselves, and it is good that they speak out, as elders cannot explain everything. These women seemed to know that both cultures are valuable, and were grappling with how to ensure that the good of both cultures were passed on to their children. In conclusion, this dilemma was difficult for the women and they said that they have not yet found the balance. Children simply do not have the same experiences as their parents.

One participant said that they went through hard times and so they have overprotected their children. This happened because of the war. "I escaped. Did not have opportunity because of political persecution. Could not advance." Sometimes they ask themselves if they are doing themselves a favour by overprotecting, and children need to experience life in order to have empathy. These women want the best for their children and therefore they have many expectations of them: "Finding a balance is very difficult for us all." One participant dreamed of being a musician and couldn't so she decided to give her children an opportunity to do that.

Social

Friendship. Under their friendship section the participating women simply noted that they now have time to be social. It is their last priority because to be social you have to be healthy and have taken care of all other responsibilities in your life.

Volunteering. The women placed the volunteer category under "social" as well. "Another thing is to be involved in society. My children does not need as much care in terms of the little mundane things like feeding... I can have some free time to be able to contribute back to the society not just the community not just the Vietnamese but Canadian society as a whole." Other women said that they can "set example, be a model," and "Help others, open mind."

Social Programs

Although the participants did not create this category in their diagram, I include this category in order to report their answer to the second question around social programs in Ottawa. They spoke of social programs when they first arrived in Canada. This was the time that they needed and used social programs. They said that the "first

year in Ottawa was very hard. Different way of thinking. Two ways of thinking – east and west.” They had ESL classes, and orientations in which Canadian customs were explained. One woman recalled having three months of ESL. The classes were free if they had no income and \$5 each week if they had a low income. They were refugees sponsored by the government and they were given \$85 every two weeks. Another woman commented on alternative ways of learning English, such as the TV shows, *The Price is Right*, and *Three's Company*.

After ESL classes it was "go look for work". Looking back, one woman felt sorry for herself. She was just a teenager. She came from a privileged family and it was scary to come to Canada. She said that it takes years to master a language, though education is supposed to fill the gap. Another said, "ESL classes are a joke and university classes cost \$600. She was speaking of still progressing and learning English skills today. Together, the participating women felt that the ESL classes that they received were far from sufficient and there were other ways that settlement was made easier, outside of social programs. For example, one woman spoke of meeting people along the way that went out of their way to help. And, when they were initially refugees, she looked ahead and jumped at every opportunity to learn. For example, she spent one year in a refugee camp before coming to Canada. She looked for classes through the Catholic relief organization that was there in order to gain any experience. She found an Australian couple who explained what life was like in an industrialized country. These were completely unstructured learning experiences. She said that 99% came with no clue about what to do in Canada. When coming, the minor cultural differences were so important for them to learn because they desired to be integrated; they do not want to stand out. As a final note

on social programs, the participants said that everyone in Canada should be able to support their needs, and to encourage people in this way. Canadians are "born to be generous" and the Canadian government should be careful not to do everything for them.

Card Sorting Activity

The women's responses during this activity were based on their circumstances at the time of the interview. They said that their responses would have been quite different if it were 20 years ago when they were younger. Career would have been their number one priority then. They could also see that responsibilities always came first and fun came as a secondary priority. The women all had extremely similar categories. Please see the following summary table and photo, documenting the card sorting activity.

"Maintain a happy family life with harmony" "Teaching my children to maintain the Vietnamese values" "Education of children"	9 pennies
"Good performance in career/job and happy with my job" "Continue to work and have a good job" "Good position"	6 pennies
"Physically and emotionally fit as well as spiritually" "Self and family to be fit and to maintain a good health" "Fitness class, badminton, reading" (personal hobbies)	5 pennies
Social "Care for others - family, friends" "Socialize - have time for friends, volunteer work"	4 pennies

Table 2.0 Summary Card Sorting Activity with Vietnamese Women.

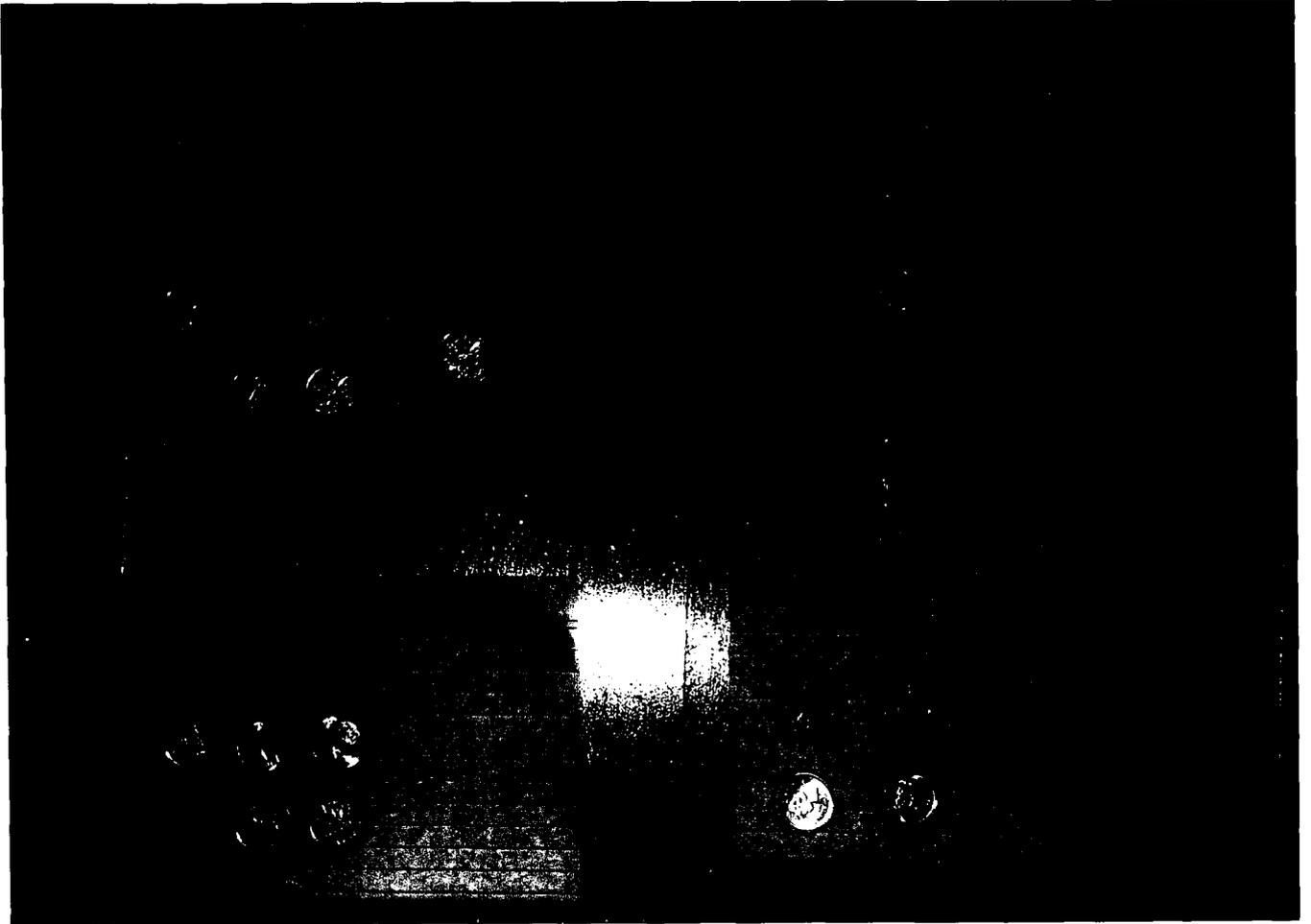


Figure 4.0 Photo of Vietnamese women's card sorting activity.

7.0 Findings: Perceived Quality of Life and Suggested Indicators

In this section I discuss the participants' perceptions of their quality of life and their perceptions of social programs. Across the three groups I identify common themes that arose throughout all of the group interviews, and I connect the women's experiences with larger contexts, comparing their perceptions with present literature as well as social inclusion and social capital theories. Finally, I propose indicators that measure what the participants have identified as issues that are meaningful to them in their everyday lives.

Categorizing Social Issues

My decision to invite the participants in this project to create the categories for answering the open-ended questions in each group interview, was influenced by the participatory principle of encouraging community members to express their own ways of ordering their realities, as opposed to researchers beginning with a theory and primarily directing interviews in the direction of the theory. This principle is partly due to recognition of the uniqueness of local realities, which vary from group to group. I found this to be true in the group interviews for this thesis (Chambers, 1997). Before analyzing the content of the group interviews, I will discuss what the categories created by the women, revealed about conceptualizing social issues and creating indicators.

The Vietnamese participants decided to order their answers based on various social categories (i.e. family, careers, health, and social activities). These categories were typical of approaches taken by other researchers who have examined a broad range of areas of immigrants' experiences (McLaren & Dyck, 2004; Meadows et al., 2001; Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). Hence, the categories are consistent with categories from other studies. In addition, although the participants in the Arabic-speaking and Somali group interviews

did not identify similar categories, their answers can be broken down into the same general issues.

The Somali women, on the other hand, based their discussion around four age categories of Somali women in Ottawa. Other studies of visible and ethnic minorities have also identified the importance of examining the unique experiences of various age groups. Many researchers have focused on the experiences of visible and ethnic minority youth (Dion & Dion, 2004; Horaneih, 2004; Kwak & Berry, 2001). Although research is lacking that specifically focuses on visible and ethnic minority seniors, this is also a group with many strengths and areas to address (Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). Even though research based on age groups is a present practice, the age groups that the Somali women identified were unique to their community. The four groups were obvious and distinguishable to the Somali participants. These age groups were based on the Somali women's interpretations of their community at the time of the interview, having arrived in Canada as refugees approximately ten years prior. They divided the middle generation based on whether women had borne children in Somalia prior to arriving in Canada, or whether they had had most of their children in Canada. They viewed the young Somali women as unique because they were born in Canada, whereas their parents were born in Somalia. Migration was one of the defining aspects for the categories.

These categories reveal the importance of recognizing that interpretations of reality change over time and across experiences. In addition, identifying issues that youth, young parents, older parents, and seniors face, may be important directions for researchers to take when examining experiences of visible and ethnic minorities. From

these findings, I will recommend indicators that allow for comparisons across age groups, and that recognize different experiences based on age.

The Arabic-speaking women expressed that their difficulties were not necessarily solely their own. Their categories identified issues that are applicable to all Canadians, to immigrants, to women, and then to Arabic women specifically. All Canadians share certain struggles (e.g. concerns around taxes), and some barriers are faced by all immigrants (e.g. discrimination in employment). The women created categories that supported a social inclusion approach to conceptualizing quality of life. The main requirement, or assumption, of the social inclusion approach is that individuals have a desire to be included and integrated into society (Cushing, 2003). The women wanted to identify with others in Canada, and to show that they were not entirely different from other Canadians and other immigrants. At the same time, they felt that they were unique in many ways (e.g. through their religion) and they did not use the "Canadians" or "Immigrants" categories extensively, but rather illustrated through them that all residents in Canada share common challenges.

Cross-Case Categories

Because the categories were completely different from group to group, it is more difficult to conduct a cross-case analysis based on all three sets of categories. The variability of the categories only further emphasizes the importance of having indicators based on local interpretations of life, which are continuously flexible.

I developed the matrices below in order to analyze, summarize, and combine the findings from the three group interviews. I used the first matrix to determine similar topics of discussion across groups. Table 3.0 displays this first matrix. The topics that I

chose in this matrix coincided with the Vietnamese women's ways of creating categories as well as issues identified in the card sorting activities conducted by the Vietnamese women and the Arabic-speaking women. In addition, although the Somali women did not identify these overarching topics in the discussion, they can easily be identified in the case records.

All three groups identified issues around their **children** as their number one priority at this stage in their lives. **Employment** was also a high priority in all three groups. In addition, I identified **social activities and support** as another category: the Vietnamese women created a "social activities" category, the Arabic-speaking women described connections with family and friends as a category in their card-sorting activity, and the Somali women spoke about active community members among Somalis in Ottawa. The category of **health** also emerged from the Vietnamese group interview, and this was discussed in the Arabic-speaking and Somali interviews as well. **Religion** was a recurring theme in the Somali and Arabic-speaking group interviews, and thus I added it to the categories. Finally, because one purpose of this thesis was to examine visible and ethnic minority women's perceptions of **social programs**, I decided to add this as a distinct category as well.

Table 3.0 A compilation of discussions of participant groups.

CATEGORIES	SOMALI WOMEN	ARABIC-SPEAKING WOMEN	VIETNAMESE WOMEN
CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -youth caught in tension btwn. cultures. Parents' fears of children losing their cultures. -mother-daughter conflicts. -disagreements on dating. -value family time. -limited parenting skills in young families, cannot afford child care, marital conflicts. -lack of information on Cdn. education system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -children as first priority. -value family dinners together. -disagree with Cdn. education system's approach to discipline. -believe morals are taken out of education of children in Canada. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -families were the primary concern of participants. -have overprotected their children. -balancing career and family was important. -family quality time very valuable (e.g. dinner time). -concerns for children's education. -concerns around passing on their Vietnamese upbringing and cultural values to their children.
EMPLOYMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -low morale in young women not getting jobs. -young Somali women with better chances at jobs than older Somali women. -men have difficulty getting jobs as well. -women decide to be stay-at-home mothers because they must choose between careers and children. -some start at the very beginning to attain jobs (ESL classes, high school education), while others in their community obtain qualifications quickly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -financial struggles of newcomers. -incident of subtle racism in a job interview. -husbands working shifts. -difficulty having credentials recognized, particularly women. -do not want to use OSAP, hence, difficulty going to school, which they recognized as a key to employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -need to have good English and good education in order to obtain employment. -strive to excel in careers. -desire meaningful work. -when they were newcomers, without children, finding a job was their priority.
RELIGION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -all participants shared that reading the Qur'an was a valuable time of their day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strong attachment to home countries because of their religion. -one participant noted that reading the Qur'an was a daily activity. -appreciated that they can wear hijab and feel freedom of religion in Canada. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -when coming to a new country, believe that people need to adjust, such as changing what they wear in order to work in certain jobs.
HEALTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -concerns for health of children due to Cdn. diet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -negative impact of emotional struggles of newcomers. -not enough recreation programs in Ottawa that are for women-only and affordable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -concerned for physical, mental, and spiritual health.
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -seniors' feelings of isolation -usefulness of informal networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -feelings of isolation in absence of extended family. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -missed their extended families in Vietnam when they first arrived in Canada. -they are at a point in their lives where they have time to be social. -volunteer as a way of giving back to society. Seen as an extra activity, such as a social activity.

			-relied on informal ways to understand Cdn. culture and to learn English because formal programs were insufficient.
SOCIAL PROGRAMS	-mainstream seniors programs not attractive to Somali seniors. Need to be more culturally-specific. -discussion of low-income housing and stigmas attached to these neighbourhoods, which they were unaware of when they moved in. -incidences of racist remarks in these neighbourhoods.	-many single moms need support. -do not want to rely on social assistance. -need social workers from the same cultures as their own. -culturally-specific workers need to be sufficient in numbers and matched with needs of specific areas in Ottawa.	-do not believe in relying on social assistance. -depressing to be on social assistance. -ESL classes are a good place to explain Cdn. customs to newcomers. -Orientation to Cdn. ways of life is extremely important.

In the second matrix I began by stating emerging findings that resulted when I combined the groups in the first matrix (see Table 4.0). In order to show the consistency across groups that certain topics were discussed, I noted the contribution of the case records towards each finding. I also determined relevant literature and theoretical approaches (social inclusion and social capital when they coincided with the findings) for each finding. This matrix directed the content of the discussion of findings in this section and led to the suggested indicators.

Suggested Grassroots Indicators of Quality of Life

The main product of this report is the proposed indicators of quality of life based on the participants' perceptions of what is meaningful to them in their everyday lives. The indicators are intended as a springboard for an indicator set in the area of diversity in Ottawa. The indicator set is incomplete without additional input from various other ethnic groups and voluntary sector representatives. When developing these indicators I hoped that they would aid the voluntary sector in Ottawa in addressing present funding trends and requirements, such as RBM and the need for long-term outcomes of programs and indicators of social change (Hall et al., 2003). Consolidating data and cooperatively measuring indicators, as a city, certainly increases efficiency and lessens burdens on individual organizations. I wanted to balance quantitative, qualitative, and participatory approaches, as well as more easily accessible indicators with those that require developing new tools for data collection. The following indicators do not include in-depth details around data collection or design (e.g. specific target values or percentages). These details will be determined by those that decide to collect data for each of the indicators.

Table 4.0 Findings of the study based on combining results of all group interviews.

FINDINGS	CONTRIBUTION of CASE RECORDS	AGREEMENT with THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS	RELEVANT LITERATURE
Participants perceived their identity and quality of life primarily through their children's life choices and well-being.	Viet - children are priorities. Create self-identities in children. Arab - mothers seen through children's identity Som - "My family is my life"		Meadows et al. (2001) McLaren & Dyck (2004)
Intergenerational conflict and tension was characterized by parents' desires for children to carry on home country cultural values and overprotection of children due to immigration experiences.	Viet, Som, Arab - Hope children adopt or maintain values and practices of home countries. Som - strict with children due to fear. Daughters parallel mothers to roles of 911, FBI. Disagreements around arranged marriages and dating.	Social capital - value of informal relationships. Social inclusion.	Dion & Dion (2004) Kwak & Berry (2001) McLaren & Dyck (2004) Meadows et al. (2001)
Youth in the participants' lives were experiencing disappointments in the area of employment.	Som - Compared to friends, less employment opportunities. In transition.	Social inclusion	Mohamoud (2004) Kazemipur & Hallis (2000)
Parents have had difficulties orienting themselves in the Canadian education system, and staying informed.	Arab - disagree with Cdn approaches to child discipline and teaching around sexuality and dating. Lack of info on streaming system. Som - different teacher-parent roles in Canada and Somalia	Social capital - want to bridge with educators.	Horaneih (2004) Working Group (2001)
Family quality time during dinner was valued by participants.	Som, Arab, and Viet - stated similar cherishing of dinner time.	Social capital - value of informal relationships.	
Participants reported limited choices for women's employment. Often chose to stay at home to raise their children because of lack of other options. Women reported discrimination in employment based on their clothing choices.	Som - Many single mothers because fathers are in Somalia. Middle generation has many difficulties. Various job experiences - odd jobs, chose to be with family, working regular hours. Arab - incident of not hired because she would wear her hijab at work. Want to earn money and not be on welfare. Viet - want to use their skills and not be on welfare. Wanted very badly to integrate, which was primarily working in Canada.	Radical social inclusion.	McLaren & Dyck (2004) Mensah (2002) Hum & Simpson (1999)
Women stated various comments men having difficulties "moving up the ladder" in their workplaces.	Som - "black men have a hard time moving up the ladder" Arab - husbands working shifts, husbands going back to the Gulf because of lack of jobs in Canada.	Social inclusion.	Mensah (2002) Hum & Simpson (1999)
Affordable childcare and information about subsidies is required in order for single mothers and other women in Ottawa to gain employment as well as upgrading credentials for employment opportunities.	Arab, Som, Viet - child care, orientation to Canada, ESL classes, and organizations that aid in gaining foreign credentials increase access to employment.	Radical social inclusion.	Working Group (2001)
Religion was an important aspect of	Arab - believed they had stronger	Social inclusion -	Ottawa Mosaic

women's lives.	attachment to home cultures because of their religion. Not difficult to follow their religion in Canada. Som - prayer and reading Qur'an as important aspects of their day. Viet - Believe in freedom of religion.	freedom of religion.	(2004) Meadows et al. (2001)
Participants expressed concerns for their children's health.	Som - children eat too much fast food in Canada.		
Participants defined health as multi-faceted.	Som - A lot of Diabetes in their community. Viet - health as multi-faceted. "If I am strong, I can help others".		Meadows et al. (2001)
Muslim women in Ottawa reported having difficulties finding low-cost women-only recreation programs.	Arab - explained this situation.	Radical social inclusion.	
Seniors also face health problems due to isolation.	Som - inactive seniors.	Social capital - an increase of relationships in the community would aid in improving health and well-being.	Meadows et al. (2001)
Participants valued connecting with other women. Seniors were also reported to need increased social interaction with others of similar backgrounds, as well as with younger generations.	Viet - once they have all other priorities in place, value social connections. Som - seniors are used to playing significant roles in community. Must be maintained in Canada.	Social capital	Meadows et al. (2001)
Participating women placed importance on informal networks in order to meet many of their social needs.	Som - activists in the community. Tell each other lessons they learn. Arab - isolation from extended family. Must find others to help them when they arrive in Canada. Viet - cases of drawing on others for orientation.	Social capital	Working Group (2001)
Some participants felt that volunteering was a valuable part of their lives.	Viet - contribute back to society and help others through volunteering.	Social capital - connecting with others and helping the community.	
Participants preferred staff and programs in the social services field that were culturally-specific as opposed to culturally-sensitive. Areas for this need were: marital counseling, family planning, parenting classes, and seniors' programs.	Som - Prefer culturally-specific workers, although outside staff are helpful as well, especially young parents, young marriages, and seniors. Arab - helpful if social workers work with clients from same cultures.	Social inclusion	Meadows et al. (2001) Working Group (2001)
For Muslim participants it was against their religion to incur debt and to gain interest. They did not have appropriate alternatives to these situations in Ottawa (e.g. OSAP, social assistance).	Arab - take no interest, give no interest.	Social inclusion.	
Participants reported feelings of community and safety in social housing, as well as experiences of racism	Som - stereotypes and stigmas in social housing. Police reinforce these.	Social inclusion	Kazemipur & Hallis (2000) Novac (1999)

I present the indicator sets in two ways. First, I present a summary of the desired outcomes and indicators in Table 5.0. Secondly, throughout this findings section, each discussion of a finding is followed by a description of the suggested indicators, including possible sources and groups to compare. The format for presenting the indicators (e.g. desired outcome, indicator, source, and comparisons) is similar to the SPCO's approach to developing indicators for the Bank of Knowledge Disability account. I also drew on Patton's (1997) format for presenting indicators.

My assumption when creating these indicators is that community members' perceptions of everyday life can be used to create indicators. Using perceptions in research involves a trust in people's socially constructed knowledge, and in setting community members' interpretations of social issues above outsiders' views (Patton, 1997). This is the assumption of the participatory paradigm and of the community indicator approach.

Visible and Ethnic Minority Children and Youth: Intergenerational Understanding

The first priority of all participants in the group interviews was their children and difficulties based on their unique experiences as children in immigrant or refugee families in Canada. The participants, who were all mothers, repeatedly emphasized that their children were their first priority. Similar to Meadows et al.'s (2001) findings, their own health and quality of life were secondary to their families' well-being, and they defined well-being based on the condition of the entire family. Indicators that truly illustrate the participants' quality of life must include multiple measures of the quality of life of children and youth.

Table 5.0 List of Desired Outcomes and Indicators Presented In This Thesis

Category	Desired Outcomes	Indicators
Intergenerational Understanding	<p>Parents feel that their children understand and appreciate cultural values from their home countries.</p> <p>Children feel that they are supported in their struggle to resolve differences in cultural values at school, work and home.</p>	Evaluations of visible and ethnic minority parents' and children's perceptions of cultural differences and their parent-child relationships.
Youth Involvement in Cultural Activities	Visible and ethnic minority children and youth participate in cultural festivals and ethnic association activities.	Percentage of visible and ethnic minority children and youth attending and/or volunteering for cultural festivals and ethnic association activities.
Informed in the Education System	Visible and ethnic minority parents have opportunities to be involved in, and to influence, their children's education.	<p>Number of meetings between parents and educators that target cultural differences and resolutions.</p> <p>Orientation programs in the Canadian education system tailored for newcomer parents.</p> <p>Percentage of visible and ethnic minority parents who attend parent-teacher and school council meetings.</p> <p>Involvement of parents in the preparation of school curriculum.</p>
Quality Family Time	Families have meaningful, quality time together.	Family members' satisfaction with number of meals they share together each week.
Inclusion in the Labour Force	<p>Visible and ethnic minorities' wages are commensurate to their levels of education and skill.</p> <p>Equal treatment in the workplace, for all groups in Ottawa.</p>	Visible and ethnic minorities' wages, level of education, and skills compared to other groups in Ottawa. Track reports of discrimination in the workplace.
Employment Programs	To have adequate and enough social programs and services in Ottawa that aid visible and ethnic minorities in overcoming barriers to employment.	Evaluations of: ESL classes, childcare programs, and immigrant-serving programs that help newcomers receive their qualifications in Canada.
Importance of Religion	Visible and ethnic minorities feel free to practice their religious and spiritual customs without discrimination.	Evaluations collecting visible and ethnic minorities' feelings of freedom in religious and spiritual practice (e.g. prayer, choice of dress, and place of worship).
Health and Well-being	<p>Visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa have optimum health and well-being levels.</p> <p>Visible and ethnic minorities have complete access to recreation programs.</p>	<p>Self-reports, and hospital and community health centre reports of health of visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa compared to non-visible and ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Evaluations of recreational programs (swimming and exercise) in Ottawa, with a focus on suitability for various income levels, religious practices, and age groups.</p>
Support Networks	Strong social networks, within and across groups, neighbourhoods, and communities.	Visible and ethnic minorities' perceptions of the quality of community, friendships, partnerships, and networks.

Volunteering	Increased levels of volunteering.	Numbers and profiles of volunteers in mainstream agencies and agencies specifically for visible and ethnic minorities (e.g. immigrant serving organizations).
Cultural Specificity	Visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa have increased access to services through culturally specific practices.	Evaluations of mainstream programs or programs for visible and ethnic minorities, particularly in areas of marital counseling, parenting courses, family planning, and seniors' programs.
Social Assistance and OSAP	Fewer visible and ethnic minorities require social assistance. Visible and ethnic minorities who, for religious reasons cannot pay interest, have alternative means of attending post-secondary education.	Percentage of visible and ethnic minorities on social assistance and OSAP. Feelings around debts and loans.
Social Housing	Decrease in reports of racist remarks and feelings of discrimination in low-income neighbourhoods.	Reported experiences and feelings of discrimination.

Many women come to Canada, and stay in Canada (even when their husbands must return to their home countries), in order to provide a better life for their children. For this selfless reason they accept negative life circumstances in hopes that their children's lives will be better. As a result, they have higher levels of sensitivity and concern for difficulties in their children's lives, as opposed to their own (McLaren & Dyck, 2004).

Age and stage of life are additional factors that influenced the participants' high priority on children. The Vietnamese women commented that twenty years earlier, when they first arrived in Canada and were on their own, their main concern was employment. For this reason, we cannot assume that visible and ethnic minorities of all ages, women or men, would place such a high priority on children's quality of life. Moreover, the participants' concerns were not solely that their children were healthy and educated, although these were high concerns. The women created their self-identities through their children. They are reflected in their children, and it was difficult when their children do not adopt the values and identity of their parents' home country.

Intergenerational Tension

All of the participants hoped that their children would maintain or adopt the cultural values and practices of their home countries. This desire was often expressed as fear or worry because of the tension between mainstream Canadian culture and the cultural values of their home countries. Horaneih (2004) identified this as intergenerational *conflict*. The term *conflict* is certainly appropriate when summarizing the story told by the Somali participant regarding labels that Somali teenage women place on their mothers (i.e. FBI, 911, and CNN). These labels indicated that daughters were alienated from their mothers, and they felt that their mothers were over-protective and too

authoritative. Dion and Dion (2004) and Kwak and Berry (2001) claimed that when children are brought from another country (as opposed to being born in the new country), and when this move is sudden, such as the case for refugees, levels of tension and conflicts in families increase. These factors were present in the circumstances of the women of this group interview. The Somali group also identified intergenerational conflict with young *women*, in particular. The women in McLaren and Dyck's (2004) study projected many of their hopes and dreams onto their daughters, leading to more conflict with daughters than with sons. Although the Arabic-speaking and Vietnamese women did not necessarily express concerns for their children as conflict, they certainly talked about how they have raised their children with continuous efforts to pass on their cultural values, and to connect with their children through cultural values and religion.

Examining intergenerational conflict or tension through the lenses of social capital and social inclusion increase understanding of both the issue and these theories. Social capital theorists view formal and informal relationships as valuable contributions to developing community capacity and solutions to community difficulties (Putnam, 2002). Perhaps the most fundamental relationships in a community are within families. Putnam (2002) suggested that social capital contributes to crime reduction, crime prevention, physical health, and confronting poverty. Having harmony within family units is a form of social capital that may contribute to these social issues as well because family can act as a resource and safe space when family bonds are secure. For example, a healthy parent-child relationship may increase a child's resilience to the effects of poverty. Usually, social capital theorists refer to bonds across groups, or at least within

communities. However, social capital can also provide a basis for identifying value even in strong family bonds.

When viewing intergenerational conflict from a social inclusion viewpoint, it is evident that various meanings and experiences of inclusion occur within families. Mensah (2002) and Cushing (2003) described various types of inclusion or various ideas of what inclusion is. Children of immigrants, or individuals who immigrated at a young age, may automatically be more integrated in society, and thus may hold different views of what inclusion means. Parents, or older immigrants, on the other hand, may not be as readily integrated, and hence, may be more likely to expect less change personally (e.g. in religious practice, or language for communicating), and to request more changes to Canadian systems (e.g. aids to understanding, aids to access). If immigrants' views support a more radical inclusion, they do not need or desire to put aside their cultural lifestyles in Canadian society in order to be included in areas such as employment. This radical inclusion makes *difference* more of a reality. Beliefs about social inclusion may vary even within families and parents in Canada who believe strongly in a radical form of inclusion may not understand why their children must adopt Canadian lifestyles.

An indicator of better quality of life of the participants of this study would be the absence or lessening of this conflict, perceived by both children and parents. We cannot assume that an appropriate solution would be children's adoption of identical cultural values as their parents. As a model, social inclusion theorists are moving away from this viewpoint in the context of communities and across countries, which we can apply to families as well. Adopting identical values would probably not benefit children in Canadian society and may not be an indication of quality of life for visible and ethnic

minority youth in Canadian society. Horeinah's (2004) study considered perceptions from both parents and children. This would be an ideal way of measuring conflict.

Indicator Box 1 displays indicators for the absence of intergenerational conflict.

One source of data, which I cite frequently in the following indicators, is schools. Presently, according to Horaneih (2004), schools are not actively collecting data, yet they are the logical source of information for many of these indicators. Hence, along with Horaneih (2004) I would encourage more research-oriented schools, contributing to their own needs, as well as those of the voluntary sector.

Indicator Box 1 - Intergenerational Understanding

Desired Outcomes: Parents feel that their children understand and appreciate cultural values from their home countries. Children feel that they are supported in their struggle to resolve differences in cultural values at school, work and home.

Indicator: Evaluations of visible and ethnic minority parents' and children's perceptions of cultural differences and their parent-child relationships.

Participatory source: Form a group with visible and ethnic minority parent-child pairs to discuss intergenerational conflict and understanding. Opinions can be expressed through photography, video, or multimedia format.

Qualitative source: Hold focus groups with visible and ethnic minority children and parents, either together or in separate focus groups. Discuss perceptions and feelings around cultural identity and balancing cultures, and strengths, conflicts, and tensions in parent-child relationships.

Quantitative source: Administer psychological measures of parent-child relationships in schools, such as the Parent-Child Relationship Scale of the Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Assessment (Wamboldt et al., 2001) or the Parent-Child Relationship Inventory (Barron-McKeagney et al., 2002).

Compare (particularly from quantitative sources): Gender of parents and children; immigration experience of parents and children (e.g. were children born in country of origin or new country?); age of children and parents; stage of life of parents.

I also considered possible indicators that may be *effects* of less intergenerational conflict. If parents would like their children to understand and appreciate cultural values from home countries, what would that look like in everyday life? The Vietnamese women said that they teach their children some of their values by explaining celebrations and having them involved in special occasions. From this, I developed the following indicators based on the Vietnamese women's perceptions. There are ways of measuring effects of children's sensitivity to, and value of, their home country culture. Through participation in their ethnic community in Ottawa (which is also certainly affected by the involvement of their parents), we may be able to grasp the degree to which children are resolving intergenerational tensions and how they are identifying with their home cultures.

Indicator Box 2 – Youth Involvement in Cultural Activities

Desired Outcomes: Visible and ethnic minority children and youth participate in cultural festivals and ethnic association activities³.

Indicator: Percentage of visible and ethnic minority children and youth attending and/or volunteering for cultural festivals and ethnic association activities.

Quantitative source: Ethnic and cultural associations in Ottawa collect and report statistics of their cultural events as well as their regular activities. Determine percentages from Statistics Canada data on numbers of children and youth of specific cultures in Ottawa. Include age of participants and gender, and involvement of youth, whether participants or volunteers.

Informed in the Education System

The Arabic-speaking women and the Somali women in this study disagreed with the Canadian education system's approach to child discipline (e.g. addressing bullying

³ See the Social Planning Council of Ottawa's website for a list of local ethnic associations and contact information: www.spcottawa.on.ca

problems) and education on sexuality and dating. They stated that the Canadian education system plays an extremely influential role in the lives of their children; yet, they felt that they did not have open communication channels with teachers and other school employees, which left them feeling unheard. Their urgency was evident in the story of a participant whose son encountered bullying in school. Not only was she concerned about her son's well-being but she was truly distraught and exhausted from defending her preference for dealing with bullying (e.g. punishment). Cases of bullying were cited as concerns of immigrant and refugee families in Horaneih's (2004) study as well. Unlike Horaneih's (2004) report, the women in this study did not say that bullies specifically targeted their children for racial reasons.

To begin addressing this problem, participants suggested that parents and schools meet together to discuss cultural differences and conflicts in neutral environments, such as resource centres. They said that problems should be addressed immediately, requiring that stakeholders meet more than once a year (e.g. every three months). This suggestion, and recording meetings such as this as indicators of quality of life, would reflect a social capital theoretical approach (Abdulkadir, et al., 2004). Such meetings and discussions strengthen relationships between schools and members of ethnic groups, as well as between schools and parents, opening spaces to discuss cultural differences and approaches. When mainstream organizations *bridge* with marginalized communities, they create the space for more participation and collaboration (Putnam, 2002). In addition, these meetings would support social inclusion of newcomer parents and children. Educators who truly hear and incorporate considerations of parents from

various cultures, would be working towards an inclusion that acknowledges values of various groups, not solely the dominant group (Mensah, 2002).

In the school environment, children and youth learn principles of sexuality and dating with which the participants disagreed. This learning is not only from peers, but directly from lessons in the classroom (e.g. provision of condoms and teaching of safe sex). When speaking of dating, the participants acknowledged that compromises are necessary, but schools could also give parents some control over what their children learn around sexuality, and at what age. In order for this to happen, teachers would need to provide parents with information about their rights and choices. Schools could also teach alternative viewpoints around dating. Parents in Horaneih's (2004) study proposed that educators change the school curriculum in order to reflect the diversity of the population of students. Cushing (2003) noted that sufficient inclusion of diverse groups often requires adjusting mainstream social norms. When educators examine curriculum and classroom practice in order to determine whether these reflect the diverse cultural values and backgrounds of the students, the first step is taken towards changing a system in order to accommodate moral perspectives and priorities of various cultures. Cushing's (2003) view of social inclusion encouraged such alterations to mainstream structures, as opposed to simply including marginalized groups in a system that remains unchanging.

Parents also felt that they were not given sufficient information of the streaming system in Canada and were not informed of schools' expectations of the role of parents in their children's education. Parents' lack of knowledge affected children in important ways. The consequences were that youth are unable to attend university as soon as expected. One indicator of quality of life, then, is the amount of information provided to

parents and their level of understanding. Providing orientation, translation, and interpretation of school materials is a very simple form of social inclusion. Educators may say that parents are given the opportunity to be included but are not attending parent-teacher meetings or sitting on parent councils (Horaneih, 2004). The participants of my thesis project wanted to have a voice in their children's education system, but they said that they lacked knowledge of their required involvement in their children's education in Canada. If parents are continuously reporting a lack of understanding in the education system and their own roles in schools, they require additional tools to overcome barriers that they face, first, in order to participate in the opportunities that are available to all parents (Cushing, 2003).

Parents' increased attendance at school council meetings, parent-teacher interviews, and volunteering would imply an increased understanding of places where they can have a voice in their children's education, as well as an increased understanding of their role in their children's education. From the above discussion, we can see that connections and relationships between educators, parents, and students, with characteristics of trust and understanding, would indicate increased social capital in the education system (Putnam, 2002). Overall, parents' understanding of the education system and participation in it reflects social inclusion approaches that are more radical, overcoming additional barriers for some groups, as well as strengthening social capital.

Indicator Box 3 - Informed in the Education System

Desired Outcomes: Visible and ethnic minority parents have opportunities to be involved in, and to influence, their children's education.

Indicators: Number of meetings between parents and educators that target cultural differences and resolutions. Orientation programs in the Canadian education system tailored for newcomer parents. Percentage of visible and ethnic minority parents who attend parent-teacher and school council meetings. Involvement of parents in the preparation of school curriculum.

Participatory source: Facilitate participatory evaluations of the involvement of visible and ethnic minority parents in schools. Facilitators draw out parents' levels of involvement and goals for involvement in their children's schools (e.g. their place in schools, their voices in schools, relationships with teachers, etc).

Quantitative sources:

- Conduct evaluations of orientation tools that increase access for visible and ethnic minority parents. Use score cards for schools, where various tools are given certain scores (e.g. orientation and information sessions for visible and ethnic minority parents, translated material, Multicultural Liaison Officers, cultural interpreters) (City of Ottawa, 2003).
- Educators note attendance of visible and ethnic minority parents at school council meetings and parent-teacher interviews. Create percentages from number of visible and ethnic minority families in the school as well as number of parents in total who attend meetings and interviews.

Qualitative sources:

- Conduct focus groups with visible and ethnic minority parents, determining parents' reported comprehension of the education system, understanding of their role, satisfaction level of their opportunities to contribute, and satisfaction level of their influence in the education system.
- Examine curriculum in order to determine inclusion of diverse values and perspectives. Consult organizations that have conducted and developed prior audits. May include raising awareness around various cultures (e.g. multicultural celebrations and holidays), and providing students with choices for participation in certain curriculum (e.g. co-ed physical education, sexual health education, etc.).

Quantitative and qualitative source: Record number of meetings between visible and ethnic minority parent groups and educators, and distribute brief evaluations of satisfaction of participants in meetings.

Quality Family Time

When speaking of family, all participating women in this thesis agreed that it was extremely meaningful for them to have dinnertime together as a family, and they valued the sharing that occurred at this time. Having quality family dinnertime may imply stable employment for family members, predictable schedules, children who respect family time together, and communicating families. For some participants in this thesis, for various reasons (i.e. parents and children working shifts, children's preoccupation with video games), quality family dinnertime was not possible, affecting their satisfaction with the quality of their lives. Overall, family dinnertime is an expression of the strength of bonds in the family, and these bonds have been discussed as social capital (Putnam, 2002).

This indicator may appear to be too indirectly related to social programs or irrelevant, but it also may be a key indicator of a family's functioning, and it shows that the participants were concerned with much more than just surviving as a family under one roof. Reporting a grassroots indicator such as "quality family time" certainly leaves many questions for further research and many external variables that may influence this value from family to family. Structural issues affect this simple ritual, and attribution (the effect of certain programs or resources on family time) is definitely difficult to track. Perhaps this indicator can be used as a broad indicator of social change that is impacting visible and ethnic minorities' lives in tangible ways. For example, a sample of visible and ethnic minority parents could be taken across the city, and researchers could ask immigrant serving organizations and community health centres to approach their clients for participation. These agencies could include specific questions around family dinnertime in their annual centre-wide evaluations.

Indicator Box 4 - Quality Family Time

Desired Outcome: Families have meaningful, quality time together.

Indicator: Family members' satisfaction with number of meals they share together each week.

Qualitative and Quantitative source: Include survey questions, in school surveys or agency surveys, which ask families about the importance of sharing a meal together, as well as the frequency that this occurs each week.

Compare: Stage of life of family (i.e. age of children and parents, time since immigration).

Summary

The participants of this study reported that elements of their children's lives were their highest priorities. Their children's quality of life seemed to have the greatest impacts on the perceived quality of their own lives. The women of this study placed much of their personal identity in the success of their children. For this reason, parents were highly affected by their children's choices of cultural values, particularly when children adopted the values of mainstream Canadian culture as opposed to their country of origin. In the education system parents found that they were battling to preserve certain values of their own home countries, such as how they disciplined their children and teaching around sexuality and dating. Parents wanted to be further oriented to the education system in order to fully understand their roles and their opportunities for involvement. Finally, women valued simple quality time in their families, such as sharing a meal.

Overall, trusting relationships, in their families and with educators, were valuable to the women. By bonding within groups and bridging with educators, they felt that

many of their difficulties could be overcome. In addition, their perceptions of inclusion in the education system were those of not altering their values or their lifestyles, but expecting that mainstream society would accommodate for various backgrounds and beliefs.

Employment Experiences and Racism

Emerging indicators reflecting participants' discussions around employment were similar across gender and age groups. Hence, below I present indicators for these topics following a review of all of the employment discussions that arose in the group interviews. The participants' discussions around employment were not surprising because many studies show that the process of gaining meaningful employment holds difficult experiences for visible and ethnic minorities in Canada (Hum & Simpson, 1999; McLaren & Dyck, 2004; Ottawa Mosaic, 2004). Immigrants face multiple barriers to having their foreign credentials recognized, unemployment rates of visible and ethnic minorities are higher than the general population, and visible and ethnic minorities are over-represented in statistics of the working poor (Hum & Simpson, 1999; McLaren & Dyck, 2004; Ottawa Mosaic, 2004).

Women's Choices

The participating women did not have one shared desire or experience in the area of employment. Some made the choice to stay at home and to raise their children, such as the following participant:

So after I left my previous job I couldn't find the suitable job
I am looking for where I can really fit in. I chose to stay with
my kids as a normal typical mother and housewife.

-Participant

Others spoke of desiring to do well in their careers, making sure that their knowledge and skills were put to use. Others also said that recognition of their foreign credentials were so difficult to attain in Canada that they had no choice but to stay home and raise their children. Going back to school full time and the length of the accreditation process makes it nearly impossible for women to have the option of raising children *and* working, which may actually be their desire. This latter scenario was repeated frequently in the group interviews.

Similar to Novac's (1999) discussion, issues around race and gender certainly intersect in complex ways. Women may feel more than men that they have a choice to stay at home, whereas men may experience more pressure to work and more feelings of uselessness when not working, particularly when originating from cultures with distinct roles for men and women. At the same time, women are often not recognized for their work at home raising children, and women are often discriminated against in the workplace when requesting accommodation for their children's needs (e.g. taking time off to care for a sick child). With the extra difficulties in finding work as an immigrant, refugee, or visible and ethnic minority, the above gender-based difficulties (lack of recognition for women's work and pressures on men to be "breadwinners") may be further exacerbated (Mensah, 2002).

Remembering times when they had just arrived in Canada and did not yet have children, the Vietnamese women said that they wanted very badly to "integrate". To them, this meant improving their English, finding jobs, and doing well in their careers. McLaren and Dyck (2004) and Meadows et al. (2001) discussed the discourse around identifying a person's value in employment and a continuous drive in capitalist societies

to be employed. This may simply be due to the need to survive through employment in a capitalist society. The Vietnamese women knew that they had to find sufficient employment in order to survive in the new society. They also had a view of inclusion, particularly as it related to employment, that the other participants did not express. Using Mensah's (2002) definitions of equality, I can say that to them equality meant that everyone is treated the same regardless of background. Hence, they focused on how they attained the appropriate education and language levels, in order to integrate.

The participants said that racism in Canada is not overt. When discussing cases of discrimination, they sometimes stated that life is not that bad or they emphasized the positive aspects of Canada. According to Mensah (2002), sometimes racism is so covert that excluded individuals do not even recognize or sometimes downplay the fact that their circumstances are caused by discrimination. Women feel comfortable practicing their religion and wearing their choice of dress in Canada, whereas in other countries they have felt shunned because of their choice of dress. Yet, the participants recounted experiences of subtle racism throughout the group interviews, which were particularly prevalent in issues around employment. Muslim women in this study cited discrimination in the workplace based on their choice of clothing. Hum and Simpson's (1999) study examined statistical differences in wages and job status among visible minority groups and Canadians. Perhaps they did not find any significant difference in visible minority women's wages and job status when compared to Canadians because cases of discrimination are sometimes based on women's perceptions, as opposed to statistical information. Perceptions are just as valid, however, as examining more quantitative measures, such as lower wages.

Employment and Family Structure

Somali women reported that they are more successful in their jobs than men. Their reason was that “it is very difficult for Black men to move up the ladder”. The Arabic-speaking women also noted that families must adjust to husbands often working shifts once they immigrate to Canada. I found varying findings surrounding this issue in the literature. Hum and Simpson (1999) found that the only group in their study with significantly lower wages than non-visible minorities in Canada, were Black men. However, Mensah (2002) found that Black women had significantly lower wages than Black men in Canada. Again, the findings in this thesis are based on the participants' perceptions of job status as well as their satisfaction with many factors in their employment situation (e.g. shifts, wages, family time, comparisons between present and past job status). At this point, further research on these specific findings should be conducted in Ottawa and across Canada, examining statistical information as well as perceptions and job satisfaction among groups.

Across gender, visible minorities, particularly Blacks, do face discrimination in wages in the labour market (Hum & Simpson, 1999; Mensah, 2002). Men and women appear to make different choices based on these disadvantages. If men cannot attain employment in their field, or at all, they sometimes return to their home countries, while their wives and children stay in Canada, often because of hope in their children's future in Canada (McLaren & Dyck, 2004). Participants in the study noted that many Somali women are single parents due to either fathers staying in their home countries or returning to home countries once in Canada for a period of time. In this way, lack of employment sometimes leads to the break up of families.

Discouraged Youth

The Somali women reported that they see their daughters, and other young women in the Somali community in Ottawa, experiencing major difficulties in attaining employment, resulting in discouragement and a reduced motivation (this may be the case for young men as well, but the participants focused their discussion on women). Young Somali women see their schoolmates, who are not Somali, getting "good" jobs, while they struggle to find jobs once they have graduated with the same qualifications. As a result of their difficulties and frustrations, young women change career paths numerous times in post-secondary education, and they continue their education further (i.e. additional degrees). It would seem that young people, with more Canadian education than older immigrants, would have increased chances at better employment opportunities. However, a Canadian education does not produce the same result for young immigrants as it does for non-immigrants. According to Kazemipur and Hallis (2000), young immigrants and visible minorities born in Canada have lower levels of employment. According to a report by Mohamoud (2004), immigrant youth are not engaged sufficiently in Ottawa's labour force when compared with the entire population of that age group.

Participants in this thesis also reported cases of Somali youth being placed in the *applied* stream in high school, as opposed to the *advanced* stream that leads to university. Participants stated that they were not properly orientated to the Canadian education system, which resulted in not understanding the different paths that the applied stream and advanced stream led to. These decisions lead to disadvantages in employment; individuals may lose a year that they could be working (taking extra classes in order to

qualify for post-secondary programs) or they may not gain post-secondary education. These difficulties were only discussed in the Somali group interview. In addition, similar findings are not reported in the literature. It would be beneficial to conduct further research into cases of discrimination of young visible and ethnic minorities in areas of employment, across ethnic groups in Ottawa.

Social Inclusion in the Workforce

In order for visible and ethnic minorities to be included in the workforce, disadvantaged groups need additional aids to overcome systemic barriers. According to Cushing (2003) and Mensah (2002), this is true inclusion, and these additional aids are often not implemented or adequately funded in Canada. Even the Vietnamese group of women in this study, who felt that Canadian society should not necessarily alter its values and structures in order to accommodate immigrants, stated that certain programs (e.g. ESL classes and orientation) are necessary to prepare immigrants and refugees for employment. If a disproportionate number of visible and ethnic minority youth are placed in the applied stream, this should be an indication that more educational supports be provided to them. Such a situation implies discrimination or lack of inclusion in earlier stages of education. If this is the case, researchers, policy writers, or teachers should examine curriculum, with a focus on aids given to visible and ethnic minority children. Again, all indicators of visible and ethnic minorities' equal representation in employment, across gender and age, reflect a social inclusion approach to evaluating quality of life (Cushing, 2003; Lister, 2000).

One indicator of quality of life, which emerged in the area of employment in the group interviews, is simply that visible and ethnic minorities have wages and job

positions that are not significantly different to non-visible and ethnic minorities in Canada. An indicator of inclusion would be that employment situations of visible and ethnic minority youth reflect their educational qualifications, and percentages of those in their fields are similar to their peers. In addition, decreased reports of discrimination based on the choice of clothing of Muslim women, would also indicate better quality of life for Muslim women in Ottawa.

Indicator Box 5 - Inclusion in the Labour Force

Desired Outcomes: Visible and ethnic minorities' wages are commensurate to their levels of education and skill. Equal treatment in the workplace, for all groups in Ottawa.

Indicators: Visible and ethnic minorities' wages, level of education, and skills compared to other groups in Ottawa. Reports of discrimination in the workplace.

Participatory Source: Conduct groups with visible and ethnic minorities. Participants create visual representations of their experiences, such as gender analyses of experiences in today's economy (see Doerge and Burke's (2000) facilitator guide: *Starting With Women's Lives, Changing Today's Economy*).

Qualitative Source: Facilitate group interviews and focus groups (young people, women, and men, separately) discussing individuals' experiences in employment in Ottawa.

Quantitative Source: Draw on Statistics Canada census data and reports of employment statistics of visible and ethnic minorities. Examine wages, education levels and skill. Focus on Ottawa. Survey community members in Ottawa, collecting additional information, in order to complement Statistics Canada census data. Examine cases of discrimination, shift work, employment in individuals' fields, ability to *move up the ladder* in employment positions.

Compare: Visible and ethnic minority groups and all Canadians, age, gender, education, and work experience in Canada.

Programs That Increase Women's Access to Employment Opportunities

The above visions for full social inclusion in the workplace are often fulfilled through programs and services that address visible and ethnic minorities' unique barriers

to employment. Cushing's (2003) approach to social inclusion acknowledges that these tools are absolutely necessary in order for visible and ethnic minorities to experience equality in the labour force. This contradicts a neoliberal approach, which advocates minimum involvement of the state, and no extra aids for disadvantaged groups (Mullaly, 1997). To aid in gaining employment, participants mentioned the need for ESL classes that teach language skills relevant to specific workplaces, childcare that is available to women when gaining their qualifications, information on how to have foreign credentials recognized, and programs that reduce the time taken for newcomers to receive their qualifications in Canada in order to have their credentials recognized. Women often want to work towards gaining their Canadian qualifications for their areas of expertise, but are not able to because of a lack of affordable childcare and provision of information regarding subsidies. Families stay in low-income brackets when there are high numbers of single mothers in certain visible and ethnic minority groups, particularly refugee women. The Working Group on Women's Access to Municipal Services in Ottawa (2001) reported similar difficulties (especially a lack of child care) when accessing municipal services and when seeking political participation at the municipal level. The Ottawa Mosaic (2004) committee stated that aids for visible and ethnic minorities in the area of employment must increase in number, capacity, and accessibility. The following are relevant indicators in these areas.

Indicator Box 6 - Employment Programs

Desired Outcome: To have adequate and enough social programs and services in Ottawa that aid visible and ethnic minorities in overcoming barriers to employment.

Indicators: Evaluations of: ESL classes, childcare programs, and immigrant-serving programs that help newcomers receive their qualifications in Canada.

Qualitative Source: Conduct evaluations and best practices of the above programs, examining client satisfaction and suggested improvements.

Quantitative Source: Collect statistics of the above programs and materials, such as number of clients, waiting lists, and number of materials distributed.

Religion

Arabic-speaking and Somali participants noted that religion is an important aspect of their lives. They expressed this by discussing their time taken each day reading the Qur'an and spending time in prayer during their daily routines. They appreciated being free to wear their hijab in public without people staring, in contrast to other countries where they have felt many stares or where this is prohibited.

Participants in the Vietnamese group interview stated that it was important for everyone to have religious expression. For example, they felt that saying "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas" was not necessary, and all religions can be included and acknowledged. They felt that mainstream Canadians did not need to alter their religious traditions either. This raises an important question for the social inclusion approach: How can multiple values be embraced? The Vietnamese group felt that when it came to social inclusion, they wanted to be integrated into Canadian society, and did not feel that Canadian society should change in order to accommodate their values and

beliefs. The Vietnamese participants held different views of social inclusion than the Somali and Arabic-speaking groups.

Participants of Meadows et al.'s (2001) study also noted that spirituality and prayer contributed to their overall well-being. In an indirect way, the Ottawa Mosaic (2004) also echoed this finding, stating that faith-based organizations in Ottawa were the most frequently noted assets reported by community organizations and associations. Similar to having quality family time, participants' daily spiritual times can be a contributor to quality of life. As well, feelings of religious freedom are also measures for quality of life.

Indicator Box 7 - Importance of Religion

Desired Outcome: Visible and ethnic minorities feel free to practice their religious and spiritual customs without discrimination.

Indicator: Evaluations collecting visible and ethnic minorities' feelings of freedom in religious and spiritual practice (e.g. prayer, choice of dress, and place of worship).

Qualitative Source: Conduct focus groups where participants discuss their feelings around spirituality and religion. Examine the role these play in participants' lives.

Qualitative and Quantitative Source: Create survey questions that ask visible and ethnic minorities about the importance of religion and spirituality, feelings of religious freedom in Ottawa, and if they are satisfied with the time they have to perform religious customs.

Compare: Gender and age.

Health

Although health was not a high priority for discussion, it was certainly noted in more than one group interview. The participants defined health as multi-faceted, including physical, mental, and spiritual aspects. Women did not necessarily want changes in the health system. They were concerned that, as mothers, they had healthy

children. They said that children eat too much fast food in Canada and do not necessarily have enough nutrients. Women often think of their family's health needs before their own. This finding corroborates Meadows et al.'s (2001) study, which reported similar findings.

Muslim participants (Somali and Arabic-speaking) were concerned about their health because of a lack of appropriate recreational services in the city. They were unable to find spaces for women to swim and exercise that were affordable and where there were no men. As a result, they simply were not exercising. Muslim women have access to low-cost recreation centres, but many of the centres do not accommodate their additional religious needs (i.e. absence of men). The women wanted Ottawa, in particular, to open more culturally appropriate spaces for seniors and Muslim women. This is a case of needing to adapt the mainstream values in order to genuinely include diverse groups, which Cushing (2003) cited as a radical form of social inclusion. I did not find similar reports in the studies of visible and ethnic minority women that I reviewed.

Indicator Box 8 - Health and Well-being

Desired Outcomes: Visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa have optimum health and well-being levels. Visible and ethnic minorities have complete access to recreation programs.

Indicators: Self-reports, and hospital and community health centre reports of health of visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa compared to non-visible and ethnic minorities. Evaluations of recreational programs (swimming and exercise) in Ottawa, with a focus on suitability for various income levels, religious practices, and age groups.

Participatory Source: Form a group of visible and ethnic minority women to define health, to identify their health needs and strengths, and to take action towards improving their health and well-being.

Qualitative Source: Perform program evaluations of recreation programs in Ottawa (e.g. YMCA, City of Ottawa Community Centres, Good Life). Profile programs that are appropriate for Muslim women, seniors, and low-income community members.

Quantitative Source: Distribute questionnaires in hospitals, clinics, and community health centres that collect data on the percentages of visible and ethnic minorities with various health conditions and that are accessing certain services.

Compare: Age and gender.

Social Support

Some participants said that their social needs, such as friendships and social activities, were not a high priority for them. However, when their other priorities were met, such as providing for their children's well-being, and having stable jobs, they valued connecting with other women. Participants also suggested that seniors are more at risk of cases of isolation, often staying in their homes and becoming inactive. They felt that seniors particularly enjoy spending time with younger generations in their cultural community. According to Meadows et al. (2001) social isolation impacts health negatively. This finding shows that the benefits and impacts of social capital are even

evident in informal, within-group connections. In addition, individual relationships contribute to the social networks of communities in their entirety. When visible and ethnic minority women have the time to connect with each other individually, the social capital of visible and ethnic minority communities strengthens, and the ability of entire communities to combat poverty, discrimination, and isolation increases.

It is through informal networks that visible and ethnic minorities sometimes meet their day-to-day needs. Individuals rely on support and information of friends when formal programs are inappropriate or when access to formal programs is inhibited (e.g. information, childcare, and transportation). The participating women reported that one aspect of quality of life is having strong informal social supports. In their home countries extended family were highly valued and were the core of their circles of support. In Canada, many extended family members are no longer present. Therefore, it is crucial that in Ottawa visible and ethnic minorities connect with other people in their own communities as well as from other cultures. Because of the value of extended family, visible and ethnic minorities also perceive quality of life through their ability to stay in touch with their extended family. For example, internet access and long distance phone access are important tools in their lives, facilitating this connectedness.

The Somali women identified characteristics of the Somali community in Ottawa, such as its growth and learning processes. They referred to the Somalis in Ottawa as *the community*. They said that the community has learned, and that there are many activists in their community. Many of these connections and perceptions of the community as a unified group are based on informal networks. Although social capital theorists seek to acknowledge the strength of these connections, they often do not account for the

workings of informal networks (Abdulkadir et al., 2004; Putnam, 2002). Strengthened relationships among community members are forms of social capital and can be measured by asset-based questionnaires (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993). In this process the community records its informal structure (ie. associations, clubs, women's circles, etc). Evaluators can also measure informal social capital by asking women if they feel that they have friends or someone to go to for support.

In addition to bonding within groups, participants said that Canadians, or individuals from "industrialized" countries, provided them with valuable information and advice for settlement in Canada. These were often informal connections, outside of settlement agencies. Valuable informal networks exist not only within ethnic communities, but also include connections with individuals who have lived in Canada for extended periods of time, regardless of their ethnicity. This form of social capital is called "bridging" and is sometimes regarded as even more beneficial than "bonding". Sometimes "bonding" breeds increased isolation of whole communities, while "bridging" often works against communities' isolation (Putnam, 2002).

Overall, informal networks are important to visible and ethnic minority women, in meeting their need to simply connect with others, as well as meeting social needs, such as childcare, transportation, and information gathering. These networks are particularly important to many visible and ethnic minority women who did not live independently in their home countries, but continuously drew on support from their extended family members. Seniors often face barriers to social support from others, and mothers often do not have time to engage in social activity. Within-community relationship building and

across-community connections are equally important and are reported as playing various roles in the social capital literature (Putnam, 2002).

Indicator Box 9 - Support Networks

Desired Outcome: Strong social networks, within and across groups, neighbourhoods, and communities.

Indicator: Visible and ethnic minorities' perceptions of the quality of community, friendships, partnerships, and networks.

Qualitative Source: Asset-based questionnaire of ethnic communities in Ottawa that maps relationships, connections, and networks as assets.

Qualitative Source: Group interviews and surveys of visible and ethnic minorities. Include questions around contact with extended family, friendships, isolation, belonging to a community, connecting with outside groups and communities, and drawing on others for meeting everyday needs (e.g. transportation, childcare, information). Participants can be recruited through organizations or in neighbourhoods (e.g. door-to-door).

Compare: Age (seniors), gender, and stage of life (parenthood).

Volunteering

The Vietnamese women placed their discussion of volunteering under the *social activity* category as well. They felt that they could not volunteer unless other priorities were taken care of and until their lives were stable. They volunteered for their own ethnic-specific community, and for mainstream organizations, and they felt that volunteering was a way to contribute back to society. Voluntary sector organizations in the Ottawa Mosaic (2004) study noted that volunteers are an extremely valuable asset in Ottawa. If organizations are to reap the benefits of volunteers, social programs in the community that meet individuals' basic needs must also be strong and well-funded. According to the participants in this thesis project, individuals do not have time to

volunteer if they must worry and give complete attention to the well-being of their families and themselves. Being able to volunteer may be an indicator of quality of life. Perhaps when individuals volunteer, a family is in a stable situation. However, often new immigrants make volunteering a priority, even when they are in crisis situations, due to the value that employers place on Canadian work experience. Overall, volunteering is another form of strengthening social capital, across groups as well as within groups.

Indicator Box 10 - Volunteering

Desired Outcome: Increased levels of volunteering.

Indicator: Numbers and profiles of volunteers in mainstream agencies and agencies that serve visible and ethnic minorities (e.g. immigrant serving organizations).

Quantitative and Qualitative Source: Distribute questionnaires to voluntary sector agencies in Ottawa. Determine numbers of volunteers, percentages who are visible and ethnic minorities, reasons for volunteering, and stage of life of volunteers.

Social Programs: Access and Appropriateness

The second research question of this study was: How do visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa perceive the effects of social programs on the quality of their lives? In the group interviews, it was phrased as follows: What are aspects of Ottawa that impact whether life is good for you or not? I provided examples to participants as well, such as services, social programs, and institutions. I created this section of the findings in order to answer this question fully, however, the participants' discussion of social programs was interspersed throughout all responses in the group interviews. Hence, this is the section of these findings that is completely researcher-created because I did not draw on the participants' categories. When coming to the second question in the group

interviews, I often found that the participants had already answered the question and they only felt that it was necessary to add a few additional remarks. I found that when separating this topic for the purpose of analysis, it became obvious that much of the women's discussions in the interviews were centered around their perceptions of social programs or areas in their lives that could be improved with new or strengthened programs. In the above sections I have already discussed the education system, services that increase access to employment, and health and recreation services, related to this question. I will now move on to additional discussions of social programs in Ottawa.

Cultural Specificity

Often mainstream organizations provide training to their employees for cultural sensitivity and appropriateness. However, from the participants' perspectives, in order to be completely *included* in society, they desired *culturally-specific* services, such as workers from their own cultures and programs based on models from their own cultures. In light of Cushing's (2003) discussion of social inclusion, often individuals require alterations of mainstream social programs in order to have fair opportunities in employment and in having their social needs met. The participants in this thesis did state that it is impossible to have culturally specific workers for every ethnicity and language, but if, statistically, we know that there are high populations of certain ethnicities and languages in certain areas of the city, it makes sense to ensure that workers from those ethnicities and languages are assigned to the appropriate areas, in appropriate quantities as well. The Ottawa Mosaic (2004) and Working Group (2001) discussed this issue under the concept of *access to services*. Visible and ethnic minorities' access to services includes workers who are culturally sensitive, culturally specific workers within

mainstream services, and culturally specific alternative services. These past studies did not, however, show priority to culturally specific alternative services, over culturally appropriate services. Regardless, the participants of this study were concerned that some of their community members were not having their needs met because of the lack of access to appropriate services.

In particular, the participants made the suggestion of cultural specificity for the areas of social work in general, marital counseling, family planning, and parenting courses (particularly for men). In these areas individuals are extremely vulnerable, and it is understandable that their needs may only be met through a high level of cultural understanding and connecting. Participants also spoke of seniors' programs. They said that mainstream recreation programs for seniors are not appropriate (e.g. Bingo). Programs must reflect seniors' interests, which are highly based on their ways of life in their home countries. These findings reflect social inclusion, where altering the dominant models of counseling and adult education are ways to truly include diverse groups (Cushing, 2003). One indicator of an effective social program and addressing cultural needs, would be number of participants who are from various cultures, who choose to attend a program. The desire for culturally specific programs was not necessarily felt by the Vietnamese group of women, who described some cases where they valued the assistance of Canadians when they first arrived in Canada, and they often used the term *integration* when describing their desires for inclusion in Canada.

Indicator Box 11 - Cultural Specificity

Desired Outcome: Visible and ethnic minorities in Ottawa have increased access to services through culturally specific practices.

Indicator: Evaluations of mainstream programs or programs for visible and ethnic minorities, particularly in areas of marital counseling, parenting courses, family planning, and seniors' programs.

Participatory source: Community members form an advisory committee for a social program or social service agency, in order to assess and problem solve around the needs of service users from specified cultures.

Qualitative and quantitative source: Conduct program evaluations that compare percentages of workers who are from various cultures, percentages of participants from various cultures, and cultural profile of the population served (Statistics Canada census). Cite cases of using alternative approaches to mainstream North American methods. Ask participants of programs whether they feel that their needs are being met in a way that satisfies their cultural needs.

Social Assistance and OSAP

The participating women often mentioned their desires not to rely on social assistance and to stay out of debt. They felt that they had skills and knowledge that they wanted to put to use in employment positions. For religious reasons, the Arabic-speaking women will not depend on OSAP, making it extremely difficult to attend university. For this reason, we could determine alternative methods by which students are provided with opportunities to attend university or college. Other measures of quality of life may be absence of debts, as well as low numbers of people on social assistance, comparing visible and ethnic minorities to the general population. However, even if this is used as a quality of life indicator, there are certainly other factors contributing to individuals being on social assistance, such as the long period of time for foreign credentials to be recognized, and inability to work based on English or French language proficiency levels. Because social assistance is a definite need, I would certainly not want an indicator of

quality of life to be misused and to create an excuse for governments' failure to provide social support in any way. Hence, the indicator of fewer people being on social assistance could reflect individuals' quality of life but it could also reflect governments' decreased funding and greater waiting lists.

Indicator Box 12 - Social Assistance and OSAP

Desired Outcomes: Fewer visible and ethnic minorities require social assistance. Visible and ethnic minorities who, for religious reasons cannot pay interest, have alternative means of attending post-secondary education.

Indicators: Percentage of visible and ethnic minorities on social assistance and OSAP. Feelings around debts and loans.

Quantitative Source: Compare government statistics on individuals on social assistance and OSAP. Compare percentage of visible and ethnic minorities on social assistance and OSAP to percentage of non-visible and ethnic minorities on social assistance and OSAP.

Quantitative and Qualitative Source: Survey visible and ethnic minorities around their religious beliefs about loans and interest compared to their incurred debts and loans.

Social Housing

Somali participants shared their experiences in social housing. Their neighbourhoods held senses of community, and they did not feel that low-income neighbourhoods were dangerous. They said that children benefited from having friends from many cultures. However, they did report incidences of racism in their communities. They were also aware of stigmas imposed on people living in social housing, but said that that these must be the results of circumstances in the past because they did not feel that their neighbourhoods were necessarily bad places to live. They felt that they were not informed about these stigmas when they were placed in these neighbourhoods. Novac (1999) concluded in her study that immigrant enclaves were products of discrimination as

opposed to cultural preference. The findings in this thesis project agree with Novac's conclusions. Participants did not choose to live in their neighbourhoods. They had no other choices due to their financial situations, but if they had had choices, and if they were informed of the stigmas attached to the neighbourhoods, they would have chosen alternative places to live. Kazemipur and Hallis (2000) stated that immigrant enclaves increase stigmatization, social exclusion, and anti-immigrant sentiments. From this thesis project we cannot conclude that the participants' housing situations *caused* these experiences in increasing measure, but they did report the presence of stigmatization and anti-immigrant sentiments as well. Social inclusion includes access to information and control over choices of where to live, as well as acceptance and freedom from discrimination. Lister's (2000) definition of social inclusion includes being valued and appreciated in the *social* life of a community.

Indicator Box 13 - Social Housing

Desired Outcome: Decrease in reports of racist remarks and feelings of discrimination in low-income neighbourhoods.

Indicators: Reported experiences and feelings of discrimination.

Participatory Source: Community members create visual representations (e.g. diagrams, matrices, maps) of their neighbourhoods, including feelings they have towards their neighbourhoods, cases of discrimination, and assets of their neighbourhoods.

Qualitative Source: Conduct a neighbourhood survey of reports of racist remarks and feelings of discrimination and stigmatizations.

8.0 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

Through this project I sought to contribute to the work of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. Local research projects and locally-based indicators are extremely valuable although low in number in Ottawa and other Canadian municipalities. Through this project I drew on the lives of community members and showed that their perceptions and contributions were relevant in tackling present evaluation trends and offer direction in measuring impacts of programs on the lives of program users in Ottawa. These findings add to the limited body of research around the quality of life of visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa. They also contribute to the development of the Bank of Knowledge, which aims to encourage the voluntary sector to share data and to mobilize around pertinent issues.

Returning to the purpose of the study, I draw the following conclusions around the ways that visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa perceive the quality of their lives, and the effects of social programs on the quality of their lives. Social inclusion and social capital theories are relevant to some aspects of quality of life of participants in this study. To most, social inclusion meant more than simply being included as participants of mainstream society. Alternatively, mainstream institutions' programs, policies, and workers should be continuously transformed in order to accommodate diverse groups, their new needs, different approaches, and varying belief systems. At the same time, the Vietnamese participants did not feel as strongly that mainstream society should be transformed. Rather, they felt that they wanted to be integrated into already-existing social structures.

The social capital approach was particularly relevant when promoting and measuring the strength of relationships between the education system and ethnic groups in Ottawa. Even though the emphasis of social capital theorists is more focused on relationships across groups, the approach also illustrated the value of visible and ethnic minorities' informal social support networks, including their family relationships.

Groups conceptualize quality of life in varying ways, not solely based on issues such as employment, health, and access. However, when making comparisons across the three groups, reference to these issues is included in most groups' conceptualizations and are useful when combining data from many groups and sources. Community members' creation of categories for framing quality of life, and discussion following this development, is a worthwhile activity, revealing insight around strengths and needs of communities, as well as diversity within communities.

Women perceive their identity and quality of life through the lives of their children. Children are their number one priority, and they hold many fears, worries, and concerns around the cultural values of their children, their relationships with children, parenting in a new country, and their children's education and future employment. Because the education system has a high level of influence on the lives of children and youth, parents' connections with the education system is particularly meaningful. In Ottawa, schools and visible and ethnic minority parents must develop many more opportunities for communication, conflict resolution, and access to information in order to improve the lives of their children in this area.

Numerous cases of discrimination and inequality were reported by participants in the area of employment and the workplace. The participants cited experiences that varied

based on age, gender, and time in Canada. Participants believed that social programs are effective when mainstream services have culturally-specific workers, as well as when services for visible and ethnic minorities in particularly sensitive circumstances have entirely culturally-specific alternatives (e.g. parenting courses, family counseling, and seniors' programs).

As secondary priorities, women perceive health as multi-faceted. Some women in Ottawa, particularly Muslim women and seniors, are unable to fulfill their health needs due to insufficient recreational facilities and programs. Women felt that they were free to practice their religions in Ottawa, although they did report discrimination in the workplace due to religion.

Participatory principles and techniques are highly relevant when developing indicators of quality of life. However, the term *participation* should be used cautiously, as should participatory methods. Participatory activities must be adapted to suit the context and familiar modes of communication of community members. Only through expressing themselves in their natural contexts will they fully capture and transfer their expertise.

Lessons From Participatory Tools

When applying participatory methodology I realized that I required more time with the women in order to reach a degree of participation that I would have been satisfied with. For example, in many participatory approaches, participants drive the process. With more time I could have developed less of a researcher-researched connection and more of a co-researcher relationship. I could have also introduced a

longer-term participatory process, such as having the participants involved in developing the research questions, collecting data, and analyzing data.

Through the use of PRA tools in this short-term project (diagramming and card sorting), I learned that some participatory tools are not necessarily participants' first method of expressing themselves or explaining their ways of life. For example, the Somali language had no written alphabet until 1972. It is highly oral and Somalis are also known for their oral poetry (Hultman, 1993). The Somali women did not engage in the diagramming activity during the interview. Perhaps if the medium had been more familiar the diagramming would have been effective. For example, sometimes PRA practitioners encourage participants to draw in the soil and to use materials from their land to identify key parts of diagrams or maps (Chambers, 1997). Regardless, the women in all of the interviews expressed themselves more comfortably orally as opposed to using markers and flip chart paper. In participatory research, we need to discover how participants express themselves most comfortably, and to use tools that complement these strengths. Because the women did not speak English well and did not write English well, both writing and drawing activities were not necessarily the best choices as participatory tools, even though they were given the option of writing in their native language.

PRA practitioners encourage new forms of PRA (Chambers, 1997), and I would propose transforming some typical visual PRA exercises into oral exercises. PRA practitioners sometimes have participants document a typical day in diagram form. As a warm up exercise, I had the women share, orally, what was important to them in a typical day. In this exercise I found that participants introduced many of the main themes for the group interview, which they discussed in greater depth throughout the interviews.

The card sorting exercise was extremely valuable. Because the interview questions were open-ended and the discussions were sometimes off-track, the card sorting activity, at the end of the interview, allowed the women to conclude their discussions and to express their priorities. The women discussed themes and concepts that were visually in front of them.

The women's categories for answering the questions were extremely revealing. By assuming that the participants had unique ways of ordering the issues, I was able to create the appropriate space for them to express further insight into their perceptions of quality of life. Overall, I found that the influence of participatory literature on this project was vital in capturing the perceptions of the participating women's priorities and everyday lives. I would recommend using these approaches when developing grassroots indicators of quality of life. Because participatory approaches to research can document effectively the impacts of social change and social programs on community members' lives, I chose to incorporate participatory methods into the recommended sources for collecting data on some of the proposed grassroots indicators.

At the same time, I recommend keeping the common critiques of participatory methods in mind. Sometimes incorporating participatory methods and approaches into research projects masks existing inequalities (Singh, 2001). Practitioners should be aware that involving participants does not necessarily deal with inequalities and should use the often over-used term "participation" with caution. In addition, participatory processes are sometimes used to validate a researcher or evaluator's already-existing agenda (Maguire, 1987). This can happen in the subtlest ways. For example, in my thesis project, some of the participants' major categories for ordering their responses in

the group interviews simply did not fit into categories across all three groups. I could not separate all of my indicators based on age, or based on immigration status. I decided, instead, to opt for consistency across groups above one groups' primary way of ordering social issues. I had to make choices in this way without consulting with participants. In addition, one group (Vietnamese women) had a different conceptualization of inclusion than the other two (Arabic-speaking and Somali women). I included both views in my findings but I emphasized the latter view (a more radical inclusion as opposed to simply being integrated). I have learned that it is difficult to incorporate the perspectives of all groups in participatory processes when the project includes groups and individuals with different priorities and opinions, even though this is a core part of the participatory process. When the process includes a number of stakeholders (community members, practitioners, funders, etc), this challenge must be immense.

Limitations

Because of the nature of MSW theses I did not have the time or resources to conduct group sessions with women from every ethnic group in Ottawa. All participants of this study were immigrants or refugees. Participants were not all *recent* newcomers, but, in order to add additional perspectives to the scope of this research project, I could have included a group of visible and ethnic minority women who were not immigrants and refugees. In addition, the concept of "diversity" expands to include other groups such as First Nations peoples. This project examined diversity issues within three specific communities, with a few women from each ethnic community. I recommend further research that includes other visible and ethnic minority groups and other age

groups in order to expand the indicators of quality of life to represent other groups of women in Ottawa as well.

Participants in each group interview already knew each other and were connected to either a community health centre or an ethnic association. Hence, the women had circles of support and were connected to resources. For example, the women from the community health centres mentioned Multicultural Liaison Officers. This may be an indication that they were well-informed about the resources in Ottawa. These women were not the most marginalized women in their ethnic groups. Involving the most marginalized individuals in a study is crucial, and further study could include these voices. In addition, because the community leaders and developers participated in the group interviews, responses may have been influenced with the presence of perhaps an *authority* figure.

Another limitation was not necessarily foreseeable. The first group interview question included the option of answering what makes life “good” or “not good”. The women answered this question with mainly what makes life “not good”. I assume from these responses that what makes life “not good” was what was important to the women. However, there may be additional tools that could be implemented in additional group interviews or consultations that draw out more positive indicators of quality of life, documenting assets, strengths, and social capital. In addition, because the group did not, obviously, represent all ethnicities and diversity within their ethnic groups, some issues that may have been good, but still important, for these participants, may have created indicators for circumstances that were not necessarily good for other community members. For example, the women did not speak extensively about housing conditions.

I assume, then, that their housing conditions are at least livable because they were not stated as a priority (this may be a naive assumption). However, if, somehow in the interview, they mentioned that their housing was "good" and the reasons why, I would have created an indicator that may have been relevant for various conditions of housing in Ottawa.

Suggestions for Future Study

In addition to the suggestions already provided in response to the above limitations, I offer additional suggestions for future study. A study could solely interpret the various divisions of age groups in communities in order to make sense of everyday experiences. Researchers could analyze the group divisions and reasons provided for these distinctions. Additional studies could also concentrate solely on experiences of visible and ethnic minority youth, young parents, and seniors. Evaluators in Ottawa could examine issues surrounding diversity in schools, as well as voluntary sector organizations. Such a study could include looking at agencies' diversity statements, diversity of employees and clients, and instances of discrimination. Researchers could also study alternatives to mainstream Canadian social services, such as parenting and family counseling. Models and approaches from other countries could be examined, as well as feasibility of implementing alternatives in Canada, within the present funding and evaluation frameworks. Ways of strengthening informal supports in these areas should also be considered.

In order to confirm the relevance, credibility, and soundness of the above suggested indicators, and also in order to add to the above set, various visible and ethnic minority women, at many stages of life and time in Ottawa, could be invited to

participate in similar group interviews, and consultations with researchers of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. This research study can be incorporated into the larger activities of the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. My hope is that I have conducted locally-relevant research that is useful and applicable. I hope that organizations and community members in Ottawa share their knowledge and perspectives on social change in Ottawa, by collecting data on the indicators developed in the Bank of Knowledge.

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APPENDIX A

PROJECT INVITATION LETTER

Dear Interested Participant,

Hello. My name is Maryann Loftus. I am conducting a research project as part of my Master's of Social Work degree at Carleton University as well as for the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. It is called "Ways that Visible and Ethnic Minority Women in Ottawa Think about the Quality of Social Programs and the Quality of their Lives".

For this research I am organizing five workshops, each with different community groups (based on culture, ethnicity, or language) in Ottawa. I am hoping that ten to twelve women will attend each workshop.

In these workshops I will ask participating women to document how they define quality of life for themselves and their ethnic group in Ottawa. This will include considering the terms inclusion, diversity, and equality, and what they actually mean when it comes to women's everyday lives. In addition, participants will explore ways that aspects of their neighbourhoods or the city of Ottawa are related to their ideals. We will record and work through ideas by drawing diagrams, writing ideas on cards, and discussing them. Often social programs are designed and evaluated without talking to the actual people that the programs are meant for. The hope is that we can design ways for service providers and governments to know what is important to visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa. Results will be used to advocate for ways of measuring quality of life that are more meaningful for visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa.

The workshops will be two to two and a half hours long. Transportation costs and refreshments will be provided. The workshops will be in English but I am hoping that participating women will feel free to speak and write ideas in their first languages when working in smaller groups. I will tape record the sessions if all participating women agree to this. I will not use any names or personal information (phone numbers, email addresses) in the report from this project. And, when reading the written report there will be no way for people to know what anyone personally said. Copies of the diagrams and work done in the workshops will be available to the women who make them. Results from this project will also be used by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.

I am free to hold the workshops between Feb. 21, 2005 and March 31, 2005 at times that are convenient to those attending (weekends, evenings, or days).

I thank you for your interest and look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,
 Maryann Loftus
 613-562-4628
mloftus@connect.carleton.ca
 Ethics Approval Date: Dec. 21, 2004

Project Supervisor:
 Elizabeth Whitmore
 Carleton University
 613-520-2600 ext. 6692
ewhitmor@connect.carleton.ca

PROJECT INFORMATION HANDOUT (DAY OF THE GROUP INTERVIEW)

Ethics Approval Date: Dec. 21, 2004

Title: Ways That Visible and Ethnic Minority Women In Ottawa Think About the Quality of Their Lives and the Quality of Social Programs

My name is Maryann Loftus. This workshop is part of a project that I am working on for my Master's of Social Work at Carleton University as well as for the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.

Today I will be asking you to explore ways that you, as a group, think about what is meaningful to you when it comes to the quality of your lives and what makes life "good" for Somali women in Ottawa. We will record and work through ideas by drawing diagrams, writing ideas on cards, and discussing them. Often social programs are designed and evaluated without talking to the actual people that the programs are meant for. The hope is that we can design ways for service providers and government to know what is important to you as women in Ottawa.

Please read over the following consent form carefully. The workshop will be about two hours long. I will not use names or personal information (phone numbers, email addresses) in the report of this project.

Copies of the diagrams and work that you produce will be available to you and to the other women who make them. Results from this project will also be used by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.

Thank you for your participation.

Maryann Loftus
613-562-4628
mloftus@connect.carleton.ca

Project Supervisor
Elizabeth Whitmore
Carleton University
613-520-2600 ext. 6692
ewhitmor@connect.carleton.ca

Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO)

Counseling Program

613-725-0202

959 Wellington Street West, Ottawa

Carmen Gloria Urbina (Counseling Program supervisor) is aware of this research project and has offered a follow-up counseling session, from counseling services at OCISO, free of charge to anyone who would like to speak with a counselor (email: curbina@ociso.org).

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

Ethics Approval Date: Dec. 21, 2004.

Title: Ways That Visible and Ethnic Minority Women In Ottawa Think About the Quality of Their Lives and the Quality of Social Programs

I, _____ (*your name*) have agreed to participate in this group session on quality of life and the quality of social programs. I understand that the workshop is being conducted by Maryann Loftus from the School of Social Work at Carleton University as part of her Master's degree and for the Social Planning Council of Ottawa.

I understand that:

- The workshop will be approximately 2 hours long.
- I may leave the workshop at any time.
- I do not have to participate in any part of the activities that I am uncomfortable with.
- I can participate in activities by sharing what I believe to be general experiences of visible and ethnic minority women in Ottawa as a group. This means that I do not have to share my personal experiences. However, my beliefs about visible and ethnic minority women in general will likely be drawn from my personal experiences. When thinking about my personal experiences I may feel emotions that are upsetting.
- I will be provided with contact information for the Counseling Program at Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) where I can go if I feel that I would like to speak with a counselor following the workshop. I will receive one free session of counseling.
- The workshop will be tape recorded if all women agree to this. The tapes will be destroyed by Sept. 20, 2005.
- Information might be shared outside of the workshop because participants will be given a copy of what we create in this workshop. We are encouraged to use the tools, skills, and information collected from this workshop in the future.
- My name will not be used in reports from the workshop but my comments may be used word for word.
- What I share will be confidential in the written reports. This means that readers will not know that I have said something that is reported. However, other women who participate in the group activities will know what I have said.
- A report on the workshop findings will be provided to the Social Planning Council of Ottawa. The Social Planning Council of Ottawa will use this information in future projects. A copy of the report may be put on the World Wide Web.
- The report will be presented to the researcher's supervisor at the School of Social Work at Carleton University.
- This project has been approved by the Carleton University Research Ethics Committee.
- If I have any questions or concerns I can contact the researcher, research supervisor or ethics committee chair.

Researcher/Facilitator: Maryann Loftus, 562-4628, mloftus@connect.carleton.ca

Supervisor: Elizabeth Whitmore, 520-2600 ext. 6692, ewhitmor@connect.carleton.ca

Ethics Committee Chair: Leslie MacDonald Hicks, 520-2517, ethics@carleton.ca

Your name: _____

Your signature: _____ Date: _____



Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
 Organisme Communautaire des Services aux Immigrants d'Ottawa

December 3, 2004

Maryann Loftus,
 School of Social Work,
 Carleton University,
 Ottawa, ON.
mloftus@connect.carleton.ca

Dear Maryann Loftus,

Re: Referring Research Participants to Counseling at OCISO

The Counseling Program at OCISO has been in operation since 1994 and provides culturally sensitive counselling to the immigrant and refugee population of Ottawa and it is delivered in many languages. Counselors meet the equivalent combination of training and experience required for membership in professional associations of psychotherapists in North America.

This letter of referral confirms that I, Carmen Gloria Urbina, the Counseling Program Supervisor at Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO), am aware of the group interviews with visible and ethnic minority women, being held by you (Maryann Loftus), MSW student at Carleton University. These interviews will be held in February and March 2005 as part of your MSW thesis project and will examine how visible and ethnic minority women monitor the quality of social programs in Ottawa. The interviews are not expected to, but may, surface past emotional experiences or cause emotional disturbance.

The counselling team is prepared to offer, to any of the participants, a follow-up counseling session from the counseling services at OCISO, should they request it. This session will be provided free of charge.

Sincerely

Carmen Gloria Urbina
 Counselling Program Supervisor
 E-mail: curbina@ociso.org

formerly Ottawa-Carleton Immigrant Services Organization
 959 rue Wellington Street West, Ottawa, ON, K1Y 2X5 Tel : (613) 725-0202 Fax : (613) 725-9054
 Email : info@ociso.org Web site : www.ociso.org
 a member agency of United Way/Centraide Ottawa

APPENDIX C

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: FACILITATOR GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

- Introductions
- Purpose of session and what to expect (open endedness, visual exercises)
- Logistics... audiotaping, notetaking, consent forms (counseling info), providing them with diagrams later on.
(15 minutes)

WARM-UP

Individually have participants think about a typical day for them.

What is meaningful and important to you throughout your day?

Listing

Be specific

Jot down your thoughts in words or pictures.

Can share or not share.

(10

minutes)

DIAGRAM

- First I will say the question and then break it down into a few steps.
- **In your everyday lives in Ottawa, what makes life good or not good, for you, your families, and other Arabic-speaking women?**
- *To capture their perceptions of life.*
- The first step to answering this question is to decide as a group on how to break it down into categories or a certain order.
- Create a diagram or picture (combination of words and pictures) to illustrate your answer. Leave room for adding other aspects (i.e. put it in the middle).
- Show them examples.
- Try to show how different ideas and concepts are related to each other.
(30 minutes)
- **What are aspects of Ottawa that impact whether life is good for you or not? Services, social programs, institutions.**
- How? Add these to your diagram or picture.
- Be specific. Break it down.
(15 minutes)

Discuss them (e.g. Why are they grouped certain ways? Why do you think you worded it like you did?)

(20 minutes)

CARD SORTING

- Participants will choose four priorities that emerged for them throughout the group interview.
- Write these on separate cards.

- All groups will place the cards at the center of the room. Combine cards that are identical.
- Each participant will rank the importance of the cards, indicating importance of the issue by placing a number of pennies.
- Discuss results and why some have more pennies while others have less.
(20 minutes)

CLOSURE

- Feedback from participants.
(10 minutes)