



# METROPOLIS BRITISH COLUMBIA

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### **NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES AND BRIDGING SOCIAL TIES**

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# **Metropolis British Columbia**

## ***Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Diversity***

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## Working Paper Series

### **Neighbourhood Houses and Bridging Social Ties<sup>1</sup>**

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#### ABSTRACT:

In this paper we examine the formation of diverse social ties among newcomers to Vancouver. We look specifically at the influence of Neighbourhood House membership on facilitating diverse tie formation. Past research has found that membership in different types of associations can lead to more or less network diversity. We build on this research by considering how different

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#### 4 RIIM: *Immigrant Network Diversity*

types of *involvement* can lead to either increases or decreases in network diversity among new immigrants. Looking at one type of association, we find that targeted, instrumental types of involvement can lead to more diverse immigrant social ties and that general, expressive types of involvement can lead to more homogeneous social ties.

#### KEY WORDS:

Immigration, Social Integration, Social Networks, Associations

SOCIAL NETWORKS HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY central to the understanding of the migration process. Massey et al. (1993, 448) define migrant networks as “sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and nonmigrants through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared nationality.” Since Boyd (1989) took stock of this literature, some researchers have answered her call for more research on the network range of migrants — contacts with people from diverse backgrounds and with varied social resources. Interest in network diversity is an important aspect of social resource theory and research on immigrant adaptations (Lin 2001; Portes 1998). Network diversity is also important to discussions of immigration integration, sometimes known as primary structural integration (Rumbaut 2001; Gordon 1964).

Recently social scientists have turned their attentions to migrant network diversity. Korinek, Entwisle, and Jampaklay (2005) found diverse networks influencing long-term settlement patterns of rural to urban migrants. Korac (2003) found that diverse ties increase immigrants’ sense of belonging. Hagan’s (1998) research on the Maya community in Texas remains an important foundation for this agenda. Her work is important for its focus on the determinants of network diversity among new immigrants, finding that work organization can constrain opportunities to develop network diversity. Our research follows this interest in the determinants of network diversity by considering the influence of voluntary association membership on immigrants’ personal networks.

Voluntary associations are at the center of research on increasing network diversity, and past research has found conflicting outcomes from association membership (Davis, Renzulli and Aldrich 2006; Glanville 2004; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986). Putnam (2000) has most famously argued that voluntary associations attract diverse members and promote network diversity. Research

on homophily (the similarity of personal ties) and associations, however, has found associations often attract members with similar characteristics, thereby contributing to the homogeneity of social networks (see McPherson, Smith-Lovin and Cook 2001 for a review).

By integrating research on immigrant network diversity and voluntary association membership, our research here makes important contributions to both fields. First, we add to the immigration literature with our focus on associations and diversity in immigrant networks. Immigrant networks are unique and hold important implications for the study of network diversity. Second, we add to the network and association involvement literature by focusing on how different types of involvement in associations — instrumental or expressive (Gordon and Babchuck 1959) — influence network diversity differently. Past research has focused on association membership and association type, with less attention to varieties of association involvement.

## IMMIGRANT NETWORK DIVERSITY

Network diversity is not easily accomplished due to a well-established tendency towards homophily. The homophily principle states that contact between similar people occurs at higher rates than among dissimilar people (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001, 416). Lazarsfeld and Merton (1954) first developed this principle empirically in their study of community friendship patterns. Since then strong evidence for homophily has been found among co-workers, friends, and romantic partners (for reviews see McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001; Marsden 1987; Burt 1990).

Research has found substantial evidence for the homophily of personal ties being induced or caused by the social structure of opportunities for contact

(McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987). Factors such as residential and spatial separation of different groups and the importance of family for bringing people into contact lead to increased homophily of personal relationships. Homophily may also result from peoples' choice of affiliations rather than opportunity structures. These choices can influence tie formation at the beginning of relationships, and over time as similar ties are maintained and ties with different others dissolve (Burt 2000).

Considering homophily and network diversity among immigrant groups addresses important questions. There are reasons to expect induced homophily. Family ties remain important for immigrants, and migration networks also tend towards similarity. Immigration itself, however, spans geographies and brings strangers into contact. Immigration also highlights the importance of choice homophily. The theory of immigrant and ethnic enclaves proposes that there are clear advantages for newcomers to affiliate with those like themselves in language, culture and national origin (Wilson and Portes 1980; Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993; Li 2004). Similarity breeds trust, and for a newcomer with particular needs these ties can lend support in their new circumstances. Despite this tendency towards homophily, there is continued interest in diverse network ties among social resource theorists and research on immigrant integration.

Social resource theory proposes that resources are accessed through social networks, and that these resources affect opportunities and the outcomes of instrumental actions (Lin 1999, 470-1; 2001; see also Portes 1998). Granovetter's (1973, 1995) well known work on weak ties has shown that network range provides advantages for information gathering that is valuable for such search process as finding jobs. Lin and colleagues (Lin 1999; Lin, Ensel and Vaughn 1981; Lin and Dumin 1986) have found these ties provide status and occupational mobility advantages for their holders. Burt (1992) has found

network range can help provide advantages for entrepreneurs and for receiving promotions within large organizations. Putnam (2000) found value beyond the instrumental uses of diverse ties, emphasizing their ability to create affinities and shared commitments between social groups.

Research on integration and the immigration experience is also concerned with the diversity of network ties. Primary structural integration (Rumbaut 2001; Gordon 1964) refers to personal ties with a person from a different ethnic background or immigrant status. Korac (2003) considers these ties a valuable end in themselves. Through in-depth interviews with Yugoslavian immigrants to Italy and the Netherlands, she found that holding diverse ties increases immigrants' sense of belonging and that her respondents desired these integrating ties when they were absent. The effects of network diversity are not limited to the sentiments of immigrants. Korinek, Entwisle, and Jampaklay (2005) found that network diversity increases long-term and permanent settlement of migrants. Examining the rural to urban migration in Thailand, they found that network diversity increases attachment to a new place, while those with ties based in family and origin community enclaves are more likely to leave the destination. Diverse ties "wed" migrants to their new destinations partly by providing access to resources that ease settlement, but also through the anchoring that follows from bonds unique to the new locality.

Hagan (1998) found network diversity has implications for political incorporation along with integration. In her examination of the Mayan community in Houston, Texas, she found that diverse ties increase the likelihood of immigrants gaining legal status. Particularly interesting are the interactions of network diversity with gender and work that she found in her research. The women who were a part of this community predominantly work as domestic servants. Their work took them away from the immigrant community for long

stretches and isolates them from varied ties. Men, in contrast, typically found work as stockers in local supermarkets. They worked with other Mayan immigrants and were able to live and work in close proximity to their local community. This allowed men time for full participation in the community and increased network contacts. Hagan found these differences provided advantages for the Mayan men as they pursued legal status under the Immigrant Reform and Control Act of 1986.

We expect the local size or concentration of an ethnic group to influence the diversity of ties with larger ethnic concentrations inhibiting network diversity and smaller ethnic communities increasing diversity. This follows an established line of sociological thinking. Blau (1977) made similar propositions concerning structural heterogeneity and the rates of cross-ethnic marriages, and Fischer's (1975) theory of urban subcultures relies on demographic concentrations for subculture formation. Fischer's argument is particularly important here because it provides a foundation for the immigrant enclave literature. There are clear advantages for newcomers to associate with others like themselves, but an essential aspect of this logic is the size of the community. In a larger immigrant/ethnic community a newcomer will find more resources of value from similar others. The smaller an immigrant or ethnic community, the more likely a newcomer will have to leave that community in order to obtain the support he or she needs.

Language acquisition has been found previously to have an impact on aspects of immigrant incorporation such as employment and political participation (Chiswick and Miller 2001).<sup>2</sup> We expect that a newcomer's ability to establish diverse ethnic ties will be influenced by their ability to communicate

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<sup>2</sup> We specify English here because it is the dominant language of the region. Similar findings have been found when French, for instance, is the primary language of the region (Chiswick and Miller 2001b).

with those others. This is clear when considering ties to the dominant English speaking population, and English can also act as a common medium of communication for immigrants who do not share the same first language.

In addition to community size and language acquisition, time in the new destination and age at immigration may influence network diversity. These factors make intuitive sense, and they have been found to be important for other outcomes such as language acquisition (Chiswick and Miller 2001), with age at arrival negatively associated and time in destination positively associated with language acquisition. There may be some similarity between language acquisition and tie acquisition, but we are cautious in suggesting the direction of influence for these factors and network diversity. Time in a destination may allow for new, diverse ties to form, for instance, but network ties have also been found to dissolve over time with a tendency towards homophily. Without past research to build on, it is equally plausible to expect that years in a destination country allows time for diverse ties to form, or time for them to dissolve.

## VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS AND NETWORK DIVERSITY

We contribute to the interest in immigrant network diversity with our examination of the conditions that influence the diversity of personal ties, in particular the role of involvement in voluntary associations. In their review of the literature, McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook (2001) found organizations such as schools, workplaces, and voluntary associations are important locations for tie creation. These organizations bring people together to form new non-kin ties and therefore offer the possibility for creating diverse personal networks. Voluntary associations have figured prominently in this literature, in part because involvement in them takes place throughout the life course in ways that involvement in other organizations, like schools do not.

Past research on association membership and network diversity has looked at friendship networks (Fischer et al. 1977), discussion groups (Marsden 1990), and small business owners (Davis, Renzulli, and Aldrich 2006). To date, however, there is little or no research specifically examining voluntary associations and network diversity among new immigrants. This is not because the importance of association membership among immigrants has been overlooked. On the contrary, research on immigrants and association membership includes topics such as motivations for activities, generational patterns of membership, and the influence of membership on political participation (Han 2004; Moya 2005; Owusu 2000; Togeby 2004). The research utilizes both global and historical approaches and examinations of specific immigrant groups in particular countries. Our goal here is to combine these independent interests with immigrant network diversity and immigrant association participation with a more formal literature on association membership and network diversity.

There are two competing hypotheses concerning the direction of influence voluntary associations have on network diversity that McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1986) call the *integrating* and *sorting* hypotheses. The integrating hypothesis expects membership in voluntary associations to promote diverse personal network ties while the sorting hypothesis predicts that participation in voluntary associations increases homophily. In her review of current research, Glanville (2004) found research on both voluntary association membership and network diversity to be rare, and the findings concerning the two hypotheses inconclusive. We look at each hypothesis and this research in more detail below.

## THE INTEGRATING HYPOTHESIS

The integrating hypothesis states that participation in voluntary associations promotes the diversity of personal network ties. This hypothesis has been persistent in the history of sociology, starting with Tocqueville (1969) and currently promoted notably by Putnam (2000); from this view, voluntary associations are seen as unique social spaces that draw diverse types of people together. This hypothesis rests on the assumption that association members are a diverse group. Involvement in associations, it is then proposed, allows for the intermingling of people and the creation of ties that bridge social cleavages of class, gender, race, and ethnicity. However, associations are often organized around some form of similarity leading to homophily on at least some characteristics. While acknowledging this, the hypothesis emphasizes that associations always cross boundaries simultaneously (see Putnam 2000, 400). Ethnic associations, for instance, often cross gender and social class boundaries.

There has been some evidence supporting the integrating hypothesis. In a representative sample of the Netherlands, Kalmijn and Flap (2001) found that voluntary association membership decreases the likelihood of age homophily in marriages. Davis, Renzulli, and Aldrich (2006), in an examination of small business owners in North Carolina, found that the occupational diversity of people in the owners' networks does not decline through association membership and that multiple association memberships can increase network occupational diversity.

## THE SORTING HYPOTHESIS

The sorting hypothesis states that participation in voluntary associations leads to greater network homogeneity. McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1987) found this sorting process first documented by early community studies such as Gans's

(1967) study of Levittown where he noted that the associations “divided and segregated people by their interests and ultimately, of course, by socioeconomic, educational, and religious differences” (cited in McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1986, 61). Research on this hypothesis develops the work of Blau (1977) on the structured opportunities for interaction and rests on the assumption that voluntary associations are made up of people who are similar on salient characteristics such as ethnicity and gender. Why might voluntary associations be made up of socially similar people? One explanation looks to recruitment networks (Davis, Renzulli, and Aldrich 2006, 45). Research finds recruitment to voluntary associations is most common through friendship ties. If members recruit new members who are similar to themselves, this recruitment effect leads to greater similarity of participants and homophily of ties. In addition to affecting who joins, social similarity also increases the duration of membership.

If voluntary associations are made up of socially similar people it follows that the opportunities for diverse contacts are low, leading toward homophily. Research has found some support for this hypothesis. In two regionally based samples, similarities in social class and age have been found among friends who met through associations (Fischer et al. 1977) or attend the same associations (Feld 1982). In a nationally representative sample, Marsden (1990) found shared association membership correlated with decreased religious diversity in network ties.

## A FOCUS ON VARIETIES OF INVOLVEMENT

One explanation for the persistence of both the integrating and sorting hypotheses is that varying types of voluntary associations have different implications for the diversity of network ties. Glanville (2004) proposed that one dimension along which associations may vary is purpose, with past emphasis placed on

the distinction between *instrumental* and *expressive* purposes (Glanville 2004; McPherson and Smith-Lovin 1987; Gordon and Babchuck 1959). Instrumental associations have goals beyond the group itself, and are more likely to be tolerant of differences in the pursuit of those goals. Associations that emphasize instrumental goals can therefore diversify members' network ties. Expressive associations emphasize personal development and the socializing of group members, and are less likely to be tolerant of differences. Associations that emphasize expressive goals can decrease members' network diversity. Glanville (2004) found that membership in expressive associations decreases racial and religious diversity, but not educational or age diversity. The mixed results suggest both the fruitfulness of refining hypotheses concerning association membership and network diversity and the need for further research.

As Glanville (2004) pointed out, all associations likely include both instrumental and expressive elements. A political organization will inevitably include some amount of socializing among members, for instance. We develop this insight by looking specifically at types of involvement in a single type of association and their influence on network diversity. Not all members of an association are involved in the same ways, and this variation of members' involvement has been a long-term interest of research on voluntary associations (Scott 1957; Moore 1961; Cress, McPherson, and Rotolo 1997; Putnam 1995; Davis, Renzulli, and Aldrich 2006). Interesting distinctions have been made concerning the persistence of membership (Scott 1957; Cress, McPherson, and Rotolo 1997), and the intensity of face-to-face participation (Moore 1961; Putnam 1995; Cress, McPherson, and Rotolo 1997; Wollebaek and Selle 2002).

In this research we consider three dimensions in association involvement: 1) intensity which captures the frequency of participation, 2) scope which captures the variety of programming and activities respondents took part in,

and 3) tenure which captures the length of participation within the same organization. Using these three dimensions we suggest two distinct participation approaches that vary in instrumental and expressive purposes. *Targeted involvement* is more intense, narrow in scope, and shorter in tenure. As member involvement is more targeted we consider this more instrumental in purpose. Following past theory and research we expect this type of involvement to be associated with more tolerance of difference in the pursuit of particular goals and to develop more diverse network ties as a result. *General involvement* is less intense, wider in scope, and more persistent. As member involvement is more general we consider this more expressive in purpose. We expect this type of involvement to be associated with more homogeneous networks.

There are some potential limitations in our choice to look at one association rather than looking at participation in associations widely. Multiple association memberships, for instance, have recently been shown to increase network diversity (Davis, Renzulli, and Aldrich 2006; Wollebaek and Selle 2002; Popielarz 1999). The approach, however, includes some advantages over looking across varieties of associations. Glanville (2004), for instance, was able to control for a variety of individual level characteristics that have been shown to influence network diversity in past research. She did not, however, control for characteristics of associations themselves aside from her key characteristics of interest. One explanation for the mixed results of her research might lie in unaccounted variation across associations that may be influencing network diversity. Looking at a single association type limits these potential confounding factors.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES

Our research examines types of involvement in Neighbourhood Houses. Neighbourhood Houses in Canada are a particularly interesting type of volun-

tary association for considering our questions because of their history as part of the Settlement House Movement. Settlement houses are one of Putnam's (2000) primary examples of an integrating association. They are neighbourhood-based, multi-service associations, and immigrant integration is a key element of their mission (Fabricant and Fisher 2002; Irving, Parsons, and Bellamy 1995; Trolander 1987; Yan 2002). Like settlement houses, it has been suggested that Neighbourhood Houses are valuable for community and network building among their members (Yan 2004). They keep their doors open for long hours so that all members of the community can drop in to use their facilities, with the intention of being the focal point of the community (Irving, Parsons, and Bellamy 1995). Using the facilities and services of the houses is mostly free or carries very minimal fees.

Neighbourhood Houses are also unique for their interest in combining instrumental and expressive elements of associations in a single organization. Although all associations include both instrumental and expressive elements, Neighbourhood Houses are unique in that combining these purposes is the specific goal of the association. As service institutions, Neighbourhood Houses provide many programs and activities that focus on helping those experiencing some disadvantage or hardship. These include childcare groups, English as a Second Language courses, tutorial groups for students, and employment counseling. Alone, these instrumental activities are not what make the Houses unique. They are better known for their ability to combine these instrumental activities with cultural and other expressive aspects of the community (Yan 2004): they often hold art classes and displays, and organize local music groups and performances. Mutual help groups for women and seniors' provide social venues for people with similar needs. Group meals are often organized with the goal of bridging cultural differences through the sharing of food traditions. Cultural

events and festival celebrations are often regular features of the monthly programming. In sum, Neighbourhood Houses provide a great variety of programs to serve the instrumental and expressive needs of their members.

## DATA AND METHODS

### *Data*

The data we use to test our hypotheses come from survey research conducted in June and July of 2005 at nine Neighbourhood Houses located in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Vancouver is the second largest settlement centre for immigrants and refugees coming to Canada. According to the 2001 Census, in Vancouver over 10% of census tracts were made up of residents that arrived in Canada in the 1990s. In some tracts the percentage of immigrants was higher than 25 percent. Most neighbourhoods are racially and ethnically mixed, and only a few have less than 30% visible minorities.

Our target population includes newcomers who migrated to Canada in the last 10 years and were participating to some degree in Neighbourhood House activities. Respondents were recruited through requests made at a variety of programs held on the premises of the Neighbourhood Houses ( $N = 351$ ). While a random sample was not possible for lack of a sampling frame, every effort was made to attract the full range of participants to the research. At each House a representative was trained to assist with administering the questionnaire to newcomers and to help establish rapport with potential respondents, and the questionnaire was completed at the House. The lack of a random sample limits our ability to statistically generalize from the sample to the larger target population. The lack of a random sample does not limit the internal validity of the patterns found.

There is also a potential selection bias in our sample due to our sampling of Neighbourhood House participants at one point in time. On one hand, there is a potential bias towards more intensely involved members and away from those who participate irregularly. In addition, there is a potential omission of a group of members who were once involved, but have since dropped from membership in the association. We expect that inclusion of these groups in proportion to the short term and intensely involved participants would enhance the direction of our findings below. We do not have any reason to expect that those who dropped from membership or participate irregularly would have significant differences in network diversity than those long term and less intensely involved members who did participate in our research.

### *Measures*

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for each of the variables used in this analysis. We describe the measurement of each of these concepts in more detail below.

TABLE 1. SAMPLE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (N = 351)

NETWORK DIVERSITY VARIABLES	MEAN OR PROPORTION	SD
Cross-ethnic personal ties	0.31	0.46
Non-newcomer personal ties	0.66	0.47
CROSS-ETHNIC HELPING TIES		
Give help: Relatives	2.54	1.09
Give help: Same ethnic neighbours	2.21	0.95
Give help: Other neighbours	1.74	0.79
Give help: Same ethnic friends	2.48	0.97

TABLE 1. SAMPLE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS (N = 351) CONT.

Give help: Other friends	1.85	0.90
Get help: Relatives	2.54	1.08
Get help: Same ethnic neighbours	2.16	0.94
Get help: Other neighbours	1.70	0.79
Get help: Same ethnic friends	2.42	0.96
Get help: Other friends	1.78	0.84
Neighbourhood House involvement variables		
Frequency: Respondent	1.68	1.25
Frequency: Other household members	1.36	1.41
Length of involvement	3.86	1.70
Variety of program attendance	6.27	4.10
IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCE VARIABLES		
Age at arrival	35.94	12.34
Years in Canada	4.57	3.16
Ethnic community	0.63	0.48
Language: Conversation	2.24	1.31
Language: Writing	2.10	1.26
Language: Reading	2.30	1.35
Language: Speaking	2.09	1.29
OTHER CONTROL VARIABLES		
Gender	0.83	0.38
Employment	0.33	0.47
Education	6.13	2.55
Children	0.86	0.35
Married	0.84	0.37

## NETWORK DIVERSITY

Our analysis includes three measures of network diversity: cross-ethnic personal ties, non-newcomer personal ties, and cross-ethnic helping ties. We measured diversity of personal ties along two dimensions: cross-ethnic personal ties and non-newcomer personal ties. We collected network composition data using a name generator strategy (Burt 1984). Respondents were asked to list from one to five friends they had met through the Neighbourhood House. For each of these friends, additional information about the person and their relationship were asked, including if that friend was from the same ethnic group and also a newcomer. From these question we calculated the proportion of personal ties that were cross-ethnic and the proportion of personal ties that were non-newcomer.

From these proportions we created two dichotomous measures indicating heterogeneity and homogeneity of cross-ethnic and non-newcomer personal ties.<sup>3</sup> We consider diverse, heterogeneous networks as those with more than 50% of personal ties that are with cross-ethnic or non-newcomers. Homogeneous networks are those with 50% or more ties with people who are from the same ethnic background or who are also newcomers. Each of these variables is coded as a dummy variable with a score of 1 indicating diversity of network ties.

Table 1 shows 31% of cross-ethnic personal networks are heterogeneous. Ethnic and racial diversity of personal ties is perhaps the most difficult kind of network diversity to accomplish (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001), and we might expect this to be particularly true for newcomers. In our sample,

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<sup>3</sup> We dichotomize these variables to address distribution problems. The problems are due to low levels of network diversity and the limited number of possible proportions given a maximum of 5 personal ties in the name generator.

despite the diversity of most neighbourhoods in which these Neighbourhood Houses are located, it is not uncommon for all newcomers' personal ties to be with other co-ethnics. Having non-newcomer personal ties is not as rare as cross-ethnic ties. Table 1 shows that in our sample, diversity of immigrant status (66%) is about twice as likely as diversity of ethnic background.

We measure cross-ethnic helping ties with the question, "From time to time people provide help to each other for free. This might include doing things like baby sitting, running errands, or helping with repairs. How often do you give help for free to the following types of people?" Respondents were asked to respond on a four-point scale ranging from *never* to *very often* for both friends and neighbours independently. The same question was asked about receiving help from friends and neighbours. These responses were factor analyzed using principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation. The analysis produced a powerful component explaining over 47% of variance and with high loadings for cross-ethnic helping and low, negative loadings for same-ethnic helping. High scores on this factor represent high levels of cross-ethnic helping.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INVOLVEMENT

We measure Neighbourhood House involvement along two dimensions: targeted and general involvement. These dimensions are measured using a set of four questions. Respondents were asked how often they visited the Neighbourhood House, how often other members of their household visited, how long they had participated, and the variety of programs in which they have participated. These four indicators were factor analyzed using principal components and varimax rotation resulting in two powerful components explaining 65.1% of the variance.

The first factor captures a respondent's *targeted* involvement. The frequency of respondent and other household members visiting the house load high (.775, .748); length of involvement and variety of program participation has lower, negative loadings (.130, -.134). We consider targeted involvement to capture instrumental participation, with members going to the Houses frequently and for particular purposes.

The second factor captures the *general* involvement. The length of participation and variety of programming participation measures load high for this factor (.771, .797), with low loadings for frequency of visits (-.289, .307). We consider general involvement to capture an expressive participation, with members staying involved with the Neighbourhood House for self-fulfillment and socializing.

### *Immigration Experience*

Our analysis includes a set of variables designed to capture some important aspects of the immigration experience that would also influence integration and network diversity. These include the size of the immigrant ethnic community, English language ability, years residing in Canada, and age at arrival in Canada. The size of an immigrant ethnic community in particular can have an important impact on network diversity. We measure immigrant ethnic community size with a dummy variable indicating Chinese ethnic background. The Chinese ethnic community is the largest in Vancouver, and also makes up the largest ethnic group in our sample (63%). The non-Chinese immigrant backgrounds represent smaller ethnic communities such as Vietnamese, Korean, and Sudanese.

English language ability is based on a set of four questions that asked respondents to rate their own ability to use English to write, read, and speak,

and their listening comprehension. These indicators were factor analyzed using principal components. A single factor emerged explaining 90.3% of the variation and all four loadings over .9. High scores represent higher English competency.

The time a person has lived in Canada can affect their ability to make contacts that cross ethnic and immigrant statuses. We measure years in Canada in completed years, with less than one year scored as zero. Past research has also found that age at arrival can have an important impact on the immigration experience. We measure age at arrival in whole years based on age at last birthday before arrival.<sup>4</sup>

### *Other Independent Variables*

In addition to Neighbourhood House involvement and immigrant experience variables, our analysis includes additional control variables that have also been found to influence network diversity. Employment is a dummy variable indicating a positive response to the question, "Are you currently working for pay?" Education is measured with a twelve-point scale ranging from *No formal schooling* to *Professional or Doctorate degree*. Children in the household are measured with a dummy variable indicating 1 or more. Gender is a dummy variable indicating a female respondent.

### *Analysis*

Based on the literature and evidence cited above, and using the above data and measures, we test three hypotheses related to Neighbourhood House participation and network diversity. Following Glanville (2004) we re-

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that only a weak (-.053) non-significant relationship exists between years in Canada and age at arrival.

fine the current debate between integrating and sorting hypotheses by looking at variations in types of participation in the same association. We expect that general types of involvement will resemble expressive participation and decrease network diversity and that targeted types of involvement will resemble instrumental participation and increase network diversity. We expect the same effect on each of our network diversity variables leading to three hypotheses. The first two hypotheses relate to personal tie networks:

Hypothesis 1: General involvement decreases cross-ethnic personal tie diversity, while targeted involvement increases cross-ethnic personal tie diversity

Hypothesis 2: General involvement decreases non-newcomer personal tie diversity, while targeted involvement increases non-newcomer personal tie diversity

Both personal network measures are binary variables, leading us to predict network diversity using a logistic regression strategy with an equation of the form:

$$\log (p'_i/1-p'_i) = B + B_1x_{1i} + B_2x_{2i}$$

where  $p'$  represents a diverse personal network for the person  $i$ ,  $x_1$  represents general involvement for the  $i^{th}$  person, and  $x_2$  represents targeted involvement for the  $i^{th}$  person.

The third hypothesis relates to cross-ethnic helping ties:

Hypothesis 3: General involvement decreases cross-ethnic helping tie diversity, while targeted involvement increases cross-ethnic helping tie diversity

Cross-ethnic helping ties are measured with an interval level, continuous variable leading us to use OLS regression with an equation of the form:

$$Y' = B + B_1x_{1i} + B_2x_{2i}$$

where  $Y'$  represents an increase in cross-ethnic helping ties for person  $i$ ,  $x_1$  represents general involvement for the  $i^{\text{th}}$  person, and  $x_2$  represents targeted involvement for the  $i^{\text{th}}$  person.

For each outcome variable we include a second model (Model 2) with a set of immigrant experience variables including age at arrival (-), years in Canada (+), community size (-), and language ability (+). The hypothesized positive or negative association with the three network diversity outcome variables is in parentheses. Including these immigrant experience variables allows us to examine the direct effect of immigration experience variables on network diversity and to control for these experiences to isolate the relationship between types of association participation and network diversity. A third model (Model 3) for each outcome variable includes the additional control variables gender, employment, education, children present in the household and marital status.

## RESULTS

### *Cross-Ethnic Personal Ties*

Table 2 describes the results of our logistic analysis of cross-ethnic diversity in Models 1a, 2a, and 3a. We find little support for our primary hypotheses when looking at cross-ethnic network diversity. Model 1a looks at our primary independent variables of general and targeted involvement. Both relationships are in the expected direction, providing support for Hypothesis 1. We find a very weak, positive relationship with targeted involvement, and a negative and significant relationship exists with general involvement. Models 2a and 3a, with the added control variables, show a smaller and non-significant negative influence of general involvement on cross-ethnic personal ties, suggesting a spurious relationship in Model 1a.

Interesting results emerge when looking at the immigration experience variables and cross-ethnic diversity. English language ability has the expected positive influence on network diversity, and ethnic community size has the expected negative association suggesting decreased diversity. We find a significant negative association with years in Canada. The addition of these immigration experience variables has some power for predicting network diversity. The adjusted  $R^2$  (.256) increases by .235 from Model 1a to Model 2a, and only increases slightly more in Model 3a with the addition of the other control variables.

TABLE 2. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INVOLVEMENT AND CROSS-ETHNIC PERSONAL TIES

	MODEL 1A		MODEL 2A		MODEL 3A	
	COEF	SE	COEF	SE	COEF	SE
General	-.32	.14*	-.26	.20	-.26	0.22
Targeted	.05	.13	-.12	.17	-.05	0.18
Age at Arrival			-.00	.02	.01	0.40
Years in Canada			-.17	.07*	-.14	0.02†
Ethnic Community			-1.76	.37*	-1.64	0.08*
Language			.71	.19*	.78	0.24*
Gender					.51	0.58
Employment					-.24	0.46
Education					.08	0.09
Children					-.37	0.56
Married					.13	0.50
Constant	-.81	.14	.79	.68	-.54	1.37
Model $R^2$		.021		.256		0.275

\*  $p < .05$  †  $p < .1$

### *Non-Newcomer Personal Ties*

Table 3 shows strong support for Hypothesis 2 concerning non-newcomer personal ties. Model 1b shows a strong positive relationship between targeted involvement and having diverse personal networks along immigrant status characteristics. The relationship holds as we introduce immigration-related and other control variables. There is some evidence that general involvement decreases network diversity as well. There is a negative association with general involvement and network diversity across Models 1b and 2b, and a strong, significant negative association emerges in Model 3b. These findings support our expectations in Hypothesis 2 and suggest that participation in associations does have an important impact on diversity of immigrant status among personal ties. Targeted involvement increases network diversity while general involvement decreases network diversity.

One of the more interesting findings of this set of models is the lack of influence found among the immigration experience variables. In contrast to the relationships found with immigrant experience and cross-ethnic personal tie diversity, our immigration experience variables are not as important for creating non-newcomer personal ties. Age at arrival and years in Canada do have significant, positive relationships with diverse ties, but community size and language do not appear important. This is also reflected in the adjusted  $R^2$ , which only increases slightly (.038) in Model 2b. Instead, the remaining control variables introduced in Model 3b appear more important in explaining non-newcomer ties. We find statistically significant decreased diversity among women and those employed and more diversity for those with children. The addition of the remaining control variables doubles the adjusted  $R^2$  to .136.

TABLE 3. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INVOLVEMENT AND NON-NEWCOMER PERSONAL TIES

	MODEL 1B		MODEL 2B		MODEL 3B	
	COEF	SE	COEF	SE	COEF	SE
General	-.01	.13	-.19	.16	-.37	.18*
Targeted	.34	.14*	.28	.15*	.27	.16*
Age at Arrival			.02	.01	.04	.37*
Years in Canada			.11	.05*	.12	.01*
Ethnic Community			.08	.34	-.19	.37
Language			.23	.17	.22	.21
Gender					-.96	.47*
Employment					-1.05	.08*
Education					-.04	.38
Children					1.19	.62†
Married					.29	.42
Constant	.64	1.3*	-.79	.54	-.24	.81
Model R <sup>2</sup>		.022		.060		.136

\*  $p < .05$  †  $p < .1$

#### CROSS-ETHNIC HELPING TIES

Looking to Table 4, we find no support for the influence of general involvement on network diversity. We do find strong support for targeted involvement being associated with diverse network ties. Model 1c shows a strong positive relationship between targeted involvement and having cross-ethnic helping ties. The relationship holds as we introduce immigration experience variables and the remaining control variables.

Looking at Models 2c and 3c, it does not appear that the immigration experience variables as a whole are important for creating network diversity, nor are the remaining controls. Rather, it appears that two variables in particular,

language ability and education, are associated with cross-ethnic helping ties.<sup>5</sup> These two variables increase the adjusted  $R^2$  to .12.<sup>6</sup>

TABLE 4. MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE INVOLVEMENT AND CROSS-ETHNIC HELPING TIES

	MODEL 1C		MODEL 2C		MODEL 3C	
	COEF	SE	COEF	SE	COEF	SE
General	.02	.07	.03	.08	.00	.08
Targeted	.18	.07*	.17	.08*	.21	.08*
Age at Arrival			-.01	.01	-.01	.18
Years in Canada			.00	.02	-.01	.01
Ethnic Community			-.10	.17	-.01	.02
Language			.17	.09*	.25	.10*
Gender					.09	.19
Employment					-.07	.03
Education					.09	.17*
Children					-.17	.25
Married					.07	.20
Constant	-.01	.07	.25	.28	.80	.56
Model $R^2$		.032		.122		.117

\*  $p < .05$

### *Implications for Theory and Research*

The influence of voluntary association membership on network diversity is not uniform. While past research and theory have emphasized either the integrating or the sorting influence of associations, our results join a growing

<sup>5</sup> It is worth pointing out the unique effects of these two variables because they both capture the concept of human capital. Having cross-ethnic helping ties is a social resource for the holder, and it appears that this resource is enhanced by language ability and education. This relationship has been suggested in previous research (Alba and Nee 2003), and our findings here appear to support this.

<sup>6</sup> In an analysis not shown here (available from author) the addition of only the two human capital variables increases the adjusted  $R^2$  to .126.

literature that has found the influence to vary based on different types of involvement and association. Focusing on variety in types of involvement, we find support for the hypothesis that targeted involvement increases diversity of personal ties that cross immigrant status and helping ties that cross ethnic boundaries. General involvement decreases diversity of personal networks that cross immigrant status and has little or no effect on cross-ethnic helping ties. We believe these results provide support for the instrumental and expressive distinctions that have been made in research on voluntary association types previously (Booth, Babchuk, and Knox 1968), and have recently been used by Glanville (2004) to explain association effects on network composition. It appears that the more instrumental targeted motivation for involvement in particular can diversify networks. Aldrich (1999) suggests that this may come from the greater tolerance of members when oriented towards instrumental goals. This is encouraging for progressing beyond the sorting or integrating debate to more refined hypotheses and research concerning association membership and network composition.

We believe our results also encourage an important modification of this research direction by focusing on varieties of *member involvement* rather than variety of *association type*. This approach allows that not all members are alike in their involvement, and that varied involvement may lead to varied effects on network composition. We hope that this research will lead to further fruitful research on patterns of involvement within the same association to complement patterns of membership across associations. It is important to note that our findings on varieties of participation do not contradict research on varieties of association type. Instead, it appears that research on type of participation and type of association can offer parallel complementary directions for future research.

Our results left an important contradiction unresolved in the analysis of cross-ethnic personal ties compared to those of immigrant status personal ties and cross-ethnic helping ties. Neither targeted nor general involvement had an influence on diversity of cross-ethnic personal ties. This finding is similar to that of Glanville (2004), who found little influence on racially diverse networks, and is consistent with ethnographic research in diverse communities that have often found strong boundaries along ethnic lines. Our finding concerning cross-ethnic personal ties is interesting when compared with the success of our hypotheses when examining another type of personal tie (non-newcomer) and another type of cross-ethnic tie (helping). We believe this partly reflects differences in the intimacy of ties. Helping ties, for instance, are more instrumental themselves, perhaps leading to greater tolerance, and they do not ask for the same levels of intimacy as friendship. This makes the contradictory results with cross-ethnic and non-newcomer personal ties more interesting. We find the most success for our hypotheses among personal ties that cross immigrant status. These results may be interpreted in two ways. It could be a sign of exclusion from personal networks based on ethnicity and race. We might also see it as a tendency for choice homophily among newcomers. As discussed earlier, this tendency is pronounced in many areas of social life. There are also important reasons for co-ethnics to concentrate as discussed most clearly in the enclave literature. Our research does find some inconclusive evidence for this. Our immigration-related variables are most powerful in explaining cross-ethnic personal ties. They show that larger ethnic communities and lack of English language ability are very important predictors of cross-ethnic personal ties. From this we might conclude that given the opportunity for similar ties, newcomers are choosing them. Years living in Canada also tend to decrease cross-ethnic diversity. It appears that as new-

comers spend time in their new situations, they are more likely to maintain the same ethnic ties or form new ties with other co-ethnics. This could be the result of a cohort affect, which we cannot rule out here, or it could indicate the dissolution of ties of difference over time suggesting that immigrants have a similar tendency towards homophily found in other populations.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND POLICY

Our emphasis on types of involvement and their influence on network diversity have practical implications for voluntary associations. Our research suggests that the type of programming matters for creating diverse network ties. Although general involvement in the association may seem like a clear way to create network diversity, we find it has little, or perhaps a homogenizing effect, on network diversity. Counterintuitively, it seems that programming that satisfies instrumental goals and encourages intense and targeted participation of members may in fact be the most useful for encouraging diverse network ties.

Neighbourhood Houses are uniquely poised to put these suggestions into practice: they hold the specific goal of bridging social differences and integrating local communities; they follow a multi-service model combining instrumental services with the fulfillment of humanistic ideals of creating social and cultural expression; and their focus on a community of location rather than a community of interest makes cross-ethnic ties more important and more plausible given a diverse local population from which to draw on. Our research shows that the development of network diversity is already happening in these unique social spaces, but also suggests that the enhancement of instrumental programming may further add to this development. A focus on in-

strumental services to reach expressive goals is counterintuitive, but perhaps a more fruitful direction.

Our findings also suggest that support of voluntary associations with an immigrant settlement orientation may be an ideal way to promote immigrant incorporation. Contemporary research continues to accumulate suggesting that the development of diverse social networks is critical for the long-term incorporation of immigrants. Diverse ties provide access to social resources, act as an anchor in new locations, and provide a sense of belonging to newcomers. Close bonds among other co-ethnics are clearly valuable, but diverse ties outside those bonds make an additional contribution to the settlement and incorporation process. Our findings do not suggest a direct policy initiative that diversifies ties. Instead, our research suggests that support of voluntary associations is an indirect initiative that holds promise for this goal. This is particularly true for Neighbourhood Houses with their immigrant settlement orientations, a multi-ethnic clientele, and a variety of activities with instrumental and expressive goals. Neighbourhood Houses can provide a social context within which instrumental needs can be addressed, while simultaneously providing the opportunity for diverse ties to be formed and maintained. Without them, newcomers will turn to other sources to solve their immediate needs, which may lead them to solidify co-ethnic networks rather than create expansive networks of cross-ethnic ties.

In Vancouver, the current structure of settlement service provision favours large settlement service organizations that also provide first-line services to newcomers. This strategy has been effective, and so it may be unrealistic to propose a major shift of the settlement service delivery model. This research may encourage a second look at this strategy with the building of diverse networks in mind. We think it suggests fruitful outcomes from better coordination

and collaboration of services between large settlement service organizations and locally based Neighbourhood Houses.

## CONCLUSIONS

We began this paper asking if involvement in Neighbourhood Houses contributed to the integration of newcomers vis-à-vis building diverse networks. We have found that different types of involvement have different outcomes and that a targeted type of involvement with instrumental goals can increase the diversity of ties developed through membership. We believe that this effect is likely enhanced by associations like Neighbourhood Houses that offer varieties of services and activities and that draw on diverse groups for potential members.

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