

Urban Regime-Building as a Strategy of Intergovernmental Reform: The Case of Toronto's Role in Immigrant Settlement

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I. Introduction

Immigration policy is a joint federal-provincial responsibility in Canada. Nevertheless, managing immigrant integration is largely an urban question. The bulk of Canada's immigrants settle in three city-regions – the Greater Toronto Area, the Greater Vancouver Area, and the Montreal Urban Community. The Greater Toronto Area alone receives close to 50 per cent of immigrants to Canada.

As constitutional “creatures of provinces,” Canadian municipalities’ legislative responsibilities and fiscal tools are delegated to them by provincial statute. Provincial governments have not mandated a municipal role in immigrant settlement and integration and do not provide municipal governments with additional resources to fulfill these responsibilities. In order to manage social change, some Canadian municipalities have responded by building *urban regimes* – public-private coalitions whereby local leaders pool resources to create the capacity to develop and implement local policy agendas - with multiculturalism policy purposes (Good 2005). This paper explores the role of the intergovernmental context in urban regime dynamics surrounding immigration policy development in Canada's largest city and most numerically significant immigrant receiving municipality – the City of Toronto, a city that has been a national leader in multiculturalism policy development despite its highly limited resources and legislative constraints. Using immigration and multiculturalism policy development as an example, it demonstrates how, in Toronto, urban regime building has become both a local capacity-building strategy and a tactic for challenging the subordinate role of municipal governments within federalism. The Government of Ontario's decision to amalgamate Metro Toronto, to “disentangle” services and to “download” some of its fiscal burdens to the city in the mid- to late-1990s, led local leaders to develop productive governance arrangements – urban regimes - to pool public-private resources to fill the gaps. These new relationships developed in several policy areas including in immigrant settlement and multiculturalism policy. Local leaders in Toronto became convinced that pooling local resources was insufficient to achieving their policy goals. They therefore developed national and regional coalitions to put pressure on upper levels of government to institutionalize new forms of intergovernmental “pooling” – popularly referred to as a “New Deal for Cities”. Toronto's local urban regime coalition “spilled over” into the national and regional scales taking on, multi-level and “polyscalar” (Boudreau 2006) dimensions. In this way, the strong urban autonomy movement and responsive governance arrangements that developed to manage large-scale immigration were unintended consequences of provincial decisions within a hostile provincial-municipal relationship. The paper argues that the Toronto case has important implications for urban regime theory because it demonstrates the

interdependence between capacity-building across sectors at the local level and across levels of government.

Section II of the paper describes changes in the intergovernmental system in the 1990s at both the federal and provincial levels. Section III explores the way in which local political dynamics changed in Toronto in reaction to these changes. Essentially, this section of the paper depicts the emergence of an urban autonomy movement in Toronto. Next, section IV discusses the emergence of new governance arrangements in immigrant settlement policy that are part of the New Deal for Cities movement. In Section V, the paper uses the urban regime concept to theorize the nature of new “polyscalar” coalitions that have developed to build local capacity in Toronto and to challenge the place of urban municipalities within the intergovernmental system. Finally, Section VI the paper concludes with a discussion of some of the most important policy outputs that have resulted from the lobbying efforts of Toronto’s powerful local regime. Section VII summarizes the main points in the paper.

II. A Changing Intergovernmental System

The 1990s represent a critical juncture in the evolution of Canadian fiscal federalism. With the introduction of the CHST, the federal government eased the conditions on grants and transferred tax points to the provinces as well as reduced the monetary value of the grant dramatically.¹ Federal reductions in intergovernmental transfers precipitated provincial cutbacks in services and transfers to municipalities or what local leaders refer to as “downloading”. Downloading occurred in several ways including through reductions in intergovernmental grants, through service withdrawal, and by a lack of ongoing leadership on the part of upper levels of government. Municipal governments were left to decide whether to fill the gap by entering “unfunded mandates”. Municipalities’ *de facto* role in multiculturalism policy and in immigrant settlement policy in Canada’s most important immigrant-receiving urban and suburban municipalities is an important example of an unfunded mandate.

In Ontario, the shift between former Premier Bob Rae’s NDP government (1990-1995) and former Premier Mike Harris’ neo-conservative government (1995-2003) represents a time of dramatic change in the municipal sector in Ontario. A common theme to emerge in Canadian urban scholarship is that the City of Toronto’s relationship with the province during the Conservative era was extremely strained (Boudreau 2000; Horak 1998; Siemiatycki 1998). Moreover, the election of the Conservatives in 1995 coincided with the federal Chrétien Liberal government’s decision to implement the CHST. The Harris government dramatically re-organized the division of powers between the province and municipalities through a process called “disentanglement”²; amalgamated many municipalities in Ontario (including Metro Toronto) in part to prepare them for their new responsibilities; and, more generally, reduced services within the province in line with the neo-liberal ideological underpinning of the government’s “Common Sense Revolution”.

¹ The CHST reduced funding for social services, postsecondary education and health from \$18.3 billion in 1995/96 to \$12.5 billion in 1997/8 (Courchene 2005, 4).

² “Disentanglement” refers to efforts to clarify provincial and municipal responsibilities. The disentanglement process began in 1997 and resulted in municipal governments in Ontario taking on increased responsibility for welfare assistance, public housing, ambulances, public transit, and water and sewer systems. In return, the province assumed half of the costs of education (Tindal and Tindal 2004, 188).

A key principle underlying *disentanglement* proposals was the principle of “fiscal neutrality”, the idea that neither level of government - provincial or municipal - would be worse off financially as a result of the exchange of responsibilities (Tindal and Tindal 2004, 193-194). However, urban scholars and municipal officials agree that “disentanglement” in Ontario was not revenue neutral and therefore involved *downloading* as well (Graham, Phillips and Maslove 1998; Tindal and Tindal 2004). Downloading in Ontario was particularly severe leading Melville Macmillan to suggest that, although municipal governments across Canada complain about “downloading,” the municipal “fiscal squeeze” in the 1990s may have been largely an Ontario problem (Macmillan 2006, 59). Recent City of Toronto budgets clearly reflect the effects of disentanglement. For example, the City of Toronto’s operating budget in 2006 was \$7.6 billion. Thirty-six percent of the budget was devoted to offering provincially-mandated services yet only 25 percent of the city’s revenues came from provincial grants and subsidies (City of Toronto 2006, 2-3).

The City of Toronto’s financial difficulties were exacerbated by the fact that Toronto receives a disproportionate share of the country’s immigrants. In other words, provincial downloading through disentanglement intersects with the place-specific consequences of Canada’s national immigration policy decisions. For instance, because of its increased responsibility for social services after disentanglement, the City of Toronto spends approximately \$20 million per year to provide social assistance to refugees and to immigrants whose sponsorships have broken down and \$30 million per year to assist non-status refugees (OCASI 2005, 3-4).

The shift from the NDP government of Bob Rae to the Conservative government led by Mike Harris also had a dramatic and more direct effect on the politics of immigrant integration and accommodation in Ontario. The Harris government downloaded responsibility for immigrant integration through *policy withdrawal*. For instance, the Conservative government under Harris disbanded the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat and rescinded the *Employment Equity Act (1993)*. In addition, the province restructured its primary immigrant settlement program and reduced its funding by nearly 50 per cent (Simich 2000, 7). By withdrawing from the policy field, the Conservative government indirectly “downloaded” responsibility for multiculturalism policy and immigrant settlement to the local level leaving local leaders to choose whether they should fill the gap left by the province in multiculturalism policy and settlement services. Furthermore, these choices were made within a context of increasing fiscal pressure on already strapped municipal revenues.

Nevertheless, in the 1990s provincial downloading of immigrant settlement and multiculturalism policy had important tri-level dimensions. For instance, there was a significant gap in Ontario’s share of national settlement funding until November 2005 when the Canada – Ontario immigration agreement was finalized. Prior to the finalization of the Agreement, Ontario received only \$819/immigrant compared with Quebec’s share of \$3,806/ immigrant from the federal government for settlement costs (Courchene 2005, 4).

The Conservative government under Harris also undertook a massive restructuring of Toronto’s institutional structure, *amalgamating* the former two-tiered municipal structure of

Metro Toronto with its six constituent municipalities.³ However, this municipal merger, which was the largest in Canadian history (Sancton 2000, 118), left the important issue of regional governance in the GTA unresolved (Siegel 2005, 131).

III. The Revolt of Canada’s Largest “Creature” of a Canadian Province

The combined effects of various forms of “downloading”, amalgamation, and the Ontario government’s failure to provide leadership on several policy issues led to the development of a local consensus and, ultimately, a powerful local coalition – an urban regime - advocating for new fiscal, legislative and political relationships between the City of Toronto and upper levels of government. An important node in this coalition – the Toronto City Summit Alliance - identified “becoming a center of excellence in the integration of immigrants” as one of Toronto’s top five policy priorities (Toronto City Summit Alliance 2001). Local leaders rallying cry became that cities need a “New Deal”.

Framing the Toronto’s Response to Changes in the Intergovernmental System

The term “New Deal for Cities” first appeared in a front-page editorial that the former editor of the *Toronto Star* – John Honderich – published on January 12, 2002 (Honderich 2002). Listing a variety of policy challenges facing the City of Toronto, Honderich declared: “The Star is launching a crusade for a *new deal for cities* [emphasis added]” (Honderich 2002). The phrase “New Deal for Cities” became the rallying cry of a broad group of local leaders who began pressuring upper levels of government for a new status for urban municipalities within Canadian federalism. The term is used to refer to a variety of different reform proposals that would have the effect of empowering municipal governments within the intergovernmental system. It has been used to describe a multitude of new fiscal, legal, political and even new Constitutional relationships among municipalities and upper levels of government. Local leaders who advocate a “New Deal for Cities” share the objective of trying to increase the *capacity* of urban governments to address place-specific policy challenges.

Establishing a new constitutional tier of government by entrenching recognition of municipalities or particular urban municipalities as an “order of government” in the Constitution is the most radical proposal. Nevertheless, some local leaders in Toronto support such an alternative. Less radical proposals include delegating cities more *legislative autonomy* by making provincial municipal acts more “permissive” and through “city charters,” separate provincial acts that establish asymmetrical and more empowering relationships between cities and provinces. New fiscal relationships – with both the federal and provincial governments - are also an important part of the debate. Finally, municipal leaders want a seat at the intergovernmental table when issues of particular concern to cities are negotiated.

Thus, the term “New Deal for Cities” encapsulates a broad range of reforms that imply greater municipal empowerment within the intergovernmental system. As Roger Keil and Douglas Young observe in their study of the politics of municipal autonomy in Toronto, “[w]

³ On January 1, 1998, the current City of Toronto was created by an act of the Ontario Provincial Parliament that amalgamated seven municipalities - six lower tier municipalities (East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto and York) and one upper tier municipality (Metropolitan Toronto).

have found no ‘structured coherence’ to this debate but a colorful, yet emerging politics of municipal autonomy” (Keil and Young 2003, 95). What is of interest here is that they found that local leaders perceive “municipal autonomy” to be the “solution” to many of the most pressing urban challenges in Toronto. In their words, “[f]or some, this meant that greater autonomy might increase business prospects; *for others, it meant that Toronto might be in a better position to deal with the integration and settlement of its large immigrant population [emphasis added]*” (Keil and Young 2003, 96). The term “frames” the Toronto regime’s response to changes in Canadian federalism. The inclusion of immigrant settlement policy in this frame has had important implications for the local governance of immigration and multiculturalism in Toronto.

The Roots of Toronto’s Urban Autonomy Regime

Provincial decisions in the 1990s in Ontario provided the most immediate “incentive structure” for new patterns political mobilization in Toronto. The Conservative government’s decision to forcibly amalgamate Metro Toronto led to a powerful middle-class citizens’ movement against the merger. The movement, which was called Citizens for Local Democracy (C4LD), drew upon a middle class reformist movement that emerged in the 1970s (Boudreau 2000, 42; Keil and Young 2003, 89). The movement developed in reaction to both amalgamation and downloading. For C4LDers, the issue was both a question of local democracy (Boudreau 2000) and a tax revolt of citizens who foresaw significant local tax increases in response to fiscal downloading (Siemiatycki 1998, 5).

Initially, C4LD members did not seek immigrants’ and ethno-racial minorities’ support and was primarily a mobilization of “white, British Toronto” (Siemiatycki 1998, 5). However, in response to this gap, a coalition called New Voices of the New City emerged under the leadership of the Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA). The coalition developed after CASSA made a submission to the province concerning how amalgamation would affect immigrant needs and preferences. By the summer of 1997, 63 immigrant-serving community organizations coalesced into the New Voices for the New City (Siemiatycki et al. 2003, 33). As Siemiatycki and others remark, “[a] civic alliance of this scale was unprecedented” among Toronto’s immigrant communities (Siemiatycki et al. 2003, 33). Amalgamation provided an incentive structure for new immigrant organizations to cooperate, and, in doing so, inadvertently created bridges between Toronto’s diverse communities of immigrants. As Siemiatycki and others so aptly summarize the new political dynamics that emerged with amalgamation: “Paradoxically, then, the creation of the megacity of Toronto – denounced for undermining local democracy – stimulated unprecedented civic mobilization among immigrant and visible minority communities” (Siemiatycki et al. 2003, 34).

Toronto Councillor Shelley Carroll suggests that the political mobilization surrounding amalgamation precipitated a broader change in Metro Toronto’s political culture. She describes this change:

Amalgamation turned suburbanites into activists...And the citizens actually amalgamated faster than the politicians because we started banding together with the other cities to protest this thing, accidentally amalgamating ourselves (Carroll 2004, interview).

As we know, the C4LD and the New Voices of the New City were unsuccessful in their challenge of Toronto’s amalgamation. However, post-amalgamation, the C4LD channeled their efforts toward new goals namely increasing the autonomy of the new City of Toronto. In fact,

one of their first goals was municipal “secession” from the province of Ontario (Keil and Young 2001). To this end, C4LDers entered into coalitions with municipal bureaucrats and politicians, business leaders, academics, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Toronto Board of Trade, and the Toronto Environmental Alliance (Keil and Young 2001; Boudreau 2003). Following their defeat, some C4LDers formed a community Committee for the Province of Toronto (Boudreau 2003, 12). Local political leaders also expressed support for this radical reform option. For instance, Mel Lastman, the first Mayor of the new City of Toronto made the headlines when he stated that Toronto should be a province at an international meeting in Florida in the fall of 1999. Whereas the movement soon turned its attention to reforms that implied a lesser degree of autonomy - namely the establishment of a city charter (Boudreau 2003, 12)⁴ - it is important to note that amalgamation’s assault on local democracy was a key mobilizing factor for Toronto’s urban autonomy movement. The activities of the C4LD spilled over into what would become a “charter movement”, and, more broadly, a “new deal” for Toronto movement. Furthermore, immigrant and visible minority mobilization in response to amalgamation contributed to a “rescaling”⁵ process that occurred in the city of Toronto. As Siemiatycki and others explain: “In the politics of amalgamation in Toronto, immigrant communities were *less concerned with preserving the jurisdictional status quo* than attempting to assure that an enlarged city government was responsive to their distinct concerns [emphasis added]” (Siemiatycki et al. 2003, 34).

One unintended consequence of the amalgamation of Toronto was that it created a powerful new political unit that could serve as a platform for local leaders and more effectively challenge provincial power. In fact, the City of Toronto’s population and budget are larger than six provinces in Canada. As Martin Horak observes, the C4LD mobilized in the absence of an opening in the political opportunity structure at the provincial level (Horak 1998, 21). However, although the political opportunity structure remained closed post-amalgamation, local leaders in Toronto were not deterred from pursuing greater empowerment for the city. In the absence of political opportunities at the provincial level, local leaders turned their attention to building local capacity and local support for greater municipal autonomy as well as to seeking political opportunities at the federal level.

Building the Urban Autonomy Coalition

The idea of establishing a city charter to govern Toronto became popular post-amalgamation. Whereas it is very difficult to trace the precise origins of an idea, some local leaders identify the origins of the city charter idea to a conference held in October 1997 in honour of Jane Jacobs. More specifically, in 1997, Alan Broadbent, a powerful businessman and philanthropist in Toronto, organized an event called *Jane Jacobs: Ideas That Matter* to discuss the work of Jane Jacobs. This event generated great interest in cities. Thus, the following year – in 1998 - Broadbent convened a group of local elites to discuss the place of cities in Canada and

⁴ Nevertheless, the idea that Toronto should become a province lingers. Several of my interviewees mentioned that Toronto should become a province including, for instance, Philip Abrahams, the Manager of Intergovernmental Relations at the City of Toronto (Abrahams 2003, interview). Furthermore, the “Canada’s Cities” campaign website outlines the constitutional amending process for Toronto to become a province and discusses implications of the Supreme Court’s decision with respect to the Reference re Secession of Quebec (1998).

⁵ The term refers to a process of territorial reorganization of political authority that some urban scholars argue is occurring intentionally and unintentionally in response to neoliberal policies in the 1980s and beyond (Boudreau 2003, 3).

commissioned papers on issues of importance to cities. The outcome of the meeting was the publication of a series of articles in a book called *Toronto: Considering Self-Government (2000)*. Following the meeting, Broadbent invited participants who wanted to continue the discussion into his boardroom.⁶ At this meeting, local elites wrote a Greater Toronto Area Charter (2001) that they modeled on city charters adopted by the European Union and proposed by Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Article One of the Greater Toronto Charter (2001) calls for the Greater Toronto Region to “form an order of government that is a full partner of the Federal and Provincial Governments of Canada, entitled to participate in discussions of an inter-governmental nature and in Canada’s system of inter-regional transfer payments.” *Article Two* of the Charter lists responsibilities that the Charter’s drafters believe should be transferred to the region including, for instance, housing, health care, and, of particular note here - immigrant and refugee settlement. *Article Two* qualifies the list by stating that the Toronto Region should govern in these areas “with the exception of those matters as are mutually agreed upon with other levels of government that are best assigned to another level.” As Alan Broadbent recalls, “It was not very difficult to come up with these powers; they are *roughly the powers of a province*, in the Canadian context [emphasis added]” (Broadbent 2003). In his view, the greater challenge was political – or “what to do with it” (Broadbent 2003).

What did the Charter drafters do? They brought the Charter document to the former voluntary committee of GTA Mayors and Regional Chairs. The Committee endorsed the Greater Toronto Charter (2001). They then convened a meeting of five big city mayors across Canada to develop a political strategy to influence the federal government. This political strategy was inspired by the advice of Privy Council Office (PCO) “staffers” who told Jane Jacobs that “the federal government might pay a lot more attention to these [the urban agenda] issues if there seemed to be some political imperative behind them” (Broadbent 2003). Thus, the Charter drafters invited then Mayors of Vancouver (Philip Owen), Toronto (Mel Lastman), Montreal (Pierre Bourque), Winnipeg (Glen Murray) and Calgary (Al Duerr) to a meeting in Winnipeg. They called this group the “C5” or “Charter 5”. Another important element of their strategy was to include important leaders in civil society. Each city was to be represented by its mayor and by prominent organizations in civil society that represent a variety of sectors – including the social sector, the business sector, and labour. The civil society participants in the coalition called themselves “C5 Civil” (Broadbent 2003).

Shortly after their initial meeting, a meeting of the C5 Civil, the C5 Mayors, and the FCM Big Cities Caucus was held and Paul Martin - who would later become Prime Minister - was invited to speak at the event (Broadbent 2003). A publication of the Maytree Foundation summarizes the origins of the national “New Deal For Cities” Movement succinctly:

Jacobs, together with businessman and philanthropist Alan Broadbent, initiated a process to bring together five of Canada’s largest cities to discuss their mutual needs for greater power and autonomy. The “C5” Mayors began meeting, joined by leaders from the business, labour and civil society from each city, to discuss the unique needs of Canada’s largest and most economically vibrant urban regions. These events, together with the sustaining efforts of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, created the momentum for what has become known as ‘A New Deal for Cities’ (The Broadbent Group 2005).

⁶ About 25 people attended the meeting. Participants included Jane Jacobs, Michael Valpy, Colin Vaughan, Patricia McCarney, Meric Gertler, Carl Amrhein, Don Stevenson, and Richard Gilbert (Broadbent 2003).

The City of Toronto played a crucial role in building the urban autonomy coalition in Toronto. In 2000, the city passed a resolution calling for a new relationship with the Province of Ontario. In addition, in 2001, the city launched its “Canada’s Cities” and began working closely with civil society to mobilize support for a new relationship with upper levels of government. For instance, in 2002, the city facilitated the development of a powerful node in Toronto’s urban empowerment coalition called the Toronto City Summit Alliance (TCSA). The coalition came together following a City Summit in June 2002. The coalition includes leaders of over 50 organizations representing a variety of sectors, including business, labour, and the not-for-profit sector. For instance, the City of Toronto, the United Way, and the Toronto Board of Trade endorsed the goals of the TCSA, which were outlined in a document entitled *Enough Talk* (2003).

The City of Toronto organized the summit at then Mayor Mel Lastman’s request. According to David Crombie - a former Toronto mayor and summit co-chair - the TCSA emerged as a result of a leadership vacuum at upper levels of government and a confluence of interests and goals between Lastman and prominent local leaders in civil society (Crombie 2003, interview). According to Crombie, whereas Lastman and several local leaders viewed holding a summit as an opportunity to take on the province and the federal government, the coalition also appealed to those who simply wanted to tackle important issues facing the City of Toronto (Crombie 2003, interview). In other words, the coalition appealed both to local leaders who wanted to pool local resources to build local capacity and to those who wanted to address city concerns through new relationships with upper levels of government.

The alliance began in Toronto and has since become a regional alliance. As discussed above, in the Greater Toronto Area, there is a gap in regional governing institutions. When the Harris government amalgamated the constituent municipalities of Metro Toronto, this did not address the issue of regional governance of the GTA. A central ambiguity in the New Deal for Toronto movement concerns the *scale at which increased local autonomy should be granted*.⁷ This gap has left room for the development of flexible governance arrangements in the region.

With time, the urban empowerment coalition in Toronto expanded dramatically. As Royson James – a well-known *Toronto Star* columnist on urban issues – noted in a June 15, 2005 article, Toronto Act Now and the University of Toronto joined the “ongoing advocacy [efforts] of the Toronto Board of Trade and the Toronto City Summit Alliance” (James 2005). He noted further: “one gets the idea that there is unanimity on the issue” (James 2005). For instance, in his view, of the 44 city councillors on Toronto council, “[a]t least 40 believe in ‘the cause’” (James 2005). The “New Deal for Cities” “frame” reflects a broad inter-sector agreement on the “solution” to many of Toronto’s current policy challenges – including immigrant settlement challenges.

In sum, the municipal autonomy debate in Toronto and its cross-provincial (or national) dimensions is complex. A full account of the origins and its political dynamics is beyond the scope of this paper.⁸ However, what is most important for our purposes is that downloading and amalgamation combined to *change patterns of mobilization in Toronto*. The *broad elite consensus* among local leaders concerning the “solution” to what John Honderich described as

⁷ This is a central theme in a document prepared by “new deal” advocates entitled *Towards a New City of Toronto Act* (The Broadbent Group 2005).

⁸ Similarly, Roger Keil and Douglas Young observe the municipal autonomy debate in Toronto has a “multitude of origins” (Keil and Young 2003, 89).

Toronto's profound "urban malaise" is striking. These new forms of political mobilization occurred within the context of a closed and even antagonistic provincial political opportunity structure. For this reason, local leaders turned their efforts to building local (city-level) and regional (in the GTA) as well as inter-provincial alliances through which to lobby the federal government. With respect to the latter, they challenged the constitutional norms of Canadian federalism.

Immigrant settlement concerns have been linked to this "New Deal" consensus, giving momentum to local capacity building in this policy area. In fact, as early as September 2000, the Maytree Foundation convened a conference to discuss the implications of a Greater Toronto Charter for the immigrant settlement sector. This meeting, which was called the "Forum Towards a Greater Toronto Charter: Implications for Immigrant Settlement" was held in Toronto at the Metro Central YMCA. The Maytree Foundation has since commissioned and produced papers dealing with how greater autonomy for the city might affect the immigrant settlement sector.⁹ These papers tend to support a greater role for the City of Toronto in the sector. The Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council is the best example of how tying municipal responsiveness to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities to this broader "New Deal" coalition increased the city's capacity to address some of the primary concerns of immigrants in Toronto.

IV. Immigrant Settlement and the "New Deal for Cities" Movement: The Emergence of TRIEC

The Toronto City Summit Alliance – a key node in Toronto's regime and in its municipal autonomy movement - established several policy priorities, one of which is "becoming a centre of excellence in integrating immigrants." (City Summit Alliance 2003). To this end, the alliance established the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) to help deal with one of the most important challenges facing newcomers – access to employment. This council is co-chaired by two highly powerful business leaders in Toronto - Dominic D'Alessandro, President and CEO of Manulife Financial, and Diane Bean, Senior Vice President, Corporate Human Resources Manulife Financial. TRIEC is supported by a secretariat that is funded by the Maytree Foundation, a private foundation established by Alan Broadbent. The Maytree Foundation initially funded all of the operating costs of this local initiative. It now receives operating funds from the federal government as well.¹⁰

Participation in this local initiative is highly inter-sectoral. TRIEC's membership includes assessment service providers, community organizations, employers, foundations, labour unions, occupational regulatory bodies, postsecondary institutions, and representatives of all levels of government – federal, provincial, and municipal. Local policy networks interested in immigrant employment issues have coalesced in this alliance, creating increased capacity in immigrant employment at both the city and the regional level. To date, TRIEC has initiated six programs: Career Bridge, Bridging Occupation and Licensing Gaps, Mentoring, Working With Employers, Getting the Message Out, and Helping Immigrants Find the Information They Need. The relationship among participants has been a socially -productive one.

⁹ See, for example, Laura Simich (2000) and Elizabeth McIsaac (2003).

¹⁰ The Maytree Foundation, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Canadian Heritage, and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada currently provide operating funds to TRIEC.

The nature of municipal governance arrangements appears to affect the likelihood and nature of cooperative efforts at the regional level. TRIEC was *initiated* in Toronto, the only municipality that has been “responsive” to the concerns and preferences of immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities in the Greater Toronto Area (Good 2005). Local leaders from Toronto are over-represented in the Toronto City Summit Alliance and its offspring, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, because of Toronto’s high level of community capacity – including in immigration and settlement. However, the effort is meant to be regional. The chairs of regional governments in the GTA that have high levels of diversity (Peel Region and York Region), as well as a representative of one municipality within each region, were asked to participate.

V. Political Mobilization and Urban Regime “Spillover”: From Urban to Polyscalar “Regimes”

Urban regimes are relatively long-lasting coalitions of local leaders that bridge the public and private sectors. Urban regimes have three primary components – a capacity, a set of leaders, and a relationship (Stone 1989). Regime participants vary. However, in order to constitute a regime, the urban coalition must include the business community (Mossberger and Stoker 2001). As we saw above, new patterns of mobilization have resulted in the formation of a powerful urban regime coalition in Toronto. The political mobilizations in response to changes in the Canadian federalism in the late 1990s were so powerful that they “spilled over” into multiple scales becoming a “polyscalar regime.”

The “polyscalar” political coalition that emerged in the late 1990s to early 21st century have the characteristics and purposes of an “urban regime” in Stone’s (1989) conception. According to Stone, “urban regime” relationships are driven by two needs:

- (1) *institutional scope* (that is, the need to encompass a wide enough scope of institutions to mobilize the resources required to make and implement governing decisions) and
- (2) *cooperation* (that is the need to promote enough cooperation and coordination for the diverse participants to reach decisions and sustain action in support of those decisions) [emphasis added] (Stone 1989, 9).

These needs arise due to a municipal government’s limits in terms of resources and because of the fragmentation of power in local communities. To summarize the theoretical puzzle to which regime theory is a response, regime theory is “based on the question of how, in a world of limited and dispersed authority, actors work together across institutional lines to produce a capacity to govern and bring about publicly significant results” (Stone 1989, 9).

Toronto’s urban regime’s polyscalar dimension addresses the *fragmentation* of the municipal system in Canada as well as the absence of regional institutions in the GTA. As “creatures of provinces” local leaders in urban centres across Canada do not have formal institutions in which to discuss issues of common concern. Thus, leaders in urban centres developed cross-provincial coalitions in response to the inability of formal institutions to address their policy concerns. In addition, in order to increase municipal policy capacity by forcing upper levels of government to *pool resources* more “fairly” with them, local leaders extended the scope of political institutions to include organizations in civil society. The Federation of Canadian

Municipalities (FCM) represents Canadian municipalities collectively but due to the diversity of its membership, it does not provide targeted representation of Canada's largest cities. The FCM's Big City Mayors partially addresses this gap. Nevertheless, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities represents municipal *governments*. Local leaders in Toronto and in other large Canadian cities began to recognize that capacity building through a "New Deal" would require regime relationships that included the participation of elites in civil society as well. The coalitions are "polyscalar" insofar as they address gaps in formal institutions at a variety of scales – municipal, regional, cross-provincial, and multi-level.

Furthermore, as with urban regimes, local leaders built – and continue to build - these coalitions *intentionally* to address the policy challenges of Canada's urban centres – what Clarence Stone calls "enacted change" (Stone 1989). As we saw above, Jane Jacobs, Alan Broadbent and other local leaders in Toronto purposely created coalitions of mayors that included representation of leaders in civil society to change the intergovernmental system. Locally based urban regime relationships that bridge the public and private sectors became an important resource in the efforts of the C5 Mayors to pressure upper levels of government to respond to their concerns. The cross-provincial alliance included the C5 and the C5 Civil.

The Toronto regime's strategy became two-pronged: to build local capacity through local regime relationships, and to use these relationships to change the distribution of resources within the intergovernmental system. Local leaders who are seeking increased urban autonomy for the City of Toronto appear to be employing several political strategies -- many of which are related to urban regime building. In fact, building *urban regimes at the local level itself constitutes one of the central strategies of the "New Deal for Cities" movement in Toronto*. The Toronto regime appears to be employing five related strategies:

1. To encourage municipalities to act like governments rather than as wards of provinces.
2. To build high-power coalitions of municipal leaders and elites in civil society.
3. To educate and engage the public in the "New Deal" debate.
4. To use diverse strategies in efforts to lobby upper levels of government.
5. To proactively address unfunded municipal mandates.

Collectively, these strategies reflect the resources and participants in the Toronto regime. The first strategy was inspired in part by a speech that Jane Jacobs made at the first C5 meeting urging the five mayors to break out of their "learned dependency" on upper levels of government and to begin acting like true government leaders. One aspect of this strategy involves insisting on a government-to-government relationship between the City of Toronto and upper levels of government (Abrahams 2003, interview). The second strategy involves creating urban regime relationships and expanding them to include a variety of scales to form polyscalar regimes. The third strategy is possible because of the Toronto regime's diverse and inter-sector participation. All of the coalitions described above –including the Toronto City Summit Alliance – are engaged in public education campaigns. Furthermore, the Canada's Cities Campaign is also designed to educate the public. With respect to the fourth strategy, different sectors employ different strategies in their lobbying efforts and have different access points in the policy process.

The fifth and final strategy involves municipal governments developing local urban regimes to pool capacity to achieve locally significant public policy goals outside of their formal mandates. Multiculturalism policy development is an important example of this strategy. For instance, in his *A New City Agenda*, John Sewell recommends this strategy to local leaders who want a "New Deal" (Sewell 2004). His book is a sort of "manifesto" for the "New Deal for

Cities” agenda that makes recommendations with respect to what cities should do in a number of policy areas including immigrant settlement. More specifically, he suggests that municipal leaders initiate new innovative programs and policies and ask for money from upper levels of government after the fact. He uses Toronto’s innovation in affordable housing policy in 1945 as an example of this strategy. In Sewell’s words:

Cities must adopt a new strategy. They must define very clearly the programs they know they are *capable of delivering* and that have popular support, and then set to work delivering them. The key is to do enough groundwork at the city level so the *public understands the need for programs and supports the city politicians in their push to get authority and finances for them...* This book advocates that Toronto – and other cities – begin to develop and implement specific programs because just talking generally about the need for money and power is not a strategy. Cities must ask for particular pieces of legislation that allow them to carry out programs they identify as their mandate, and they must be precise about the monies needed [emphasis added] (Sewell 2004, 91).

This is precisely the strategy that has been employed in the immigrant settlement sector with the development of TRIEC.

The TRIEC: A Regional Regime in Immigrant Settlement Policy

The TRIEC constitutes a regional “urban regime”¹¹. It also has multi-level dimensions since civil servants in all three levels of government participate in its working groups and the federal government now funds some of its operating costs. TRIEC’s purpose is to create policy capacity in the area of immigrant integration into the economy through public-private collaboration. It arose out of a need to bring together a diverse set of actors to deal with barriers to immigrant integration into the labour market. Thus, as urban regime theory predicts (Stone 1989, 6), it arose out of a need for “institutional scope” and “co-operation” as a result of the fragmentation of interests that affect or have a stake in immigrant employment.

The urban regime concept contributes to our understanding of how TRIEC’s informal governance arrangements are maintained. Drawing upon the rational choice literature, Stone (1989) explains how regimes are developed and maintained by their ability to provide “selective incentives” to their partners. Addressing barriers to immigrant employment was chosen as the first concrete policy step in the TCSA’s goal of becoming a “centre of excellence in the integration of immigrants” because it was a goal upon which a broad cross-sector alliance could agree. As community leader Amanuel Melles observes, employment cuts across many communities and as such is an issue upon which a multicultural population can agree (Melles 2003, interview). The business leaders who participate in TRIEC recognize that the business community also has a stake in immigrant incorporation into Toronto’s economy. As Dominic D’Alessandro notes in his letter to Paul Martin:

The Conference Board of Canada calculates that not recognizing immigrants’ learning and credentials costs our economy somewhere between \$3-billion and \$5-billion annually. As a businessman, a private citizen and an immigrant, I see

¹¹ Urban scholarship in the late 1990s uncovered regional regimes in American urban areas (Leo 1998; Clarke 1999).

this as a critical issue both for maximizing the economic potential of Canada and for successful nation-building. This is why I am chairing the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (D'Alessandro 2004).

As urban regime theory implies, policy preferences of various sectors cannot be assumed. Rather, policy outputs are negotiated within the regime and elite preferences are shaped by their interaction with other leaders. As Stone observed with respect to the business community in Atlanta: "...participation in the governing task and the quest for allies ...had an effect on the business elite, broadening its understanding of what constitutes a favorable economic climate" (Stone 1989, 195). Local leaders consider successful immigrant integration to be a key element of a favorable economic climate. Public education campaigns have become an important strategy in the regime's quest for allies.

As urban regime theory would predict, TRIEC is supported by exchange relationships of the type emphasized in Stone's (1989) earlier work. Business supports the council, because it would like to see the GTA and its business community benefit from highly skilled immigrant labour. Immigrant organizations participate because the programs developed by TRIEC provide immigrants with mentoring opportunities and, ultimately, jobs. The regional regime is also maintained through networks at the municipal level with Toronto's network playing a particularly strong role in this respect.

Clarence Stone's more recent work draws on the literature dealing with problem definition and issue framing to explain regime decline in Atlanta and he invites urban scholars "to consider how issue concerns come to be specified as purposes, and how they are *linked, enlarged, and refined* for action [emphasis added]" (Stone 2001, 20). Toronto's regional regime in immigrant employment is *linked* to an *enlarged* coalition fighting for a "new deal" for the City of Toronto. In addition, immigrant settlement policy is *linked* to economic growth objectives. The goal of immigrant integration has been *refined* to focus on immigrant employment, an issue on which there is a broad inter-sector consensus.

The "New Deal" frame also serves a regime maintenance function. It is what Clarence Stone refers to as a "broad purpose" that serves as a rallying cry for local leaders across the GTA. A "New Deal" is an over-arching goal upon which all of the regime actors can agree. Examination of the dynamics of Toronto's regime illustrates the power of the "gravitational pull" of regime coalitions (Stone 1989, 193). The level of consensus on the goal of achieving a "new deal" for Toronto is extremely high. The broader purpose of the "new deal" coalition contributes to the weight behind calls for new intergovernmental relationships in immigration policy.

VI. Evaluating the Polyscalar Strategies of Toronto's Urban Regime

One might argue that local capacity building in "unfunded mandates" through the development of regime relationships fails to hold upper levels of government accountable for their policy responsibilities. For instance, David Crombie, a former Toronto Mayor and federal cabinet minister, and one of the original co-organizers of the Toronto City Summit Alliance described local policy capacity building in immigrant settlement a "constitutional cul-de-sac" by which he meant that it would be more effective for local leaders to hold upper levels of government accountable for their policy failures rather than to enter new policy jurisdictions (Crombie 2003, interview). Furthermore, one might argue that it is a waste of local leaders'

efforts to lobby the federal government since municipal institutions are a provincial responsibility under Section 92.8 of the Constitution.

Nevertheless, the Toronto regime's "polyscalar" strategies have achieved some success at both the federal and provincial levels. Former Prime Minister Paul Martin (2003-2006) initiated a "New Deal for Cities and Communities" that included, for example, the creation of a Cities Secretariat within the Privy Council Office, the appointment of a minister responsible for cities, a 100 per cent municipal rebate on the GST as well as signed agreements with all provinces to share a portion of the gas tax. In fact, Toronto was included as a *partner* in the Canada-Ontario agreement.

Nevertheless, the most important development was the *Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act (2006)*, a municipal charter that came into effect in January 2007. This Act establishes a more "permissive" legal framework and delegates new taxation and fiscal authority to the city. For instance, the city is now able to raise new excise taxes including liquor and cigarette taxes and can undertake Tax Increment Financing to encourage development. There is some debate about whether the Act goes far enough in terms of empowering the City of Toronto as it does not give the city the ability to raise new taxes with a significant tax yield. Nevertheless, the Act is path breaking insofar as it explicitly recognizes the city's authority to negotiate and enter into agreements with the federal government including in immigrant settlement policy (Miller 2005). This newfound authority creates a framework for the city to have a policy-making role in areas of particular concern to the city. In addition, it could also have important fiscal consequences. The City of Toronto could negotiate new fiscal transfers from the federal government.

More empowering intergovernmental relationships are also evident in the immigrant settlement. The Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, which was finalized on November 21, 2005, increased federal funding of immigrant settlement services in Ontario from about \$800 per immigrant to about \$3,400 per immigrant. The agreement is the first Canadian immigration agreement to establish a partnership with municipalities and provides the foundation for a "New Deal" in immigration and settlement policy for the City of Toronto.

Since the signing of the Canada-Ontario Agreement, the province has initiated several programs to facilitate immigrant access to the labour market that reflect TRIEC's priorities. For instance, on December 12, 2006, the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act, 2006* received Royal Assent. This act addresses barriers in 34 regulated professions in Ontario including physicians, accountants, lawyers, and engineers. In addition, as part of its plan to address barriers to professions, the province established an internship program for foreign-trained professionals in ministries and Crown agencies. It is the first provincial program of its kind. However, participants in TRIEC first initiated such mentorship programs at the municipal level and in the private sector. The government of Ontario announced the introduction of the *Fair Access to Regulated Professions Act* in June 2006 at TRIEC's hireimmigrants.ca seminar that was part of its "A World of Experience" week.

On January 23, 2006, a Conservative minority government under the leadership of Stephen Harper was elected at the federal level without a single elected seat (Conservative cabinet minister David Emerson was elected in Vancouver as a Liberal) in Canada's three largest cities – Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. He introduced a "new" model of federalism – "open federalism" - that stresses federal respect of provincial jurisdiction. Some proponents of a federal "urban agenda" fear that the Harper government will ignore the needs of cities because municipalities are a provincial responsibility. However, this need not be the case. It is possible

for the federal government to develop an *urban* agenda without developing relationships with *municipalities* that bypass provinces by adopting an “urban lens” on national policy-making and addresses policy areas the consequences of which are primarily urban (Berdahl 2006).

Immigration policy is a good example of an area of concurrent federal-provincial jurisdiction the consequences of which are mainly urban. To date, it appears as though the Conservative government will continue to address the needs of Canada’s immigrant-magnet cities including cities in the GTA. For instance, in March 2006, former Immigration Minister Monte Solberg renewed the federal government’s commitment to providing Ontario with \$920 million in additional funds for settlement programs (DiversityWorks staff 2006). Both the McGuinty and the Harper governments appear to consider the issue of facilitating the integration of immigrants into the economy by addressing barriers to the recognition of foreign credentials to be a priority. This issue is an important priority of Toronto’s governing “regime” as well.

VII. Concluding Thoughts

The above discussion indicates that some of the causal factors of urban regime dynamics that Karen Mossberger and Gerry Stoker (2001) identified in their review of the regime theory literature – including changes in *federal grant policies* and *political mobilization* - interact in complex ways. We saw that changes in fiscal federalism, combined with a volatile and strained provincial –municipal relationship between the province of Ontario and the City of Toronto created incentives for Toronto’s regime to focus its attention on the federal government. In the midst of what local leaders perceived as an “urban crisis” that was created by provincial neglect of urban problems, Toronto’s regime partners initiated a national campaign for a “New Deal for Cities” to deal with a more fundamental city problem – the lack of sufficient political, legislative and fiscal autonomy. In addition, the Toronto regime increased its efforts to build local capacity in areas of particular concern to the city simultaneously. Furthermore, in the absence of regional institutions, Toronto’s leaders took leadership on behalf of the region, and began searching for regional allies. This process resulted in flexible new regional governance institutions that incorporated upper levels of government in local capacity building initiatives such as the TRIEC.

The dynamics of urban regime building in Toronto have important implications for the comparative study of urban regime maintenance and change. This case illustrates the potential importance of the intergovernmental system to local governance. Within the context of the fragmentation of power in urban systems, local leaders have incentives to build public-private coalitions to pool policy capacity. However, the Toronto case demonstrates that disequilibria in the distribution of resources exist both in civil society and in the intergovernmental system. Regime theory teaches us that selective financial incentives are particularly important to regime maintenance and development. In civil society, the business community possesses a disproportionate share of these important incentives. In the intergovernmental system, there are also fiscal “imbalances”. Upper levels of government possess a greater ability to tax and spend than municipal governments. Therefore, incentives exist to include resource rich leaders in both the public and private sectors in urban regimes.

In Toronto, local leaders want to share in the decision-making process in areas of particular importance to the regime – including immigration and settlement policy. In addition, they would like to enhance the city’s legislative autonomy. We cannot take a city’s “limits” (Peterson 1981) in the intergovernmental system – including the division of power – for granted.

The above discussion also illustrates the role of institutional change in regime dynamics. The amalgamation of Metro Toronto had an important effect on *patterns of mobilization* in

Toronto. Prior to amalgamation, urban scholars described the City of Toronto as a progressive middle-class regime. *Amalgamation* appears to have broadened participation in local governance. Both the C4LD and the New Voices for a New City mobilized during amalgamation and contributed to a rescaling process in the federation. The New Voices for a New City mobilized an unprecedented number of immigrants and immigrant organizations in the core city and suburbs under one banner. Furthermore, the business community appears to play a more important role in Toronto's governance since amalgamation. We saw above that the new City of Toronto provided a stronger platform for national organizations given its size, budget, and the electoral legitimacy of the Mayor.

Toronto's ability to respond to immigrants has been enhanced by the way in which the issue has been framed. In Toronto, local leaders link immigration and multiculturalism challenges to economic development and prosperity in the city. Because immigrant settlement goals are important priorities in Toronto's local governance regime, these issues were also an important part of local leaders call for a "New Deal for Cities". Since immigrant needs and preferences were tied to this powerful regime and national movement, we have witnessed important and new local capacity-building efforts in immigration policy – through the leadership of TRIEC – and the negotiation of an agreement on immigration between Ontario and the federal government that includes municipalities as partners. Toronto is singled out in this agreement due to the lobbying efforts of its regime. The federal and provincial governments now recognize the local capacity that the City of Toronto brings to policy discussions on immigration.

The intergovernmental context does not *determine* local policy outputs and urban regime dynamics. Rather, it provides incentives within which local leaders choose how they will respond. Local leaders decide which issues will be included in their priorities, what goals they will pursue, who they will seek as allies in their policy endeavors, how they will frame policy goals as well as their strategies for attracting regime participants and maintaining the regime. However, the intergovernmental context provides an important element of local leaders' context of policy choice.

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