

POSTER

Title

Provincial-International Relations: Exploring the Involvement of the Ontario Legislature in International Affairs

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Abstract

The paper explores the intersection between the provincial and the international by outlining and examining the international involvement of the Ontario Legislature. The various connections explored include an overlook of the relations between the Ontario Legislature and representatives of other legislatures as exemplified through the Legislature's involvement in interparliamentary organizations, delegations, as well as through the pursuit of international initiatives advanced by members, Officers, and affiliates of the Legislative Assembly. In addition to describing the actions that have and are currently taking place, the paper begins a discussion about the general purposes of such endeavors, as well as their perceived effectiveness. Overall, the paper proves a unique contribution to the literature concerning both international relations and provincial politics by broadening the focus of each. Too often are the connections between the international sphere and more localized forms of politics overlooked, particularly with respect to the role of parliamentarians. The paper seeks to loosen these ties by focusing on the involvement of the Ontario Legislature in affairs that extend beyond provincial and, likewise, federal borders.

Introduction

This paper explores the international involvement, or the international relations, of the Ontario Legislature. It will be shown that local parliamentarians, as exemplified by the involvement of the Ontario Legislature, have important roles to play internationally.

Not only do provincial-international relations exist at the legislative level, but they occur quite frequently and in a diverse manner of ways. The paper will outline and describe such relations as they occur between the Ontario Legislature and foreign legislatures or other bodies, as exemplified through the Legislature's involvement in the following:

(1) Interparliamentary Organizations

(2) Delegations

(3) The pursuit of international initiatives advanced by members, Officers, and affiliates of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

In addition to describing the actions that have and are currently taking place, the paper will begin a discussion about the general purposes of such international relations at the provincial parliamentary level, as well as discuss their perceived effectiveness. It will be argued that these relations have distinct purposes, which have, in many cases, achieved positive results.

Methods

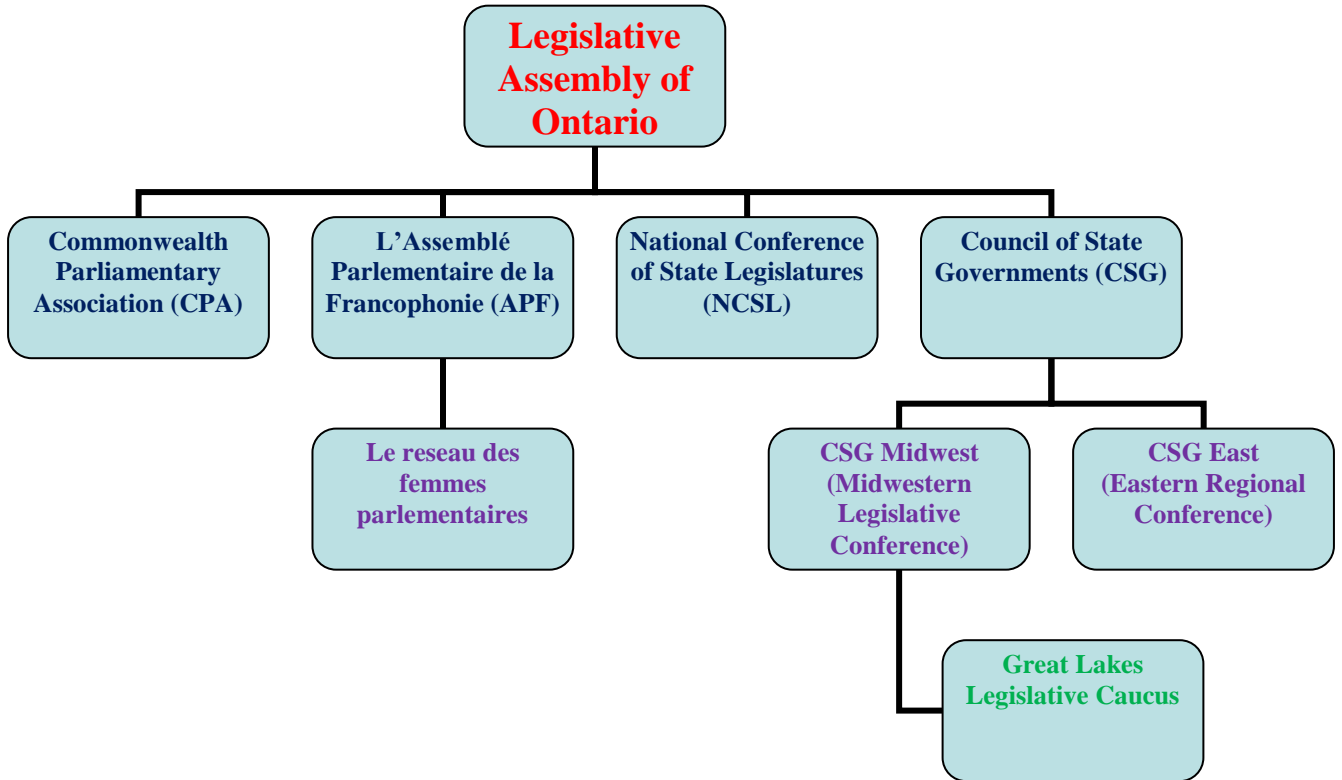
(1) Primary Research

- Heavy reliance on primary research
- Conducting **interviews** with Members, Officers, and staff of the Ontario Legislature
- Attending **delegations** (Israeli Flag Raising and Vietnamese Delegation)

(2) Secondary Research

- Journals, Books, and websites of interparliamentary organizations

Interparliamentary Organizations



Delegations



Figure 1 Mr. Amir Gissin, Consul General of Israel, speaking at Flag Raising



Figure 2 Israeli Flag Raising, April 20th 2010

Individual Initiatives



Figure 3 OLIP Interns with Governor of Tennessee Phil Bredesen



Figure 4 OLIP Interns with Speaker of the Colorado State Legislature Terrance Carroll

Purposes

1. The sharing of ideas and practices

- **Legislatures do not exist in isolation**
- **Sharing = learning = innovation**
- **Ultimate goal: improving the parliamentary process**
- **Particularly advantageous for developing democracies**

2. Developing resolutions to common problems and policy concerns

- **Forums for the creation of concrete policy results**
- **EX. The NCSL and cross-border policy involving drivers' licenses**
- **EX. Women's issues and gender inclusive language**

Effectiveness

“I have never been to a delegation, or conference, or anything where I have not come back without an enhanced understanding or idea that could not be used in this place”. – Deborah Deller, Clerk of Ontario Legislature

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