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Multiculturalism Policy and the Importance of Place:

An Uneven Policy and Jurisdictional Landscape

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Abstract

Through its multiculturalism policies, the federal government has established a normative framework to govern ethnic relations and the long-term immigrant integration process in Canada. This framework prescribes a proactive government role in facilitating ethno-cultural equity in social, economic and political institutions. However, because immigrants tend to settle primarily in cities, the multiculturalism policy challenge is largely an urban question. In fact, close to three-quarters of Canada's immigrants settle in its three largest city-regions. In addition, since the 1970s, there has been a steep upward trend in the number of immigrants who are visible minorities. Therefore, Canada's largest urban centres have experienced a dramatic shift in the ethno-cultural composition of their populations in a relatively short period of time. The paper addresses the extent to which municipal governments in English-speaking Canada's two most numerically significant immigrant receiving city-regions are following the Canadian multiculturalism model of immigrant integration through a comparison of seven municipalities: Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Markham in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Vancouver, Richmond, and Surrey in Greater Vancouver (GV). It finds that there is a great deal of variation in municipal multiculturalism policy efforts and develops a three-fold typology of "municipal responsiveness" to characterize these differences. It argues that this jurisdictional unevenness and, more broadly place-specific challenges, must be addressed to ensure the continued viability of the multiculturalism model in Canada.

I. Introduction

Through its “multiculturalism policies,” the Canadian federal government has established a normative framework that prescribes a proactive public role in facilitating positive ethno-cultural relations and inter-ethnic equity. These policies provide a normative standard to guide the long-term immigrant integration process. Nevertheless, since more than three quarters of Canada’s immigrants choose to settle in its three largest city-regions -- Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal -- the social, economic and political consequences of changing ethno-racial demographics in Canada is most immediate in these locales.

Despite the spatial concentration of the multiculturalism policy challenge in Canada very little was known about how these demographic trends have affected municipal governance in Canada’s primary immigrant-receiving locales until recently.¹ The limited but growing literature on this subject documents a great deal of variation in the extent to which municipal governments respond to immigration by adapting their services and governance structures to incorporate immigrants’ preferences and to increase immigrant access to services (Tate and Quesnel 1995; Wallace and Frisken 2000; Edgington and Hutton 2002; Good 2004; Good 2005; Good 2006; Graham Philips 2006). Thus, only some municipalities are following Canada’s national model of immigration integration – official multiculturalism. To *what extent* and *how* are municipal governments in urban Canada adapting their services and governance mechanisms to the dramatic demographic changes that immigration causes? To what extent are municipalities in Canada’s most numerically- important immigrant

¹ This gap in our understanding is a symptom of the marginalization of the study of urban politics in the field of Canadian political science (Garber 1995; Abu-Laban 1997), which has conceptualized municipal autonomy in a very limited way following a strict “creatures of provinces” constitutional doctrine (Lightbody 1995; Magnusson 2005).

receiving city-regions following the multiculturalism policy framework that is embraced at the federal and some in provincial jurisdictions? This paper engages with these questions through a comparison of the policy responses of seven urban and suburban municipalities located in Canada's two most numerically important city-regions in English-speaking Canada – Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Markham in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Vancouver, Richmond, and Surrey in the Greater Vancouver (GV).

In section II, the paper begins by describing the broad contours of the Canadian commitment to multiculturalism at a national scale, a model of immigrant integration that has been plagued by periodic conceptual and empirical confusion in national debates. As this paper is being written, the model is being challenged from a variety of fronts based on unsupported and even inaccurate empirical claims (Ley 2007). Next, in section III, the paper describes the scalar implications of immigration and, ultimately, of the multiculturalism policy challenge. This section demonstrates that multiculturalism is a primarily urban phenomenon and, particularly, a large urban center issue. The next section of the paper (section IV) develops a typology to characterize the nature of multiculturalism policy variation in Canada's primary immigrant-receiving city regions and provides an empirical portrait of these municipal policies. In this section, it becomes apparent that different models of immigrant integration inform municipal policy-making in these locales. At a general level, the findings presented in this paper contribute to recent scholarly defences of the importance of multiculturalism policies to successful immigrant integration (Bloemraad 2006; Ley 2007). However, its primary empirical message is that multiculturalism policies have been adopted in a spatially and jurisdictionally inconsistent way. The paper concludes by discussing the significance of the findings for the successful development and

implementation of effective multiculturalism policies in Canada. It argues that policy makers at all levels must address jurisdictional and spatial unevenness in multiculturalism policy-making in order to ensure the continued viability of Canada's model of immigrant integration.

II. Multiculturalism Policies in Canada

Multiculturalism in Canada is a growing and changing *empirical reality* to which Canada's *official policy of multiculturalism* has responded. Today, few Canadians would disagree that multiculturalism constitutes a defining characteristic of the Canadian population. However, there exists a great deal of confusion within Canada as to the goals of Canada's official policy of multiculturalism (Kymlicka 1998; Ley 2007). Misunderstandings are at least a partial result of the evolving nature of Canada's policy.

Audrey Kobayashi (1993) has outlined three stages of the development of multiculturalism in Canada: *demographic multiculturalism*, *symbolic multiculturalism* and *structural multiculturalism*. In a practical sense, these stages represent an evolution from a recognition of the cultural contribution of groups other than the historical "charter groups" in the 1960s, to a limited official policy of multiculturalism that provided state support to celebrate and to maintain Canada's diversity in the 1970s, to a policy model that addresses institutional, systemic barriers to inter-ethnic equity and integration (Kobayashi 1993; Ley 2007). As geographer David Ley (2007) observes in his recent "defence" of Canadian multiculturalism, the popular impression of multiculturalism policy goals today reflect the second stage of the policy's development, a stage that encouraged the maintenance of, and even emphasized, cultural differences (Ley 2007, 10). Will Kymlicka (1998) made similar

observations in his defense of the policy in the late 1990s in response to challenges at that time (Kymlicka 1998).

Nevertheless, as Ley so bluntly puts it: “multiculturalism has moved on” (Ley 2007, 10). The current goals of Canada’s federal policy involve the government’s proactive attempts to address barriers to the fair inclusion of ethno-racial minorities in economic, social and political institutions. The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988)*, which legislated the shift from symbolic to structural multiculturalism, states that “the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards *race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion* as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to achieve the *equality* of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada [emphasis added]”. The scope of its mandate extends not only to public institutions but also to the business community, to the voluntary sector and to other private organizations (5.1d).² Similarly, the goals of the multiculturalism program, which is administered by Canadian Heritage, stress *integration* as its primary goal rather than cultural maintenance - “active citizenship, not heritage cultures” (Ley 2007). The program focuses on cultural bridging, addressing racism and discrimination, civic participation and adapting Canadian institutions to reflect societal diversity (Ley 2007, 10). In fact, Canadian Heritage no longer funds the maintenance of heritage cultures but, rather, it supports integration services such as official language training programs that are offered by NGOs (Ley 2007, 10).

Furthermore, *structural multiculturalism* is more than a single government program. It has become a general model of immigrant integration and citizenship in Canada.

² A commitment to incorporating ethno-racial minorities equitably into Canadian institutions is also supported by a constitutional recognition that the Charter of Rights and Freedoms should be interpreted in a way that is consistent with Canada’s multicultural reality (Section 27).

Multiculturalism policies, which focus on the longer-term integration process, complement shorter-term settlement policies that are administered by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and that are designed to meet immigrants' most immediate settlement needs (Bloemraad 2006; Good 2006). In addition, the federal government's commitment to employment equity, which is legislated in *the Employment Equity Act* (1986), is also an important part of *structural multiculturalism*. Thus, Canada's citizenship policies, settlement programs, multiculturalism policies, and commitment to employment equity are all part of a "bundle" that reflect the country's multiculturalism model of immigrant integration. Multiculturalism policies are both a *general model of citizenship* that encourages inter-ethnic equity and specific policy "response[s] to the pressures that Canada exerts on immigrants to integrate into common institutions" (Kymlicka 1998, 40).

The somewhat limited empirical research on the model's effect in terms of achieving ethnic and immigrant integration suggests that the approach has been relatively successful. For instance, Will Kymlicka (1998) shows that since official multiculturalism was first adopted in 1971, Canada has seen an increase in rates of immigrant naturalization, intermarriage, political participation and official language proficiency. Irene Bloemraad (2006)'s comparative research on immigrant integration and "political incorporation" in Canada and the United States also supports the conclusion that Canada's multiculturalism model contributes toward integration. These studies suggest that multiculturalism policies work.

However, as Kymlicka (1998) has observed, the policy both *does* and *must* evolve as new ethnic relations challenges arise. For instance, in his more recent work he cautions that Canada might be at a "crossroads in race relations" as Canada's black community

experiences a deeper level of *racialization* than other visible minority communities (Kymlicka 2001, 178). Thus, existing measures of success in integrating immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities into Canadian society and institutions should not overshadow the ongoing, proactive efforts that are needed to manage Canada's ethno-cultural diversity as Canadian society evolves and new challenges become apparent.

Furthermore, the research cited above has not addressed an important dimension of the multiculturalism policy challenge – its urban reality. And, as Mario Polèse and Richard Stren (2000) caution, whereas there are important opportunities associated with immigration, at the urban level, population density coupled with dramatic social change can also be a source of intense social stress (Polèse and Stren 2000, 8). If multiculturalism policies are to be effective, they must address the scalar implications of the policy challenge.

III. Canada's Changing Multicultural Reality: Demographic and Scalar Dimensions

The current focus of Canada's multiculturalism policies reflects profound changes in the empirical reality of the ethno-cultural composition of Canadian society. These shifts resulted from changes in Canada's immigrant selection policies and practices, which were racially-biased until 1967 when the "point system" of immigrant selection was adopted (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002). Before 1961, Europe was the source of 90 percent of Canada's immigrants (Statistics Canada 2001b). However, by the 1990s, the leading source of immigrants to Canada was China followed by India, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Taiwan (Statistics Canada 2001b). Prior to 1961, only 3 percent of Canada's immigrants came from Asia (Statistics Canada 2001b).

Due to these changes in the source countries of immigrants, Canada has experienced a three-fold increase in its “visible minority”³ population since 1981 (Statistics Canada 2001b). In 2001, only three of every ten visible minorities were born in Canada (Statistics Canada 2001b). In addition, there has been an upward trend in the relative number of immigrants who are visible minorities with 52 percent, 68 percent, and 73 percent of the immigrants who came to Canada in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s respectively identifying themselves as visible minorities (Statistics Canada 2001b). Furthermore, Statistics Canada projects intensification of the link between the “racial”⁴ diversification of Canada and immigration. It predicts that by 2017, if current immigration trends continue, between 19 and 23 percent of the population will be a member of a visible minority group (Statistics Canada 2005).

However, these demographic trends also have important scalar dimensions. Canada’s visible minority and immigrant populations (which largely overlap) are concentrated in its three largest city-regions – Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. These three city-regions receive close to three quarters of all of the immigrants to Canada. In 2002, the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)⁵ received close to 50 percent of Canada’s approximately 230,000 immigrants (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2002). More generally, the Toronto CMA receives nearly three times more immigrants than its share of the population (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2002). Statistics Canada also predicts that immigrants will continue to choose to settle in large urban centres. By 2017, the Toronto region will be home to 45 percent of the entire Canadian visible minority population and will become the

³ Federal policies and Statistics Canada adopt the *Employment Equity Act* (1986)’s definition of “visible minorities” as “persons, other than Aboriginal people, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”.

⁴ “Racial” is in quotation marks to acknowledge the socially-constructed nature of “race”.

⁵ A CMA is an urban region that is composed of an urban core and one or more adjacent municipalities. In order to constitute a CMA, the urban region must have a population of at least 50,000 residents. In order to be included in a CMA, adjacent municipalities must be highly integrated with the urban core. Integration is measured by the flows of commuter using census workplace data (ShiftCentral Inc. 2003, 47).

“visible majority” since non-whites will become a majority there (Statistics Canada 2005). Together, Canada’s three largest cities – Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal – will be home to a remarkable three quarters of the country’s visible minority population (Statistics Canada 2005).

The other clear scalar trend with respect to immigrant and visible minority populations in Canada is that there is an increasing suburbanization of these populations. Many immigrants are now settling directly in suburbs in Greater Vancouver and the Greater Toronto Area (2003 and 2004, interviews). In fact, immigrants and visible minorities form close to 50 percent of the population for several suburban municipalities in these regions (Statistics Canada 2001a).

Table 1 illustrates the demographic impact that immigration has had on urban and suburban municipalities in the GTA and GV where the cases to be discussed here are located relative to the provincial and national scales.

Table 1: Profile of Diversity at Different Scales

Political Unit	Population	Foreign-Born (%)	Visible Minority (%)
Canada	29,639,030	18	13
Ontario	11,285,545	26.8	19.1
Toronto	2,456,805	49.4	42.8
Mississauga	610,815	46.8	40.3
Brampton	324,390	40	40.2
Markham	207,940	52.9	55.5
BC	3,868,875	26.1	21.6
Vancouver	539,625	45.9	49
Richmond	163,395	54	59
Surrey	345,780	33.2	37

These data are taken from the 2001 Census (Statistics Canada 2001a).

The changes in the ethno-cultural demographics of Canada’s largest city-regions have been dramatic. Prior to 1961, less than 3 percent of Toronto’s population was in the “visible

minority” category and Toronto was known to be a highly homogeneous city with a largely British and highly Protestant population (Doucet 1999). The demographic shifts in the ethno-cultural composition of Vancouver’s population were similarly striking. Vancouver’s non-European population – most of which is of Asian ancestry – increased a dramatic 422 percent between 1971 and 1986 (Olds 2001, 85). In Canada, questions of inter-ethnic equity and harmony as well as immigrant integration have very important spatial dimensions.

As we saw in the previous section, Canada’s national policy of multiculturalism responded to these changing demographics by shifting the policy focus from heritage maintenance and more broadly “symbolic multiculturalism” to an integrative, and ethno-racial equity focus that characterizes “structural multiculturalism”. Nevertheless, whereas the goals of Canada’s multiculturalism policy have evolved, the recognition of its spatial and jurisdictions implications has been largely neglected.

Since immigration, race relations, and ultimately multiculturalism policy challenges are most immediate in Canada’s largest urban centres, the question as to what democratically elected governments at these levels are doing to manage large-scale demographic change arises. Are municipal governments behaving as local ambassadors of Canada’s national policy of official multiculturalism? To what extent have municipalities adapted their services and governance structures to facilitate ethno-cultural equity and inclusion in public, economic, and social institutions in their respective communities? Have they been “responsive” to ethno-cultural diversity as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (1988) legislates?

IV. Toward A Typology of Municipal Responsiveness To Immigrants and Ethno-Cultural Minorities

The term “responsiveness” evokes notions of democratic inclusion and accountability as well as effectiveness in public administration in meeting needs and responding to challenges. The word is used widely to characterize many different aspects of institutional performance including timeliness, creativity, innovation, and comprehensiveness in institutional responses.⁶ However, as Canada’s official policy of multiculturalism recognizes, responsive policy frameworks must also take steps to make immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities feel more at home in political, social and economic institutions (Kymlicka 1998). At the local level, multiculturalism policies address barriers to accessing municipal services and to participating in municipal governance due to ethno-cultural barriers. They also reflect the particularities of the multiculturalism challenge in urban and suburban communities.

The typology (as well as empirical portrait of multiculturalism policies that follows) was developed on the basis of analysis of policy documents, municipal websites, newspapers and close to 100 interviews with community leaders in the municipalities in the sample including local political leaders, civil servants, community leaders and business leaders.⁷

At the local level municipal multiculturalism policies tend to fall into the following *policy types*:

1. Municipalities may establish *a separate unit of government to manage diversity and organizational change* in response to immigration and dramatic increases in the ethno-cultural diversity of their populations. These units serve as a catalyst for change across all municipal departments and to engage with the community.

⁶ For instance, Robert Putnam uses these evaluative criteria in his seminal study of the institutional performance of regional institutions in Italy (Putnam 1993, 65).

⁷ See *Appendix 1* for a list of interviewees.

2. Municipal governments may provide *grants* to community organizations, offer *in-kind support* to community organizations (space and staff for instance) and conduct *research* on community needs.
3. Municipalities may develop *employment equity* initiatives to address systemic barriers to immigrant and ethno-cultural minority access to employment. The scope of these policies can vary. Municipalities may address these barriers within their own organization but may also take steps to encourage the fair integration of immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities into the private sector.
4. Municipalities may develop an *immigrant settlement policy* that explicitly acknowledges that they are playing a role in this policy field through multiculturalism policy initiatives.
5. Municipalities may also take steps to increase their *political inclusiveness* by establishing mechanisms by which immigrant and ethno-cultural minority preferences enter council deliberations on policy matters. In practice, this might involve creating advisory committees that deal with immigrant and ethno-cultural concerns specifically, offering interpretation services for citizens who wish to make deputations to council, or translating information on municipal elections.
6. Municipalities may make efforts to increase *access and equity in service delivery*. This can involve translation and interpretation services, offering culturally sensitive services, or establishing a communications strategy.
7. Municipalities may initiate *multiculturalism and anti-racism initiatives* including efforts to improve inter-cultural relations, to combat racism and to eliminate hate activities.
8. Municipalities may choose to create an inclusive *municipal image* through, for instance, establishing inclusive symbols and using inclusive language in key municipal documents.
9. Municipalities may support *multicultural festivals* and events.

Canadian municipalities vary significantly in the extent to which they chose to adopt the policies described above. They fall into a three-fold typology of municipal responsiveness – “responsive”, “somewhat responsive”, and “unresponsive” (Good 2005; 2006).

Municipalities vary in four primary, related ways:

1) They vary in the extent to which they have been *comprehensive* in their response to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities. In other words, municipalities vary in the extent to which they adopt a wide *range* of policies (listed above) and in the extent to which these policies are *institutionalized* in the municipal civil service.

2) They vary in their *policy styles* – whether they are *proactive*, *reactive*, or *inactive* in the multiculturalism policy field (Wallace and Frisken 2000; Good 2005; Good 2006). These two elements are related insofar as the institutionalization of support for the adaptation of municipal services and governance structures fosters a proactive, anticipatory policy style and the failure to do so leads to reactive policy-making.

3) They vary in the extent to which they have developed informal governance relationships to build the capacity to manage ethno-racial change. Where local leaders have formed coalitions that are responsive to the concerns of immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities, leaders of immigrant settlement organizations and other organizations with multiculturalism-related mandates participate in urban governance.

4) They vary in the extent to which immigrant settlement leaders consider the municipality’s approach to be responsive to the concerns of their communities. Despite national debates concerning Canada’s policy of official multiculturalism⁸, all immigrant settlement leaders interviewed for this research agreed that multiculturalism policies are responsive to the concerns of immigrants.

Table 2 summarizes the paper’s typology of municipal responsiveness to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities in urban Canada.

Table 2: A Typology of Municipal Responsiveness to Immigrants and Ethno-cultural Minorities

	Responsive	Somewhat Responsive	Unresponsive
Breadth and Depth	Comprehensive	Limited	Highly limited
Policy Style	Proactive	Reactive	Inactive
Immigrant and Ethno-cultural Minorities and	Included	Variable levels of inclusion.	Excluded

⁸ Multiculturalism policies were subject to backlash in recent years. Anti-multiculturalism discourse is evident in the former Reform Party’s policy platform as well as in arguments made by prominent Canadian figures such as Richard Gwyn (1995) and Neil Bissondath (1994). This backlash led noted Canadian political philosopher Will Kymlicka to address these concerns in his *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethno-cultural Relations in Canada* (1998). More recent challenges to the policy led geographer David Ley to write a “defense” of the policy (Ley 2007).

Governance			
Immigrant Settlement Leaders' Assessment	Positive	Moderately Positive	Negative
Policy Types	1-9	5-9	9

“Responsive” municipalities have adopted a wide range of policies (types 1-9), have institutionalized support for these policies, and are proactive in their policy styles. Furthermore, community leaders in the immigrant settlement sector assess the efforts of responsive municipalities to the concerns of their constituents in a positive way. Responsive municipalities have also developed productive governance relationships to support their multiculturalism policy efforts. “Somewhat responsive” municipalities have developed a limited range of policies (types 5-9) to facilitate immigrant and ethno-cultural minority access and equity and have done so reactively – for instance, in reaction to political mobilization and pressure as well as race relations crises. Somewhat responsive municipalities lack strong institutional support of their multiculturalism policy development efforts. They vary in the extent to which they both include immigrant interests in urban governance relationships and in the extent to which immigrant leaders consider them responsive. “Unresponsive” municipalities adopt few if any policies and/or practices to accommodate diversity (type 9 only) and their policy style can be described as “inactive”. Immigrant settlement leaders in “unresponsive” municipalities evaluate the municipality’s responsiveness negatively and/or are unaware of whether the municipality is active in multiculturalism policy. Finally, “unresponsive” municipalities do not include immigrants in governance arrangements.

The Empirical Terrain: A Diversity of Models of Integration

“Responsive” municipalities

The urban core municipalities – including the *City of Toronto* and the *City of Vancouver* - have been responsive to the needs and preferences of immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities. Their responses have been comprehensive insofar as they have been consistent across municipal departments and agencies, and insofar as these cities have adopted a broad range of policies to accommodate the diversity of their populations. In addition, informal public-private governance coalitions that include multiculturalism policy goals have developed in both responsive municipalities.

The City of Toronto’s responsiveness to diversity is reflected *symbolically* in its motto “Diversity Our Strength”. In January 1998, the city embarked upon a comprehensive planning exercise to develop a plan of action with respect to ‘access and equity’ in the newly amalgamated⁹ City of Toronto by setting up the *Task Force on Access and Equity*. Toronto City Council approved the *Task Force*’s recommendations in the form of an Action Plan in December 1999. The city’s access and equity initiatives flow from this plan.

Furthermore, the City of Toronto’s commitment to ‘access and equity’ is institutionalized in a special unit designed to “manage” these issues - the “Diversity Management and Community Engagement Unit”. This unit, which is located in the City Manager’s office, supports and monitors the implementation of formal policies but is also a flexible unit that initiates action when unanticipated needs arise. It is designed to be a “catalyst” and “facilitator” of the entire corporation and to serve as a “bridge” between

⁹ On January 1, 1998, the current City of Toronto was created by an act of the Ontario Provincial Parliament that merged seven municipalities – six lower-tier municipalities (East York, Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto and York) and one upper tier municipality (Metro Toronto) – that constituted the former, federated two-tier Metropolitan Toronto.

council, the civil service and the community (Lee 2003, interview). As such, this unit supports the city's "proactive" policy style.

The City of Vancouver has also institutionalized support for its multiculturalism initiatives in both its Social Planning Department and its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office. The social planning function involves addressing social issues that affect the community and disadvantaged groups and individuals in particular. Vancouver's Social Planning Department has a full-time staff position - a "Multicultural Social Planner" - devoted entirely to social planning issues arising out of the city's multicultural nature.

Both responsive cities have developed a wide range of multiculturalism policies. For instance, the City of Toronto adopted a number of "core policies" to guide policy-making and planning in the city including its Workplace Human Rights and Harassment Policy (1998), its Hate Activity Policy and Procedures (1998), its Employment Equity Policy (2000), and its Multilingual Services Policy (2002). The City of Toronto has institutionalized a monitoring process for these policies through its Human Rights Office and through "social audits" of its departments (City of Toronto 2004). The City of Toronto's proactive policy style is also evident insofar as it commissions research reports on immigrant community needs.¹⁰

Like Toronto, Vancouver has developed a wide range of policies to accommodate ethno-cultural diversity. The City of Vancouver has been a national leader in employment equity policy since 1977. The City of Vancouver approaches employment equity holistically, by creating the conditions for fundamental change in the corporate culture of the municipality rather than by simply focusing on hiring practices. The EEO office administers

¹⁰ For instance, it commissioned the Ornstein Report (2001), which found that the poverty rate of non-European groups is twice that of European groups. In response to this report, the city held community consultations resulting in the development of the *Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination* in 2002.

extensive diversity training programs to city staff on an ongoing basis. Building upon the success of these programs, in 1989, the city established the “Hastings Institute”, an arms length not-for-profit, city-owned corporation that provides diversity training to outside organizations – including other municipalities, provincial ministries, crown corporations, not-for-profit organizations, unions and businesses - on a fee-for-service basis. The mayor and four members of council sit on the Hastings Institute’s Board of Directors in order to ensure that its directions reflect the city’s priorities.

Both the City of Toronto and the City of Vancouver have taken steps to include ethno-cultural minorities in political decision-making by establishing formal advisory committees with multiculturalism related mandates to provide community input into council decision-making. These advisory communities complement efforts to engage immigrants and visible minorities in the municipal electoral process. Advisory committees address important gaps in representation on municipal councils in which ethno-racial minorities are poorly incorporated (Siemiatycki 1998; Good 2005). In Toronto, five access and equity policy advisory committees and two working groups were set up following the *Task Force Report*.¹¹ Vancouver’s current committee is called the Special Advisory Committee on Diversity Issues (2003-present). Taken alone, advisory committees often reflect a reactive policy style. However, in Toronto and Vancouver, because other institutional supports are in place, advisory committees provide a mechanism of community engagement that contributes to the city’s ability to assess community needs and to plan for future challenges.

The two cities’ proactive approaches to accommodating diversity are reflected best in their community grants programs. Toronto’s Access and Equity Grants program provides

¹¹ The *Race and Ethnic Relations Advisory Committee* and the “Immigration and Refugee Issues” working group are examples.

targeted funding to organizations that represent ethno-cultural minorities. Council increased the funding for access and equity programs significantly in the city's 2004 budget to support emerging immigrant communities - from just over \$400,000 to \$773,800 (Lee 2005, e-mail correspondence). In 2005, Vancouver directed more than 25 percent of the city's direct service grants (which represent 3/4 of its total budget for grants of approximately 3.4 million) to organizations serving ethno-cultural and immigrant communities (Wong 2005, interview).¹²

Community leaders in both Toronto and Vancouver viewed their respective municipality's level of responsiveness favourably.¹³ In addition, in both cities local leaders built governance coalitions that include immigrant representative. In Toronto, a broad-based coalition has developed that includes political leaders, civil servants, members of the business community, leaders in the immigrant settlement sector and others (Good 2005). An important node in the coalition is the Toronto City Summit Alliance, a group of powerful local leaders that have coalesced around the need to address a number of the city's challenges including immigrant settlement goals and to fight for greater urban autonomy. This alliance established the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council, whose members have become an important players in a multi-level governance arrangement that includes participants at the city, provincial, federal and community levels. In Toronto, local leaders recognize the inter-relation of economic development, immigrant employment and access and equity objectives.

¹² In addition, within a second stream of funding, the city provides core funding to "neighbourhood houses", which are mainly located on the east side of Vancouver where many high-needs immigrants live. Furthermore, through the grant application process, Vancouver monitors the progress of "mainstream" organizations in increasing ethno-cultural minority access to their services (Wong 2005, interview).

¹³ In fact, community leaders in Toronto suggested that the city ought to play a greater role in immigrant settlement than it currently does and, in a more general way, should have more power within Canadian federalism. As Sam Dunn of Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre put it: "there is a disjunct [sic] between the locus of immigration and the frameworks of responsibility" (Dunn 2003, interview).

In Vancouver, the city's multiculturalism policies are, in part, a by-product of an economic development "regime" that led the city to proactively encourage investment and immigration from Pacific Rim countries (especially China). Kris Olds describes the "reach and influence" of the local coalition of leaders that support strengthening Vancouver's ties with Pacific Rim countries as "long, sinuous, and hegemonic" (Olds 2001, 92). In Vancouver there were a number of "growing pains" as the city transformed into a Pacific Metropolis with a large and powerful Chinese community. Long-standing residents complained that affluent immigrants were displacing existing residents by driving up housing costs and property taxes as well as changing the cultural and social shape of the community (Edgington and Hutton 2002, 20). However, these strains were managed and supported by a proactive coalition of local leaders in the public and private sectors.

Thus, in both responsive municipalities, multiculturalism policy purposes are supported by both formal (municipal) institutions and by informal institutions in the form of ongoing public-private elite coalitions. Toronto and Vancouver frame their many "multiculturalism policies" as part of an "immigrant settlement" strategy. They are also tied closely to economic development objectives. This local level trend is consistent with the shift in policy discourse in the immigration, multiculturalism, and employment equity areas at the national level toward "selling diversity" (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002).

"Somewhat Responsive"

Three of the suburban municipalities in the sample - the *City of Richmond*, *Town of Markham*, and the *City of Surrey* - have been "somewhat responsive" to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities. In Richmond and Markham, ethnic advisory committees play a

central role in managing the city's response to social change. Their evolution tends to be *reactive*. In all three "somewhat responsive" municipalities, multiculturalism policy responses are limited and *ad hoc* – they respond to the ethnic relations challenge of the day.

The history of advisory committees in Richmond shows that there have been varying levels of political support for a city role in intercultural relations as well as its reactive policy style in multiculturalism policy development. In 1990, the City of Richmond established its first intercultural committee - the "Coordinating Committee on Ethnic Relations" (CCER) - in reaction to large influxes of Hong-Kong Chinese immigrants to Richmond and a perceived need to adapt the municipal corporation to accommodate the demographic changes. However, in 1995, the committee's mandate shifted from organizational change to focusing on "promoting harmonious intercultural relationships" (City of Richmond 2002) due to backlash against immigration. A city report summarizes the situation in 1994:

One of the important concerns that has surfaced in the past few months is the "backlash" from, primarily, non-ethnic or long term ethnic residents who are objecting about the time and money being spent on helping new residents adjust to life in Richmond. This "backlash" is expressed over concerns of signage and service in the new Asian malls, translation services, the "Christmas tree on City Hall" issue, the growing number of Chinese newspapers and Chinese signage in older institutions (banks, stores, etc.) and the mega house discussions. This "backlash" is being felt by most ethnic and ethnic-serving agencies, as well as our City government" (City of Richmond 1994, 3).

In response, in 1995, the city redirected its efforts in multiculturalism policy from a focus on organizational change to facilitating intercultural bridges between the Chinese community and long-standing residents. For instance, it established "Good Neighbour Month," a street banner program celebrating multiculturalism and set up displays on the Official Community

Plan in Aberdeen Mall, Richmond's first and highly controversial "Asian mall,"¹⁴ which was developed in 1992 as an alternative to Vancouver's Chinatown (Huhtala 2004).

The committee also hosted discussions between residents and developers of Asian malls regarding English signage and service. In response to backlash on the part of long-standing residents, Thomas Fung, a powerful Chinese developer who developed six Asian malls in Richmond decided to tear down and redevelop the Aberdeen Centre at a personal cost of millions of dollars to address the concerns of long-standing residents who complained that it catered to Chinese-speaking residents only. Its commercial tenant agreement now obliges shop-owners to maintain the mall for English language use and prohibits them from erecting permanent Chinese language signs either inside or outside of their stores (Huhtala 2004). Fung's Fairchild Group also created a marketing arm for six Asian-style malls called "Asia West". The marketing arm pushes shopkeepers to accommodate non-Asians by using English on their signs and by carrying clothing in sizes suited to non-Asian (Pynn 1997). Through the cooperation of the city and Thomas Fung, this race relations crisis was transformed into a marketing strategy for the city. Tourism Richmond, a non-for-profit agency that market Richmond uses the Asia West concept in its marketing materials.

The genesis of the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee (RIAC), Richmond's current advisory committee, lies in a heated community conflict over the location of a group home in Richmond (Townsend 2004, interview). Essentially, the city established the

¹⁴ According to David Chuenyan Lai, an "Asian mall" has the following characteristics: "1. All signs and advertising are in both English and Chinese; 2. A heavy concentration of Chinese restaurants, grocery stores, bakeries, bookstores or other specialized stores; 3. Is named after a Hong Kong location or popular plaza in Hong Kong such as Aberdeen Centre or Pacific Centre; 4. The majority of restaurants are named after popular restaurants or stores in Hong Kong, Taiwan or China; 5. It's usually crowded with [an] overwhelming number of Asian customers and English may or may not be spoken; 6. Developed by Hong Kong or Taiwanese entrepreneurs or investors; 7. Sale of strata titles is usually advertised in Chinese and agents are usually Chinese; 8. Purchasers are generally Chinese investors or merchants; 9. Rarely has an anchor store such as a single large department store" (Lai 2001 in Huhtala 2004).

committee in reaction to an intercultural misunderstanding. The city decided to relocate a group home to a predominantly Chinese neighbourhood, which created outrage in the Chinese community. According to city officials, the issue escalated within the Chinese community in part because of misinformation about the nature of group homes in Canada that was circulated in the Chinese-language media (Townsend 2004, interview). The city tried to resist taking action for more than eight months before it was forced to establish the *Group Homes Task Force* due to the persistence of Chinese-born residents (Huhtala 2005, interview). The *Task Force* became a public education exercise. Of the *Task Force's* budget of about \$150,000, approximately \$50,000 was spent on translation, interpretation and other initiatives aimed at reaching out to newcomer communities.

After extensive community consultations, RIAC developed an ambitious strategic plan.¹⁵ What is perhaps most interesting about the plan is that it is just as much (if not more) of a response to the concerns of long-standing residents as it is to the concerns of immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities. For instance, it identifies the issue of non-English signage in the community as one of its key communications issues (RIAC 2004, 2) and recommends the establishment of a “City bylaw that would require all public stores and businesses to have some basic level of signage in English” (RIAC 2004, 7).

Markham's policy style is also most evident in its history of race relations advisory committees and special task forces. In 1988, the Town of Markham established two ethno-cultural advisory committees – the Committee on Race and Ethnocultural Equity of

¹⁵ The plan included the following priorities: addressing language barriers that inhibit community building, anti-racism initiatives, facilitating information sharing in culturally sensitive ways, facilitating immigrant involvement at all levels of government, ensuring that the city and community partners' policies and planning reflect the RIAC's intercultural vision, acting as advocate to other levels of government, developing partnerships, and supporting the development and integration of Richmond's immigrant youth population (RIAC 2004, 6).

Markham (1988-1995) and the Heritage and Multiculturalism Committee (1988-91). The city reconstituted the former committee in 1995 when it disbanded in the midst of a race relations controversy. The controversy was sparked by comments then Deputy Mayor Carole Bell made that were perceived to be racist by many in the community. Her comments, which were made at a regional meeting¹⁶, were critical of the concentration of Chinese immigrants in Markham. She said: “The growing concentration of ethnic groups is causing conflicts in Markham” and “[t]he weakness of multiculturalism ... comes when there is a concentration, when you are getting only one group of people” (Queen 1995). She also added a personal statement: “I wouldn’t come to the region and I would go because of it – and I’m saying that truthfully” (Queen 1995). An *ad hoc* committee, which would later become a broader coalition called the Coalition of Concerned Canadians, sprang up after her comments to demand a public apology. Dr. Ken Ng and Marlene Magado, prominent leaders in Markham’s Chinese and Filipino communities respectively co-chaired the Coalition. An apology was never made despite the concerted pressure of the Coalition. Instead, Bell decided to “clarify” her position in a number of letters to the editor of the local newspaper. Her letters further inflamed the situation. She raised concerns about the number of Asian malls being developed in Markham and the lack of English language signage in these developments. Furthermore, she stated that residents who were the “backbone” of Markham were leaving because of immigration. The Coalition of Concerned Canadians garnered the support of national organizations and of the Mayors of many of the other municipalities in the GTA. However, despite the massive mobilization against Bell’s comments, both political leaders and a large segment of long-standing residents in Markham supported her. For instance, according to a *Markham Economist and Sun* report, about four hundred people

¹⁶ Markham is a sub-unit in a two-tier municipal structure called York Region.

stood and applauded Deputy Mayor Bell as she entered council chambers on August 28, 1995, the week after the Coalition of Concerned Canadians made deputations to council in a chambers crowded with its own supporters.

Eventually, then Mayor Don Cousens convened the *Task Force on Race Relations* (1995) to study the issue. Following the *Task Force Report*, the Markham Race Relations Committee was re-established in 1997 to manage ethno-cultural relations on an ongoing basis and to assist in implementing the *Task Force's* recommendations. The current committee's mandate is to encourage harmonious intercultural relations and, to a lesser extent, to promote organizational change. The committee hosts an annual festival called "The Many Faces of Markham"; engages in public education campaigns; offers diversity training sessions to Town staff; and does "corporate outreach" to strengthen relationships between business, faith groups, and other institutions in Markham and the Town. Although she recognizes the limitations of the city's responses, Magado concedes that the Town has been a great deal more responsive to the concerns of its diverse population since the "Carole Bell incident" (Magado 2004).

Both Richmond and Markham have developed communications strategies to manage ethno-cultural diversity. Richmond advertises regularly in Asian language newspapers and translates city plans and communications on an "ad hoc" basis "as need is perceived and resources are available" (Townsend 2004, interview). One interesting initiative of Richmond's corporate communications department is its media watch program, which is contracted out to a firm called Chinese InforMedia Services at a cost of \$15,000-\$20,000 per year (Townsend 2005, e-mail correspondence). The service monitors articles written in Chinese about Richmond in the three daily Chinese newspapers for accuracy and potential

controversies or misunderstandings and reports to the city twice per month. In addition to pre-empting ethnic relations crises, this service serves as an important tool by which to gauge the effectiveness of Richmond's efforts to reach out to the Chinese community (Townsend 2004, interview). This service developed after the "group homes controversy".

Markham's communications strategy is more modest than Richmond's. The municipality created an informal bank of people who can serve as interpreters and translate city documents on an "as needed" basis (Sales 2004, interview). This practice, which became a formal written policy in 2002, is rather limited as departments and agencies must work within their existing budgets to offer interpretation and translation services (City of Markham 2002).

Surrey has also been "somewhat responsive" to immigrants and to ethno-cultural minorities. Its departments and agencies that deliver services on the ground have initiated its most important initiatives in diversity policy. Historically, Surrey's Parks, Recreation and Culture Department led in this policy area. For instance, in 1996 it launched its *Task Force on Intercultural Inclusivity: Reaching Out in Surrey* to identify barriers to equal access of minorities to recreation services and to develop a plan to address those barriers. In 2000, the city developed a marketing plan to target ethno-cultural minorities. The city's libraries have also adapted their services. Nevertheless, since a corporate commitment to inter-ethnic equity is lacking, and since community leaders consider Surrey to be "unresponsive" to the concerns of immigrants, it is on the border of "somewhat responsive" and "unresponsive". In addition, Surrey has not developed ongoing governance arrangements that include leaders of immigrant organizations. This is due to the fact that many high level civil servants and the city's political leadership do not support the development of such relationships.

Furthermore, where the will to accommodate exists, civil servants (in line departments) expressed that they do not know who the leaders of the community are (Basi 2004, interview). Many informants described a highly diverse and even divided South Asian immigrant community making statements such as there are many South Asian “interest groups” and the community is “very political”. A Superintendent with the RCMP mentioned that intra-group violence is a problem within the South Asian community – in his words “there is fighting in Temples, if they’re not shooting at each other in the streets...” (Hall 2004, interview). The South Asian community appears to lack the “social capital” to organize to pressure the municipality to respond due to in-group divisions.

Thus, somewhat responsive municipalities vary in the extent to which lasting public-private governance relationships have emerged with the goal of developing the capacity to accommodate and manage change in the ethno-cultural demographics of their populations. In the two most responsive of the “somewhat responsive” municipalities in the sample – Markham and Richmond – productive relationships have developed around the goal of fostering positive race relations between the largely Chinese immigrant community on the one hand and the long-standing (and largely white) community on the other. Limited public-private relationships also developed in Surrey at the departmental level. Leaders of community organizations tend to view Richmond and Markham’s level of responsiveness to ethno-cultural diversity in a positive light whereas, in Surrey, the leader of its largest immigrant settlement agency does not have access to local political officials (Woodman 2004, interview).

Unresponsive municipalities

The *City of Mississauga* and the *City of Brampton* have both been unresponsive to the demographic changes in their populations. The only responses to diversity in Mississauga that one could possibly mention in this context are the Mayor's annual multicultural breakfast and an annual multicultural festival called Carassauga. Similarly, the City of Brampton holds an annual multiculturalism festival called Carabram as well as an annual "multi-faith" breakfast with the Mayor.

In Mississauga and Brampton, immigrant and ethno-cultural minority preferences are not represented in the cities' governing arrangements and immigrant settlement leaders either consider these cities unresponsive or are unaware of the city's approach to managing diversity.

V. The Importance of Place and the Municipal Role in Multiculturalism Policy-Making

Municipalities in Canada's most numerically significant immigrant receiving communities are following different models of citizenship and immigrant integration. Vancouver and Toronto have been "responsive" to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities. In response to immigration, they adopted a wide range of multiculturalism policies and institutionalized support for their implementation in their civil services. Furthermore, they respond to new multiculturalism challenges proactively as the national multiculturalism policy framework implies. Through community grants, these two cities contribute to building long-term capacity in immigrant communities. Ongoing governance relationships also contribute to these cities' proactive policy style. In these ways, they have adopted a *structural* approach to multiculturalism policy-making.

The “somewhat responsive” municipalities in the sample – including Richmond, Markham and Surrey - have also adopted elements of *structural multiculturalism*. However, the scope of their policies is more limited and they adopted them reluctantly and often in reaction to race relations crises and intercultural misunderstandings. Their approach is perhaps more accurately labeled *diversity management multiculturalism*. They do not proactively address structural barriers to immigrant access to services and inclusion in governance. Rather, they react to new concerns on an “as needed” basis. “Unresponsive” municipalities have been inactive, taking a “laissez faire” approach to multiculturalism. Their limited responses, which include symbolic support for multiculturalism festivals and annual breakfast events with the mayors of the municipalities, follow a highly limited version of the *symbolic multiculturalism* model that existed at the federal level when official multiculturalism first became government policy. To what extent do these differences truly matter and how do they matter? To what extent should policy makers be concerned about the variation in models of immigrant integration that local leaders at the municipal level chose to adopt?

In their edited collection of case studies on the impact of social diversity on cities in the North and South entitled - *The Social Sustainability of Cities* (2000) – Mario Polèse and Richard Stren argue the following:

the social sustainability of cities is affected not long by nationwide aspatial policies (social legislation, fiscal policy, immigration laws, and the like) but also, if not chiefly, by policy decisions and implementation at the local level, often in sectors which a priori appear to be relatively banal and prosaic. Local affairs *do* matter (Polèse and Stren 2000, 17).

As discussed above, empirical research on multiculturalism policies demonstrate that one can observe a correlation between the adoption of multiculturalism policies and a rise in

measures of integration – including, for instance, rates of naturalization (Kymlicka 1998) at the *national scale*. Similarly, Irene Bloemraad’s (2006) work, which compares immigrant integration in Canada and the United States, suggests that Canada’s multiculturalism policies contribute to the political incorporation of immigrants – the extent to which they naturalize, run for office and are represented in legislatures. Her work is based on both large quantitative data sets (which establish the broad patterns) and in-depth interviews with immigrants and immigrant leaders. Through her interviews, she is able to demonstrate how multiculturalism policies matter to political incorporation. She finds that multiculturalism policies provide both the symbolic and material resources that immigrants need to become active in the political sphere (Bloemraad 2006, 236). Her research suggests that supporting community organizations and recognizing ethno-cultural identities leads to a greater *desire* and *ability* on the part of immigrants to participate in political life. Multiculturalism policies appear to matter to immigrant integration.

However, the political incorporation of immigrants is uneven across Canadian jurisdictions and space. If federal multiculturalism policies facilitate immigrant political incorporation through their symbolic recognition of ethno-cultural minorities and, at a practical level, through funding of immigrant and ethno-cultural minority organizations then we should observe the effect of these federal policy decisions at the municipal level. In fact, many of the organizations that Heritage Canada funds through its multiculturalism program are based in the GTA and in GV. However, at the local level immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities are poorly and unevenly incorporated into political life. For instance, although the proportion of visible minorities in all of the municipalities’ populations in this sample are close to 50 percent, their representation on local councils ranges from 0 to 25 percent of local

councillors and mayors (Good 2006). The symbolic and material resources that the federal government provides to immigrants are not translating into acceptable levels of political incorporation at the municipal level. This points to a need for policy makers at all levels and for scholars to take into consideration both the spatial consequences of multiculturalism initiatives and the jurisdictional variations multiculturalism outcomes.

However, one might argue that municipal responsibilities are relatively unimportant to immigrant integration compared with federal and political responsibilities. As Mario Polèse and Richard Stren (2000) observe, policy decisions and implementation at the local level seem “relatively banal and prosaic” (Polèse and Stren 2000, 17). To what extent and how does immigrant and ethno-cultural minority inclusion matter in areas of municipal responsibility such as planning and development, library services, recreation services, public health and policing for instance? Could a failure on the part of municipalities to adapt their services and governance structures to include immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities contribute to undermining the effectiveness of the multicultural model of social integration?

The first and most fundamental point to be made is that immigrants themselves consider municipal multiculturalism policies at the municipal level to be important. One might expect that the opinions of immigrant leaders concerning whether municipalities should devote scarce resources to multiculturalism initiatives might vary across jurisdictions. For instance, one might have expected that at least some immigrant leaders in suburban, more “c” conservative municipalities would be less likely to want municipal officials to spend their highly visible property tax dollars on “soft” policy initiatives. Nevertheless, all immigrant leaders interviewed for this study stressed the importance of municipal efforts to adapt their services and governance structures to reflect the diversity of their populations. In

fact, in one “unresponsive” municipality – the City of Brampton - a city councillor who himself is an immigrant from Jamaica, painted a picture of extreme alienation on the part of visible minorities in the community (and the Black community in particular) due to several reasons including, for instance, a perceived lack of employment equity at the city and an unequal say in recreation programming. His statement that Bramptonians “may be looking at a boiling point in this city” (Manning 2004, interview) serves as a warning to municipal governments – and, in fact, to all levels of government - that they cannot be complacent about the importance of including immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities into local governance. Similarly, immigrant leaders all stressed the importance of equal access to lucrative, public sector municipal employment. For instance, one leader described employment equity policies as the “fairest social policy one can adopt” and noted that the common expression in the community in Mississauga is that the municipal civil service is “lily white” (Chaudhry 2003, interview). One settlement worker in Mississauga – another example of an “unresponsive municipality” - described the city’s approach to changing demographics of the city as such: “Yes, you’re here, yes you can have your festivals, but no access to city hall or to money” (Community leader 2003, interview). Thus, the consistent support of immigrant communities for multiculturalism policies and the alienation that results in the presence of institutional barriers provides strong evidence of the importance of multiculturalism initiatives at the local level. One might even hypothesize that Canada’s national policy of multiculturalism creates the expectation of equity among immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities that might result in further alienation when expectations are not met at the municipal level.

Planning responsibilities – one of the central delegated authorities in the municipal realm - also have important implications for community inclusion. For instance, municipal zoning decisions affect whether immigrants are able to organize their families in a way that is consistent with their culture. Many immigrants would like cities to accommodate their practice of living with their extended family and, therefore, would like municipalities to permit “secondary suites” (Gibson 2004, interview).

Planning conflicts have been a particular source and reflection of social stress in a number of municipalities in the sample. These conflicts, however, do not only involve accommodating immigrants’ preferences into decision-making. Rather, municipal planning decisions affect how long-standing residents will perceive immigration and multiculturalism policy as well. For instance, we saw in Richmond and Markham that multiculturalism policies were adopted in response to *backlash* on the part of the long-standing community much of which was manifested through local planning conflicts. In these locales long-standing residents reacted to the development of Asian malls, the lack of English-language signage in these mall developments and concerns about “monster homes” that challenged the planning norms in the municipalities. This example demonstrates that in some localities, incorporating immigrants into local communities requires a response that facilitates compromises between the “host” community and immigrant communities. The way in which planning conflicts unfolded in Richmond and Markham also illustrate the important role that municipalities can play in resolving such conflicts. Physical proximity to ethnic relations conflicts allows municipalities to convene the community to develop solutions. For instance, as we saw above, the City of Richmond contacted Asian mall developer Thomas Fung to alert him to concerns on the part of long-standing residents about his developments and a

solution developed through this informal channel. Municipal ethnic advisory committees serve as a tool to convene the community on an ongoing basis. In many ways, municipalities are uniquely placed to respond to emerging and sometimes explosive community debates about multiculturalism.

The place-specific disputes discussed above illustrate a more general point - that multiculturalism policy challenges take fundamentally different forms in various local communities. Moreover, according to Kristin Good's (2005) work, the differences in multiculturalism policy outputs, community debates about multiculturalism, and governance arrangements are related to the *ethnic configuration* of local communities. She develops two categories of ethnic configurations that have resulted from immigrant settlement patterns – including “biracial” configurations where the largest visible minority group forms more than 50 percent of the overall visible minority population and “multiracial” configurations, municipal jurisdictions in which a multitude of visible minorities have settled. Good (2005) demonstrates how these configurations influence the multiculturalism policy-making process at the local level. For instance, in “biracial” municipalities such as Markham and Richmond, which have both received very large numbers of Chinese immigrants, it appears more likely that backlash against immigration will develop for a number of reasons including a perceived threat of cultural “take-over” by a single immigrant group that arrives in large numbers. The multiculturalism priority in these communities becomes facilitating basic intercultural dialogue and bridges across the host and immigrant communities.

Furthermore, there is reason to hypothesize that the nature of social diversity in local political units has implications for general public support of Canada's national model of immigrant integration. In biracial municipalities, from the perspective of long-standing

residents in these locales, the claims that scholars make about the strong desire of immigrants to integrate (Kymlicka 1998) and the relative success of this enterprise in Canada (Kymlicka 1998; Bloemraad 2006), appear to be contradicted by their first hand experience in their local community. As an extensive array of ethno-specific institutions develop and urban developments that do not provide signage or service in English spring up, the perception becomes that “multiculturalism” leads to “ethnic separatism”. Whereas it is clearly erroneous to suggest that Canada’s multiculturalism policy causes or supports “ethnic separatism,” if multiculturalism policies are to be implemented effectively at all levels, they must address local debates and acknowledge how *local contexts shape citizens’ perceptions of the policy* and the general approach to immigrant integration. Multiculturalism policies must evolve to respond to the most significant ethnic relations and inter-ethnic equity concerns. Moreover, in the long term, the multiculturalism model’s viability nation-wide, depends on public support. Multiculturalism policy efforts that contribute to addressing place-specific challenges – including municipal efforts - will contribute to that endeavor.

Efforts to increase the effectiveness of multiculturalism policies in light of spatial, community-specific debates need not be the exclusive purview of municipalities. To a certain extent, all levels of government can develop locally tailored multiculturalism programs to address community specific concerns. The federal and provincial governments could adopt spatial lenses in their policy-making. Like in many other policy areas, an “urban” or “suburban” policy agenda is not synonymous with a “municipal” agenda, and, in fact, the former requires to cooperation of all levels of government (Berdahl 2006).

The uneven adoption of multiculturalism policy frameworks at the municipal level coupled with the clear importance of tailoring multiculturalism policies to local communities

suggest that, in the interest of policy effectiveness, all three levels of government have a role to play in multiculturalism. However, who should do what? Clearly, only municipal governments can adapt their own corporate structures and services to accommodate diversity. However, even here upper levels of government might play a role. Policy consistency could be increased if provinces were to introduce standards for multiculturalism policy efforts at the municipal level that were sufficiently flexible to allow municipalities to tailor their programs to local needs. There is evidence to suggest that at least some municipal governments would welcome a greater level of formal responsibility in multiculturalism policy development and implementation. For instance, local leaders in the City of Toronto connect immigrant settlement and other multiculturalism policy challenges to a broad-based urban autonomy movement (Simich 2000; McIsaac 2003; Toronto City Summit Alliance 2003; The Broadbent Group 2005). Many would like to see delegation of these responsibilities to the municipal level (2003 and 2004, interviews).

Nevertheless, all local leaders agree that these municipal mandates in multiculturalism policy would have to be coupled with access to new resources. Municipal governments are constitutional “creatures of provinces” whose delegated legislative and fiscal autonomy is highly circumscribed. To the extent that municipal governments have tailored their services and governance structures to meet the particular needs of their diverse population, they are acting without formal authority in this area and without additional public resources. Multiculturalism policy-making at the local level is an “unfunded mandate”. As one councillor in Toronto put it, the city’s multiculturalism policy efforts are “generated by activist councillors” who “push the envelope because of need” (Rae 2004, interview). Another city councillor in Toronto believes that “municipalities have really been sucked in

...trying to take up the slack of the other levels of government shirking their responsibilities”. In this councillor’s view, municipal officials should instead hold other levels of government accountable for their policy failures because municipalities are “not built for it” as they do not have sufficient resources (Toronto city councillor 2004, interview). Municipalities in high-immigration cities must pay for their efforts with their limited own-source revenues, which are raised primarily through property taxes and user fees. These constraints also are part of the reason why local leaders develop informal governance arrangements to build capacity to manage social change by pooling resources across the public and private sectors. Given their tight fiscal constraints, in many ways, municipalities’ choice to devote resources to multiculturalism goals is unexpected.¹⁷ However, the above survey of municipal policies and policy styles demonstrates clearly that some municipalities are more willing to get involved in managing and responding to social change than others. All of the suburban municipalities that adopted these policies did so reactively. The “unresponsive” suburban municipalities might follow suit only if a major race relations develop. As the suburbanization of immigration continues, this uneven, and often reactive approach to multiculturalism policy development will only become more problematic.

Finally, the making of multiculturalism policies would be enhanced by a greater level of coordination among the three levels of government. Since the federal government has been most actively and consistently involved in this policy field through its settlement policies and multiculturalism programs, this also means ongoing communication between municipal officials and federal officials regarding multiculturalism policy-making. In many localities,

¹⁷ In his seminal *City Limits* that theorized municipalities’ place within the political economy of American federalism, Paul Peterson (1981) predicted that municipal governments would not pursue policies that might compromise their economic position relative to other municipalities. According to him, municipalities are especially unlikely to involve themselves in policies that are redistributive in nature as this would compromise their ability to compete for economic investment (Peterson 1981).

especially the “responsive” ones that engage proactively with their communities, city officials possess unparalleled knowledge about their communities’ needs and challenges that could be valuable in the design of federal programs.¹⁸ In addition, the federal government develops and administers policies that support immigrant integration and ethno-cultural equity in a variety of departments all of which have implications “on the ground” in cities. Municipal leaders are uniquely positioned to observe how the effects of these decisions intersect.

Responding coherently to multiculturalism challenges and addressing place-specific challenges is complicated by the Canadian federal system in which provinces tend to guard their responsibility for “municipal institutions” jealously. Nevertheless, recent developments in Ontario suggest that direct federal-municipal funding in this policy area might become possible in the future where the political will exists. For instance, the new City of Toronto Act – the *Stronger City of Toronto for a Stronger Ontario Act* that came in effect in 2007 - allows the city to enter into intergovernmental agreements with the federal government directly. Furthermore, the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (2005) acknowledges the importance of municipal governments in the immigrant settlement policy field and singles out Toronto.

VI. Concluding Thoughts

Although Canada’s multiculturalism model of immigrant integration has been challenged in recent times, the limited empirical research suggests that it has been relatively

¹⁸ Recognition of the importance of place-specific knowledge to the successful integration of immigrants is why the federal government established and funds a number of research centres in major cities across Canada under the umbrella of the Metropolis project.

successful. Over time, federal policy-makers have adapted the model to the changing demographic reality of immigration to Canada.

However, a central challenge today is to address the spatial consequences of the model and associated policies and their uneven adoption across jurisdictions in Canada. Municipal governments vary significantly in their multiculturalism policy efforts. In fact, these differences are significant enough to constitute distinct local “citizenship regimes”. Although some might dismiss the importance of municipalities and their policy responsibilities and consequently also the significance of their multiculturalism policy efforts, this paper demonstrates otherwise. There are barriers to immigrant and ethno-cultural minority access to municipal services and governance institutions that lead to a sense of alienation among immigrants in local communities. Remarkably, immigrant leaders in all municipalities discussed in this paper believe that municipal multiculturalism policies are required.

It is also clear that multiculturalism policy challenges take particular forms across different communities. A major question for policy-makers at all levels is how to address this unevenness as well as the question of which level of government should do what. What role should municipalities play in the overall multiculturalism citizenship regime? One option is for provinces to establish standards for municipalities in the multiculturalism and immigrant settlement policy fields. However, these standards and formal responsibilities would have to be accompanied by fiscal transfers to municipalities to support their efforts.

Nevertheless, intergovernmental cooperation is also needed to ensure the continued viability of Canada’s multiculturalism policies. Policy gaps in the multiculturalism efforts of other level of government are manifest in cities in an immediate way. Furthermore,

municipalities cannot address barriers to immigrant integration in areas outside their areas of responsibility. For instance, their ability to address the pressing issue of access to trades and professions and employment policy in general requires the cooperation of upper levels of government. A question that emerges from the paper is whether municipalities need a seat at the intergovernmental table when issues of particular importance to immigrants are discussed.

Empirical research continues to confirm the value multiculturalism policies in facilitating the immigrant integration process. However, at the practical level, support for such policy initiatives is a political matter that involves power, the distribution of resources and struggles to define communities. What has become clear is a more general point that applies to many policy fields in Canada – it is a “shame” to “ignore the cities” (Andrew 2001).

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Appendix 1: List of Interviews

Note: All interviews were conducted by Kristin Good and were in-person unless otherwise indicated.

- Abrahams, Phillip. Manager, Intergovernmental Relations, City of Toronto, February 18, 2004.
- Ashton, Brian. Councillor, City of Toronto, October 13, 2004.
- Augimeri, Maria. Councillor, City of Toronto, September 20, 2004.
- Barnes, Linda. Councillor, City of Richmond, April 29, 2004.
- Basi, Ravi. Multicultural Outreach Librarian, Newton Library, Surrey Public Library, May 20, 2004.
- Bray, Keith. President and CEO, Markham Board of Trade, January 12, 2005.
- Brown, Susan. Senior Policy Advisor, Labour Force Development, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, City of Toronto, December 4, 2003.
- Buss, Greg. Chief Librarian, Richmond Public Library, May 17, 2004.
- Cadman, David. Councillor, City of Vancouver, April 26, 2004.
- Carroll, Shelley. Councillor, City of Toronto, September 21, 2004.
- Casipullai, Amy. Policy and Public Education Coordinator, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), November 26, 2003.
- Cavan, Laurie. Manager of Community & Leisure Services, Parks, Recreation and Culture, City of Surrey, May 20, 2004.
- Chatterjee, Alina. Director of Development/Community Engagement, Scadding Court Community Centre, Toronto, December 15, 2003.
- Chan, Sherman. Director, MOSAIC, Vancouver, April 23, 2004.
- Chaudhry, Naveed. Executive Director, Peel Multicultural Council (PMC), December 10, 2003.
- Cheng, Ansar. Director of Settlement, SUCCESS, May 3, 2004.
- Clapman, Ward. Superintendent, Officer in Charge, RCMP, Richmond City Detachment, May 27, 2004.
- Crombie, David. CEO, Canadian Urban Institute, Toronto, February 4, 2004.
- Crowe, Terry. Manager of Planning, City of Richmond, April 29, 2004.
- Dinwoodie, Murray D., General Manager, Planning & Development, City of Surrey, June 22, 2004.
- Douglas, Debbie. Executive Director, OCASI, Toronto, November 28, 2003.
- Dunn, Sam. Project Coordinator, Best Practices for Working with Homeless Immigrants and Refugees, Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre, Toronto, November 3, 2003.
- Feldman, Mike. Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto, September 23, 2004.
- Fennel, Susan. Mayor, City of Brampton, September 20, 2004.
- Fisch, Bill. Regional Chair and CEO, The Regional Municipality of York, April 13, 2004.
- Gibson, Grant D. Councillor, City of Brampton, September 9, 2004.
- Gill, Charan. Executive Director, PICS, Surrey, British Columbia, February 9, 2005.
- Gill, Warren. VP Development, Simon Fraser University, June 17, 2004.
- Green, Jim. Councillor, City of Vancouver, April 26, 2004.
- Hall, Suzan. Councillor, City of Toronto, January 14, 2004.
- Hansen, David (D.P.). RCMP, Richmond City Detachment, May 19, 2004.
- Hardy, Bruce. Executive Director, OPTIONS, Surrey, February 9, 2005, telephone interview.
- Houlden, Melanie. Deputy Chief Librarian, Library Administration, Surrey Public Library, May 20, 2004.
- Huhtala, Kari. Senior Policy Planner, Policy Planning, Urban Development Division, City of Richmond, February 18, 2005, telephone interview.

Iannicca, Nando. Councillor, City of Mississauga, January 19, 2004.

Jamal, Audrey. Executive Director, Canadian Arab Federation (CAF), Toronto, December 2, 2003.

Jeffrey, Linda. MPP Brampton-Centre, February 2004.

Jones, Jim. Regional Councillor, City of Markham, February 27, 2004.

Kohli, Rajpal. Advisor, Equal Employment Opportunity Program, City of Vancouver, April 28, 2004.

Lee, Rose. Policy Coordinator, Diversity Management, Strategic and Corporate Policy/Healthy Cities Office, City of Toronto, November 17, 2003.

Leiba, Sheldon. General Manager, The Brampton Board of Trade, May 27, 2005, telephone interview.

Louis, Tim. Councillor, City of Vancouver, June 11, 2004.

Magado, Marlene. Chair, Markham Race Relations Committee, Markham, February 17, 2004. Follow-up interview on October, 2004.

Manning, Garnett. Councillor, City of Brampton, October 5, 2004.

McCallion, Hazel. Mayor, City of Mississauga, April 13, 2004.

McCallum, Doug. Mayor, City of Surrey, May 20, 2004.

McIsaac, Elizabeth. Program Manager, Maytree Foundation, Toronto, January 26, 2004.

Melles, Amanuel. Executive Director, Family Neighborhood Services, Toronto, January 21, 2004.

Merryweather, Brian. Manager, Human Resources, Human Resources Division, Finance, Technology & Human Resources, City of Surrey, June 22, 2004.

Mihevc, Joe. Councillor, City of Toronto, December 5, 2003.

Mikitrack, Annie. Executive Director, Surrey Social Futures; School Trustee, Surrey; Member of RIAC, May 27, 2004.

Mital, Umendra. City Manager, City of Surrey, June 22, 2004.

Moscoe, Howard. Councillor, City of Toronto, September 23, 2004.

Moore, Elaine. Regional Councillor, City of Brampton, September 7, 2004.

Nuss, Marie. Executive Director, Brampton Neighbourhood Resource Centre, Brampton, February 19, 2004.

Pantalone, Joe. Councillor and Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto, September 13, 2004.

Rae, Kyle. Councillor, City of Toronto, September 23, 2004.

Richmond, Ted. Coordinator, Children's Agenda Program, Laidlaw Foundation, January 7, 2004.

Sales, Jim. Commissioner of Community Services, City of Markham, March 2, 2004.

Sanghera, Balwant. Chair of RIAC, President of Multicultural Concerns Society of Richmond, May 4, 2004.

Schroeder, Scott. Community Coordinator of Diversity Services, City of Richmond, April 29, 2004.

Seepersaud, Andrea. Executive Director, Inter-Cultural Neighbourhood Social Services (ICNSS), Mississauga, November 27, 2004.

Semotuk, Verna. Senior Planner, GVRD, Policy and Planning Department, February 16, 2005, telephone interview.

Shakir, Uzma. Executive Director, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians (CASSA) and President of OCASI, Toronto, December 18, 2003.

Sherlock, Lesley. Social Planner, City of Richmond, April 29, 2004.

Spaxman, Ray. President, The Spaxman Consulting Group Ltd., May, 2004.

Stobie, Charles. Vice President, Government Relations, Mississauga Board of Trade, January 7, 2005, telephone interview.

Taranu, Alex. Manager, Urban Design and Public Buildings, City of Brampton, July 29, 2004.

Taylor, Margot. Senior Advisor, Employment, Human Resources Division, City of Surrey, June 22, 2004.

Taylor, Susan. Director, Human Services Planning, Planning and Development Services Department, York Region, January 23, 2004.

Thiessen, Peter (Cpl). NCO i/c Communications Media Relations, RCMP, Richmond City

Detachment, May 19, 2004.

Townsend, Ted. Manager, Communications & Corporate Programs, City of Richmond, May 10, 2004.

Usman, Khalid. Councillor, City of Markham, March 2, 2004.

Vander Kooy, Magdalena. District Manager, East Region, Toronto Public Library, City of Toronto, December 9, 2003.

Vescera, Mauro. Program Director, The Vancouver Foundation, March 11, 2005, telephone interview.

Villeneuve, Judy. City Councillor, City of Surrey, June 22, 2004.

Welsh, Timothy. Program Director, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA), May 13, 2004.

Wong, Baldwin. Multicultural Social Planner, City of Vancouver, May 3, 2004.

Wong, Denzil. Councillor, City of Toronto, September 27, 2004.

Wong, Milton. Chancellor, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, January 12, 2005, telephone interview.

Woodman, Lesley Ann. Executive Director, Surrey-Delta Immigrant Services Society, Surrey, June 24, 2004.

Woodsworth, Ellen. City Councillor, City of Vancouver, May 26, 2004.

Woroch, Patricia. Executive Director, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, June 21, 2004.

Anonymous Participants:

Board Members of the Multicultural Inter-Agency Group of Peel (MIAG), Mississauga, November 24, 2003.

4 Civil Servants, City of Mississauga, November 27, 2003.

Civil Servant, Toronto Public Health, December 9, 2003.

Executive Director of an Immigrant Serving Organization, York Region, December 16, 2003.

Civil Servant, Human Resources, City of Markham, March 2, 2004.

Civil Servant, Peel Region, March 9, 2004.

Civil Servant, MCAWS, Government of British Columbia, March 1, 2005, telephone interview.

