

Comparing metropolitan governance: The cases of Montreal and Toronto

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The transformation of metropolitan governance cannot be understood without adopting a double reading frame referring on the one hand to the actual content of policies aimed at the metropolitan scale, their *raison d'être*, the macro-economic logics that underlie them, and on the other hand to the configurations of actors and institutions which evolved strongly in the last 20 years. Essentially, the metropolitan level, beyond the municipal, progressively became (and not without conflict or opposition) the new territory of reference for political leaders as well as for economic ones.¹

Big cities bring pressures for a new configuration of intergovernmental relations. In this institutional and political flux, the main challenge of public policy-making is to stabilize a place for exchanges between institutions. There seem to be an emerging political space at the metropolitan scale, where collective action and claims for local democracy unfold. The recent reforms have created more and more organized local and metropolitan societies. Metropolitanization also means an internal reconstitution of the political sphere and its articulation with civil society. There is a diversification of local and metropolitan responsibilities and activities, from the

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¹ In this paper, we use the terms 'metropolitan' and 'city-regional' interchangeably. We are conscious that they carry different nuances whether one uses them in French or English.

production of local services to, among other things, a proactive role in economic development.

Neil Brenner—following Pierre Veltz (1996)—has studied processes of metropolitanization in Western Europe, ‘in which (a) high value added socio-economic capacities, advanced infrastructures, industrial growth, inward investment, and labor flows are increasingly concentrated within major metropolitan regions, and (b) territorial disparities between core urban regions and peripheral towns and regions are significantly intensifying across the entire European economy’ (2004: 180). This double tendency clearly also exists in Canada, where generally increased urbanization has bifurcated into a pattern of globalized, successful, growing, dynamic city regions (such as Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and, with reservations, Winnipeg) on the one hand and a large number of declining towns (mostly in the old industrial and resource economy belts of the East and the North (Bourne, 2004; Simmons and Bourne, 2003), on the other hand. Even within ‘successful’ city-regions, social polarization remains pregnant. In Montreal, for instance, 36% of children live under the poverty line. As Canada’s urbanization is more and more globalized, its pattern has developed from a national to an international urban system replacing, in the first instance, the traditional East–West orientation across the country with a North–South orientation with the United States as the most important space of reference.² In addition, the overall global shift from European orientation to North American orientation in the world-economy has also recalibrated Canadian cities’ role in the world, or at least the hemisphere. Specifically, a continentalist vision has arisen, which is strongly inflected with rhetoric of globalization (Magnusson, 2002). We have called this elsewhere the shift from ‘permeable Fordism’ to ‘porous’ post-Fordism in Canada as urban regions now are opened up to investment both from the US and from other world regions (especially East Asia) (Keil and Kipfer, 2003; Keil and Young, forthcoming; Keil and Boudreau, 2005a,b). The consequence has been a general reorganizing of Canadian cities to fit the globalized system. The question asked in this context has been how do global cities fit into a system of metropolitan governance, which was ostensibly structured to fit the consecutive periods of colonial, semi-peripheral, national and continental histories of the country over the past 150 years?

In this context, it is interesting to compare how the globally influenced transformation of metropolitan institutions in two of Canada’s most important city-regions (Toronto and Montreal) changes the ‘capacity to act’ of each city-region. Can we speak of the emergence of a collective actor at the city-regional scale? Is there a political, territorial, institutional frame at the metropolitan scale that enables states to coordinate between economic and social activities, actors and processes and to produce coherent public policies?

Metropolitan institutions are increasingly becoming a significant tier of regulation regarding the future of cities. This is the case in Toronto as well as in Montreal, even

² As a top executive of one of Canada’s major banks was telling us in an interview, the financial sector is quite anxious to see political officials focusing on this North–South axis rather than clinging on to the East–West dream of a unified national political economy (Interview Feb. 9, 2004).

though the strategies elaborated by economic and political actors are different in each city-region. In fact, the metropolitan space as a tier of regulation has been referred to recently by several actors—including upper tiers of the State—as a pertinent place or locus for coping with coalition building, hegemony and promotion of strategies of economic development.

This said, one has to keep in mind that to define cities, including city-regions, as collective actors is a real challenge to analysis. Under what conditions can cities or city-regions emerge as collective actors? Here we tend to agree with Patrick Le Galès when he underlines that ‘cities as collective actors, do not emerge solely from the interplay of individual actors’ (Le Galès, 2002: 10). Distinguishing himself from methodological individualism, he insists on five major elements in order to recognize collective action at a city level: ‘a collective decision-making system, common interests—or those perceived as such—integration mechanisms, internal and external representation of the collective actor, and a capacity for innovation’ (Le Galès, 2002: 10).

However, we have to remember that Le Galès is writing about European cities. The North American situation is quite different. From a political perspective and defined as political actors, municipalities are much weaker than their European counterparts. In addition, defined as actor and institutions, city-regions do not necessarily succeed easily in coping with the challenge of urban governance at a metropolitan scale. In other words, to structure their interests or to plan ahead on the basis of shared values remains a real challenge for city-regions. This is because inequalities and conflicts of interests between the center and the periphery—to take only one category of division between actors and institutions on the urban scene—are quite strong. Nevertheless, in some situations, from a governance perspective, a regime can emerge at least for a certain period of time. But for social, economic and political actors, their capacity to act at a metropolitan scale is never a given. The necessity of city-regions to cope with two opposite objectives, that is to say, on the one hand, improving the capacity of being competitive at a global scale and, on the other hand, facilitating social integration, represents a real challenge for actors trying to influence the future of the city-region.

Our research is located in the new regionalist literature. We have a different, yet complementary lens on this literature, focusing on the relations between civil society and metropolitan institutions. In spite of the lack of a historical distance from these new institutions in Toronto and Montreal, it is clear that their success was not guaranteed given that they faced hostile reactions and prevalent institutional fragmentation. In this research, their effectiveness is assessed in terms of their capacity to change the existing mediation channels between civil society and metropolitan institutions.

There is a burgeoning literature on the ‘new regionalism’ and urban/regional governance both in Europe and in North America (for examples: Brenner, 2002; Jouve, 2003; Swanstrom, 1996; Dreier et al., 2001; Kearns and Paddison, 2000; Mitchell-Weaver et al., 2000). Much of this debate concerns itself with new ways in which regions are defined as economic, social, cultural, political, and environmental units. As Brenner has noted, following Swanstrom (2001), the new regionalism

comes at a time when concerns about redistribution of resources make way for a general turn towards economic development as the rationale for intraregional cooperation and interregional identity building (Brenner, 2002: 9). Brenner differentiates three restructuring processes—urban form, global economic restructuring, and neoliberal state restructuring—and uses them as connected lenses through which to understand the current debate around urban-regional re-scaling in the literature (Brenner, 2002: 10) and suggests a complex ‘methodological strategy through which currently unfolding rescalings of urban governance in the USA and elsewhere might be examined’ (Brenner, 2002: 11). There is a rich critical literature on regions and regionalism that has advanced our thinking about how to grasp the meaning of ‘regionalism’ or ‘metropolitanism’ in the current era of globalization and neoliberalization. At the expense of gross oversimplification, the main concerns in the literature have been around the role of regional state structures in economic governance (Jones, 2001; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999a); topologies and actor networks as well as critiques of those (Amin, 2002; MacLeod, 2001); the continentalization of regional governance (Newman, 2000; Sancton, 2001); issues of local democracy and social cohesion (Burns, 2000; Kearns and Forrest, 2000; Stoecker and Vakil, 2000); economic development (Wolfson and Frisken, 2000); political restructuring (Keil and Young, 2003; Vojnovic, 2000; Lightbody, 1998); intergovernmental relations (Deas and Ward, 2000; MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999b). A new critical debate has emerged on the relationship of environmental sustainability and regional economic growth (Jonas et al., forthcoming; While et al., 2004). Lastly, a specific literature has dealt with Canadian cities and the new regionalism (Sancton, 2001; Fontan et al., 1999) and associated institutional issues (Donald, 2002b; Pierre, 1999; Filion, 2000).

Most critical scholars in these debates have made it abundantly clear that they reject any attempt to reify the scale of the region in any way. Instead, as Brenner among others has argued for the US case, the current interest in metropolitan governance represents a new ‘politics of scale’ rather than a ‘new regionalism’. Indeed, various actors attempt to adjust to economic restructuring processes by changing the scalar organization of the state (Brenner, 2002). The importance of viewing the entire debate on ‘new regionalism’ as part of the overall rescaling of urban regions lies in the necessity to understand the contested character of the process and its links with the transformation of the Welfare or Keynesian State. Indeed, many have noted that political rescaling is in fact a process transforming the division of labor between the national state and municipalities and city-regions. Understanding this process sheds light on the current questioning of the nationally centered model of political organization that dominated until the 1980s. Political rescaling is thus a strategy employed by states to respond to the new post-fordist accumulation regime that destroys the very basis of the welfare state and transforms city-regions into the ecosystem of contemporary capitalism (Harvey, 1989; Swyngedouw, 1989; Goodwin et al., 1993; Goodwin and Painter, 1996; Jessop, 2000; Amin, 2002). As Harvey puts it, processes of political rescaling, as we can observe in Montreal and Toronto, ‘are therefore faced with an historical opportunity to seize the nettle of capitalism’s geography, to see the production of space as a

constitutive moment within (as opposed to something derivatively constructed by) the dynamics of capital accumulation and class struggle' (Harvey, 1995: 5).

It is also of note that the scalar restructuring literature is—uneasily—complemented with the topological and associational literature on cities and regions (Amin and Thrift, 2002). Following Amin, the notion of the region is contingent on 'multiple geographies of affiliation, linkage and flow' (Amin, 2004: 38). From this multifarious reality springs a political contestation which is at the heart of the region, which is really not constituted by 'harmony' or unity but by agonistic politics:

This means seeing the local political arena as an arena of claims and counter-claims, agreements and coalitions that are always temporary and fragile, always the product of negotiation and changing intersectional dynamics, always spreading out to wherever a claim on turf or on proximate strangers is made or to where novelty is generated by juxtaposition (Amin and Thrift, 2002: 39).

Processes of political rescaling are embedded with a structural tension between actors and institutions struggling to define, according to their interests, the 'best' territorial scale for dealing with contemporary social issues. This is what Swyngedouw meant when writing that 'the theoretical and political priority never resides in a particular geographical scale but rather in the process through which particular scales become (re)constituted. Struggling for the command over a particular scale can, in a given sociospatial conjuncture, be of eminent importance' (Swyngedouw, 1997: 141). This is also supported by authors such as Delaney and Leitner (1997), Martin (Martin et al., (2003), and McCann (2003), for whom

the politics surrounding changes in contemporary urban policy-making is a politics of scale. In this politics, scale is not a neutral background. Rather, it is a discursive frame used by competing interests to define or redefine the appropriate location of political power and the territorial extent of specific policies and regulation. The term discursive frame refers to the process through which interest groups involved in urban politics seek to convince others of the merits of their particular understanding of how the world is, how it should be, and the politicization that will make it better in the future (McCann, 2003: 160).

It is with this analytical frame in mind that our work on new regional dynamics in Montreal and Toronto is developed below. We begin with an overview of city governance restructuring in North America since the 1990s. We then look at the consequences of these transformations in Montreal and Toronto, before concluding with comparative remarks. As we will see, the two cases present very different understandings of what is the region and the kind of political space it can open.

1.1. The long 1990s: rescaling and metropolitanization

During the long 1990s, North American urban regions underwent some significant changes in their metropolitan governance structures. These changes also included shifts in responsibilities and policy areas covered by municipal and regional

governments. First, the decade saw the advent of a more regionalist view of municipal regulation. This new regionalism entailed a contradictory set of messages but nevertheless constituted a break with much of the downtown-centered urban policy environment of the 1960–1980s and, in sum, resulted in a suburbanization of metropolitan politics. While the political influence of suburbs was already an important force in the 1950s, in the 1990s there has been an important revival of suburban political influence, a process facilitated by amalgamation and other regionalist reforms.

This is not to say that urban policy-makers were ignoring downtown. In fact, the 1990s saw the advent of various downtown-centered redevelopment schemes (from condominium development to sports complex, and so on). But this policy focus on downtown areas was pushed politically by pro-development suburban values. In other words, downtown political influence was marginalizing downtown residents and social needs for the benefit of place-marketing and social control. This has had significant impacts for leftist regulatory schemes not only at the metropolitan level, but in provincial/state and national politics as well (Gainsborough, 2000; Walks, 2004).

Second, as urban regions felt the double impact of globalization and neoliberalization, urban elites and policy makers scrambled to adjust their institutions and practices to what they felt were the new rules of a globalized and liberalized intra-urban competition. This has spurred social resistance continuing along the same lines of tension as those outlined by growth-machine theorists and by analysts, such as Castells, focusing on mobilization for collective consumption in the 1970s and 1980s: a struggle between use value and exchange value, between the perceived needs of global competitiveness and the needs of local residents (Castells, 1972, 1983; Molotch, 1976; Cox and Mair, 1988; Jonas and Wilson, 1999; Donald, 2001). This new wave of use value mobilization, however, has been rescaled in two important ways: (1) local urban struggles have been connected nationally through pan-Canadian and even pan-North American urban coalitions, and transnationally, particularly through the anti-globalization movement and the world social forum, and (2) the political imaginary framing these local urban struggles has jumped scale from being perceived as a local issue to being framed as part of a global struggle pitting neocommunitarianism against neoliberalism (Boudreau 2003b; Köhler and Wissen, 2003; Conway, 2004).

This is particularly striking if one analyses the discourse developed by social movements in which ‘local democracy’ is the central claim (Boudreau, 2003). Previous urban struggles were not always considered localist, but the potential for social transformation emerging out of these struggles was hotly contested (Castells, 1983; Harris, 1987; Caulfield, 1988a,b; Harris, 1988). By comparison, most of the urban struggles today are explicitly linked to socially transformative goals such as new forms of globalization and anti-capitalism (Köhler and Wissen, 2003; Conway, 2004).

Third, as these elites acted in an environment of internal contestation and political dissent locally (where the real-estate crisis was exacerbated by social and ecological problems), all projects of urban-regional government restructuring were also

programs for creating new urban hegemonies. While the structured coherence of 1980s growth politics gave way to a more retrenched set of policies during the first half of the last decade, municipal governance started to take on more roles of disciplining and controlling urban populations. Specific policies aimed at disciplining vulnerable users of public space such as the Safe Street Act in Ontario, that specifically targeted homeless and street youth fell in line with the general disciplining tendencies associated with neoliberalism (Kipfer and Keil, 2002). The competitive urban region dovetailed with the carceral city and much of the neocommunitarian discourse developed by urban activists has been reappropriated and instrumentalized by urban elites (Boudreau, 2004).

Fourth, most North American cities became much more culturally and demographically diverse throughout the 1990s. This development meant that attempts at streamlining governance structures for the sake of global competitiveness had to be weighed against the urban regions' increasing diversity: whether diversity was an asset or a liability in this competition rested mostly on the degree to which the new non-white majorities could be made part of the deal.

Fifth, as the real-estate crisis gave way to a new boom towards the late 1990s, a new politics of growth under some banner of ecological modernization took hold: new urbanism and smart growth became the buzzwords of an urban revival that drastically changed the fabric of class and space in those parts of the inner cities that had yet been spared by waves of gentrification during the previous decade. In the suburbs, discourses on smart growth and ecological modernization became a powerful mobilizing banner for new forms of activism (Trom, 1999; Gilbert and Phillips, 2003).

Sixth, metropolitan governance experienced a fundamental re-scaling. While some governance changes could potentially be explained by mere local matters, the new urban North America was deliberately contextualized in a global world of economic and political re-construction. Moreover, in a context of important state reforms, metropolitan governance has just recently been placed in the center of intergovernmental reforms after a decade of privatization and contracting out. Struggles for new revenue sources and policy responsibilities at the city-regional level are now clashing with already-existing tensions between the federal and the provincial in terms of their respective autonomy. Focusing on metropolitan governance can reinforce neoliberal agendas steering intergovernmental reforms, given that cities have long functioned on such a model (Tiebout, 1956).

1.2. Normalized neoliberalism in the early 21st century

At all levels of government, from the municipal to the federal, North America is seeing emerging an increasingly strong consensus on the need to focus on a new urban agenda after a long decade of suburban neoliberal politics. A consensus it is, indeed, as both the Left and Right are cooperating in defining this new urban agenda. While there were much talk about new regionalism during the 1990s, particularly in the United States, there was not a consensus to the degree we see emerging in Canada today given that new regional institutional transformations

were fairly exceptional. The new question is, therefore, not so much a tension between urban and suburban issues anymore, but rather a conflict on the kind of urban society we want.

In the United States, three types of actors were sustaining the new regionalist debate: academics, experts, and representatives from national and regional organizations. There were three main arguments used in favor of a new regional territorial organization. Firstly, the interdependence between various sections of the urban region was emphasized, with the help of statistical analysis (Savitch et al., 1993). The argument was that the nature of the linkages between the inner city and suburbs and the steering capacity of inner cities was meant to produce prosperity. The objective was to debunk the commonly held belief (mostly by political elites in the suburbs) that competition with the inner city was inducing economic development.

Secondly, this competitive logic is transferred at the global scale by another group of authors who argue that globalization changes the hierarchical urban system and that competition comes not so much from inside the city-region, but from other similar city-regions in the world (Peirce et al., 1993; Barnes and Ledebur, 1998). In this perspective, the new regionalism pushes for more infra-regional cooperation in order to face this global competition.

Finally, a third set of argument focuses on issues of sustainability and efficiency. Urban sprawl, transportation planning, and, more fundamentally, social and racial segregation are said to be manageable only at the metropolitan scale (Rusk, 1993; Orfield, 1997). This line of work became particularly powerful as it was published shortly after major city-regions (Miami, Los Angeles,) went through violent urban confrontations that caused tens of deaths and billions of dollars of damage.

This reformist discourse advocating rational planning, economic competitiveness, social justice, and the protection of the environment did not lead to concrete institutions similar to the Regional Planning Commissions and Councils of Governments created in the US in the 1960s and 1970s. At the time in the US, it was mostly the federal government that subsidized those institutions. However, with the budget crisis of the 1990s inherited from years of Reagonomics and Clinton's austerity plans, these federal initiatives disappeared. Moreover, the shift to the center-right operated within the Democratic Party in order to court the white suburban middle-class electorate, had inhibited Clinton's urban agenda (Rusk, 1993; Savitch and Vogel, 2006).

An important difference between US and Canadian cities is their degree of municipal autonomy from other levels of government, particularly from the provinces or states. In Canada, municipalities are faced with the powerful hand of provinces. They are considered simple 'creatures of the province' designed to implement provincial decisions. Legally, Canadian cities generally do not enjoy the protection of municipal charters written by local actors. Where charters do exist, they are the result of provincial decisions and their content is determined by provincial actors. This lack of municipal autonomy can be explained by, on the one hand, the fact that the Canadian parliamentary system gives much power to the executive branch of the government, which makes municipalities dependent upon

provincial political and partisan agendas. On the other hand, the local scene carries more weight within civil society in the US for historical reasons such as the cultural importance of local democracy in the US and the country’s experience with slavery (characterized by the important power of local elites) (Sancton, 2001).

It is this lack of municipal autonomy that gave many Canadian provinces the capacity to impose municipal amalgamation in the 1990s in cities such as Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Halifax, Quebec, and Montreal. Big cities in the Prairies have not been involved in this wave of amalgamation largely because their municipal boundaries already encompass between 70% and 95% of the urbanized area (e.g., Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg). It is only in Vancouver that the province decided to reject the amalgamation solution and to implement a metropolitan cooperation entity including 23 municipalities (Collin et al., 2002).

Because of the weight of their population, the amalgamation of Toronto (2.5 million inhabitants) and Montreal (1.8 million inhabitants) captured most academic attention (Figs. 1 and 2).

An element to highlight about these two processes is that the solution of amalgamation was chosen by both conservatives in Ontario and social-democrats in

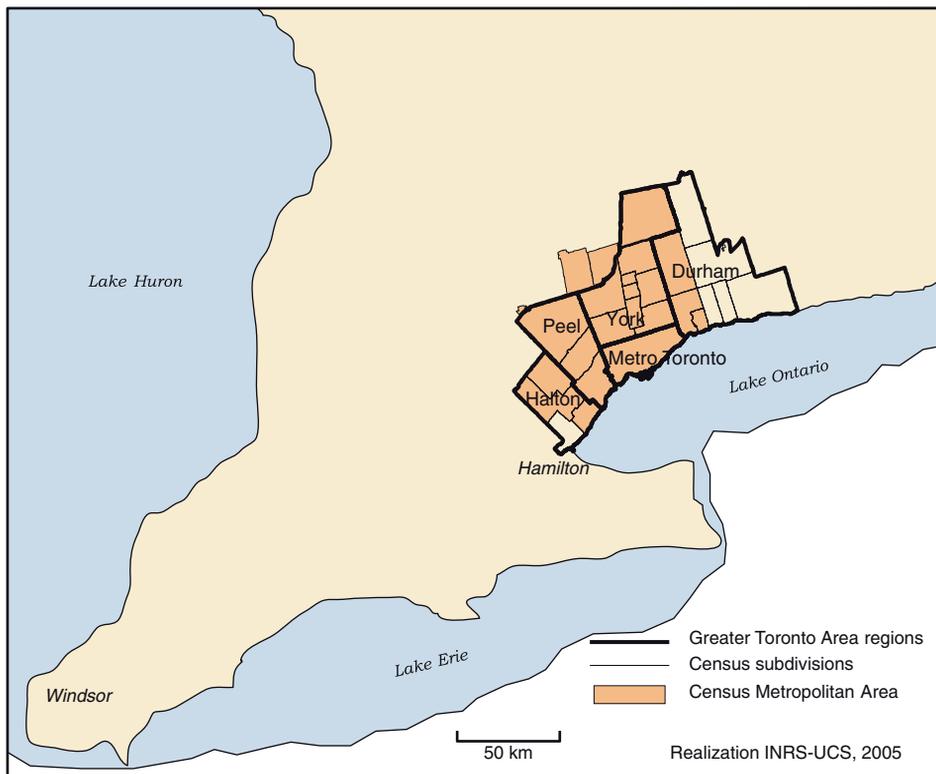


Fig. 1. Map of Greater Toronto Area, Golden Horseshoe and municipalities of Toronto.

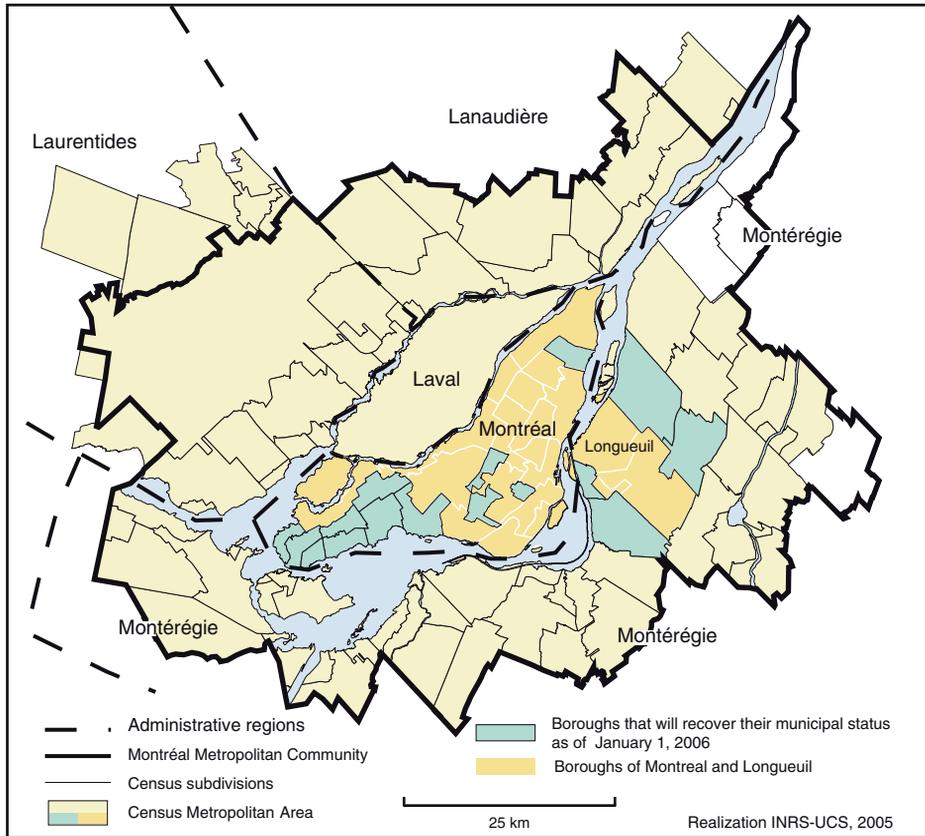


Fig. 2. Map of Boroughs, Municipalities and Metropolitan Region of Montreal.

Quebec (Keil, 1998). In both cases, the choice of imposing amalgamation, which created intense opposition and controversies, was accompanied by a general process of government streamlining. In the case of Montreal, the amalgamation debate was further tinted by linguistic considerations, with a specific treatment reserved for Anglo-Montrealers.

Building on this new regionalist debate, Canadian urban policy was suddenly undeniably propelled to the spotlight of the national political stage in the fall of 2003. Previous election victories of progressive mayors in Winnipeg (1998) and Vancouver (2003) had set the pace for a different kind of metropolitan politics. With the decisive victory of social democrat David Miller in November 2003 in Toronto, the front of progressive municipal politicians keen on urban policy reform was strengthened significantly. This progressive urban wave—at least at the level of mayoral politics—has been part and parcel of a broader shift away from the openly revanchist and suburban politics espoused by mayors in the tradition of New York's Rudolph Giuliani, LA's Richard Riordan, Toronto's Mel Lastman, Montreal's

Pierre Bourque, and others to a declared urbanist and (neo)-reformist tendency taking charge of metropolitan problems (Boudreau and Keil, 2006). In all cases, at least lip service has been paid to the expansion of cities' roles in a federal governance system, to a clearly urban (as supposed to the previously suburban) policy agenda, to an internal governance system more representative of the needs of complex urban systems and populations, and—especially in the Canadian case—to the need for more inter-municipal cooperation in the face of federal and provincial constitutional hegemony.

In addition, the Canadian Federal government has put forward policy documents aimed at rethinking its role in urban affairs. Paul Martin, former leader of the Canadian Liberal Party and Prime Minister of Canada had put his support behind a 'new deal for cities' and personally called new Toronto Mayor David Miller to back his demands for more revenues at the municipal level, more infrastructure monies, and a process of local decision-making on the redevelopment of a downtown airport. In the meantime, though, the relationships between the federal and provincial governments on the one side (both governed by Liberals) and the Toronto government on the other (led by a social democratic mayor) have become somewhat strained. Faced with the criticisms of smaller municipalities and of provincial governments wishing to keep municipal affairs under provincial rather than federal jurisdiction, Paul Martin had quickly changed his language to talk instead of a 'new deal for cities *and communities*', thus bypassing the specific needs of bigger city-regions such as Toronto in order to offer to all municipalities a similar package. In a political move, Toronto left the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the umbrella organization of the provinces' municipalities because 'We don't speak through proxies, we speak for ourselves', as Mayor Miller defiantly said (Toronto Star, September 16, 2004). In response, the provincial government intervened promising to address Toronto special needs such as transit funding and immigrant services directly and to let the City deal with some administrative issues on its own rather than having the Province interfere (Harding and Lewington, 2004). In the Spring of 2005, the Province and the City were in bilateral negotiations to grant the City important new powers through a City of Toronto Act (Gillepsie, 2005; Interview with a Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, March 9, 2005).

2

Montreal: the territorial and functional rearrangement of governance

While the federal–municipal relation is more visible and less sensitive in Toronto, Montreal has also been heavily influenced by the federal government. It is at the scale of the central city, and under the strong pressure of economic actors as well as of the federal level, that the economic transformation of Montreal, struck hard by a structural crisis that lasted throughout the 1980s until mid 1990s. This process of political rescaling is translated into a shift in the content of public policies that is defined by Jessop as the transformation from the ‘Keynesian Welfare National State to the Schumpeterian Workfare post-national regime’ (Jessop, 2002). This post-fordist transition led to a political search for flexible solution on the labour market, and the endorsement of new economic clusters. This entails a considerable social price. For instance, despite the fact that Montreal’s particularly high unemployment rate dropped considerably in the 1980s, 36% of households within the boundaries of the City of Montreal before amalgamation still live under the poverty line (according to the Statistics Canada criteria). Political rescaling, in other words, can be interpreted as the imposition of new hegemonic relations between social groups at the local and global scales (McCann, 2003). This transformation is well illustrated by the discourse of someone working in the International Affairs Division of the City of Montreal:

The times when the City of Montreal financed operations helping developing cities is long gone. Now, what is most important for us is our capacity to help businesses in Montreal penetrate the markets of those developing cities. This is our sole preoccupation. I don’t give a damn about Montreal NGO’s focus on international solidarity if they do not contribute to penetrating these emerging markets (Interview with a representative of the City of Montreal, November 25, 2003, translation by the authors).

Transition towards the Schumpeterian Workfare post-national regime encounters various resistances, which did not lead, as one would expect, to urban social movements, but instead it strengthened local and metropolitan institutions and elites. In the case of Montreal, progressive social movements are unable to organize at the metropolitan scale (which is the new territory of reference) and remain caught into a political debate on the Quebec national question that crystallized all positions on the political spectrum. Progressive social movements are remarkably tedious, except around issues of social housing or environmental controversies, which are treated mainly only under the register of NIMBYism. Neoliberalism and metropolitanization are most criticized by political elites, not by urban social movements. These struggles remain caught in a traditional center/periphery dichotomy, while being fed by internal contradictions stemming from the administrative apparatus of the Province of Quebec.

2.1. *Multilevel governance and a neoliberal discursive framework*

Even if the recent discourse of Paul Martin's Liberal government in favor of a new partnership with local municipalities and communities generated much controversy in Quebec because it was seen as a take over of a provincial jurisdiction, it should be noted that the involvement of the federal government in metropolitan governance in Montreal is not recent. All leaders in the province of Quebec criticized at one point the intrusion of the federal in provincial affairs. What is less known is that at certain times, this 'intrusion' was ardently demanded. The difficult economic situation in Montreal in the 1980s and especially at the beginning of the 1990s, led Quebec political leaders to adopt a more reconciling profile when discussions arose about managing the post-fordist transition following Montreal's loss of the status of main Canadian economic center in favour of Toronto. This transfer of economic activities to Toronto was further helped by federal policies such as support for the transportation, finance and car sectors in Ontario (mainly in Toronto, advantageously located in the Great Lakes region). The relocation of the economic center of the North–American continent towards the South–West of the United States, as well as the discovery of the bituminous fields in Alberta, were powerful factors in the reorganization of the Canadian economy which moved the center of gravity westward and outside of Montreal. Even though mega events in Montreal tended to mask the importance of the crisis—the World Fair of 1967, the Olympic Games of 1976, the construction of the Mirabel airport which was to be the main air hub for Canada or even the Floral festival in 1980—the 1980s started on the background of a major economic crisis. The crisis hit hard in typically fordist, low productivity sectors that were employing a large, strongly unionized, low-skill workforce in a few dominating large firms evolving in a relatively protected national market. If, in Montreal, it is exaggerated to talk about a process of deindustrialization as powerful as that which affected the Rustbelt in the United States, it is on the other hand obvious that the city-region encountered a process of reorganization which resulted in the slow erosion of the traditional industrial base and the emergence of new economic activities related to high-end tertiary sector (Higgins et al., 1970; Higgins, 1986; Coffey and Polèse, 1993; Manzagol and Bryant, 1998; Linteau, 2000) (Fig. 3).

Confronted with public financial problems, the City of Montreal was unable to provide services in its (however limited) areas of jurisdiction (urbanism, urban collective services, maintenance of infrastructures). It quickly appeared as a secondary actor on its own terrain. It approved and guaranteed a certain number of strategic orientations but it could not truly weigh on their contents. These ideas were primarily formulated by the federal government which, starting from the mid-1980s, initiated a process of strategic planning dedicated exclusively to Montreal (Consultative Committee on the Development of the area of Montreal, 1986). The Quebec Liberal government at the time was in favour of such a process because it expected to receive financial transfers from the federal for Montreal. Moreover, the new conservative government in Ottawa that came into power in 1984, wanted to pacify its relationships with Quebec in the wake of the 1980 referendum on sovereignty-association. Twenty-years of Liberal reign on the federal political scene

Square kilometre population by census tract, Montreal metropolitan region, 1986 and 2001

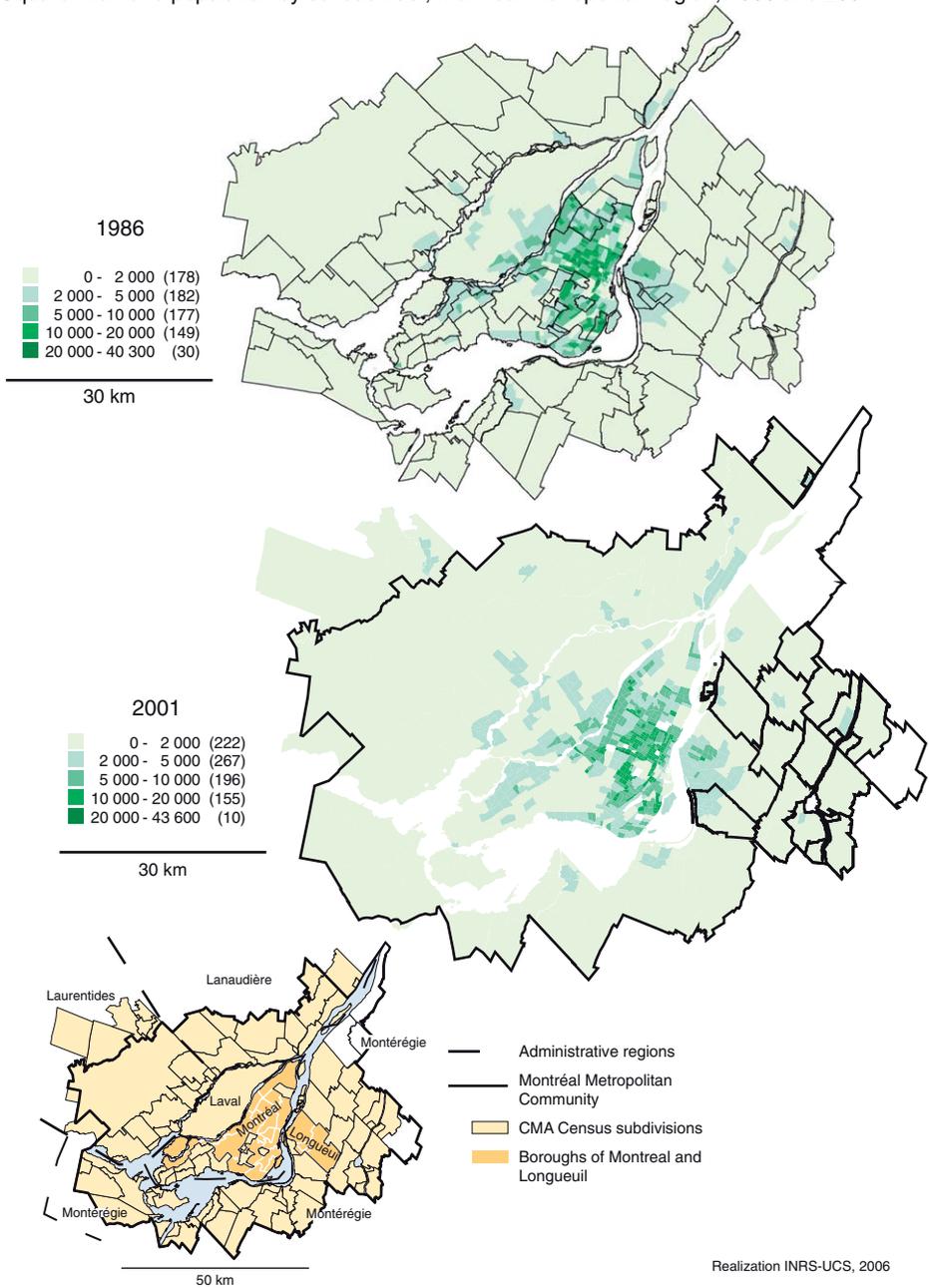


Fig. 3. Population density and administrative boundaries, Montreal Metropolitan region, 1986–2001.

had resulted in a very clear centralization of the Canadian federation, particularly after the unilateral repatriation of the Canadian Constitution from London (England) to Ottawa, and, four years after the failure of the first referendum on the independence of Quebec, it was time for a ‘relaxation’ of relations between the federal government and the province of Quebec.

With this relaxation of Quebec sensitivity to federal intrusion in provincial areas of jurisdiction, Ottawa was freer to use its spending capacity in response to the demands of municipal and provincial elected officials who were confronted with an unprecedented increase of the rate of unemployment at the scale of the city of Montreal (30% in certain neighbourhoods). A strategic planning exercise (known as the ‘Picard Report’) identified economic development priorities, while insisting on the structuring of a new territory of action (the city-region and not only the municipality of Montreal) with a neoliberal language that disadvantaged the sectors, territories, and social groups most affected by the post-fordist transition. The ‘Picard Report’ did not lead to major federal and provincial investments. It had nevertheless a major impact in that it established an ideological framework that was constantly supported by one of the major trade union of the province, the Federation of Workers of Quebec (FTQ). The main strategy was to put Montreal again on the map by trying to attract large international organization headquarters acting in the orbit of the United Nations, and by supporting the development of priority sectors (such as new information and communication technologies, biotechnologies, aeronautics) which were present in the metropolitan productive system. This internationalization strategy is perfectly summarized by a member of the 1986 Picard Commission:

In 1986, Montreal was facing a terrible economic crisis. The ‘Picard Report’ insisted essentially on an internationalization strategy following the example of Geneva, that is, we wanted first and foremost to attract international organizations, not necessarily global corporations. Why? Because we are close to New York City and thus of the United Nations’ headquarter, but we offer a much more pleasant urban environment. And mostly, because we knew perfectly that the struggle for attracting global corporations was lost already in 1986 against Toronto. Toronto had long surpassed us. It was over. We were relegated. We couldn’t really play competition with them. We had to find a niche where Toronto was not a player, thus the idea of international organizations (Interview with a member of the Picard Commission, December 16, 2003, translation by authors).

An urban regime which depended on public funds was thus set up, supported by the FTQ representing the majority of construction workers (unionization is compulsory for working in that sector). The international crisis of the real estate sector hitting at the beginning of the 1990s created a serious obstacle for the real-estate promotion sector. By the second half of the 1990s, however, the federal and provincial governments gained more financial capacity to subsidize big operations in downtown Montreal and to finance the strategic sectors identified in the ‘Picard Report’ by means of tax credits.

This episode resulted in legitimizing post-fordism, which became clear when progressive social movements in Montreal neglected to criticize this neoliberal agenda forcefully. While urban movements were numerous in Montreal and were mainly responsible for the election of the Montreal Citizens Movement (MCM) to City Hall in 1986 (see below), they were unable to secure new alliances on a metropolitan scale, beyond their neighbourhood scale of action (Hamel, 2005a). They did become important actors in dealing with the inner city economic crisis, particularly with the creation of Community Development Corporations (CDC) and aiming at reinforcing the employability of marginalized populations. The institutionalization of relations between these progressive social movements and the provincial and federal governments was one of the causes of their disempowerment on the Montreal scene. Being integrated into the management of programs and policies elaborated by upper tiers of government, they lost part of their autonomy and became organizations providing services on behalf of the State. Certainly, their number increased considerably, from 138 to 1500, between 1973 and the end of the 1980s, but it was at the price of transforming their *raison d'être* and their subversive capacity (Lustiger-Thaler and Shragge, 1998). Moreover, in the particular context of Quebec, where policies are read and understood only through the lens of the constitutional debate and provincial/federal relations, any expression of a political conflict around economic policies were strongly limited. On the whole, even if the effects of the Consultative Committee on the Development of the area of Montreal were to be felt more than ten years after its publication, its impact on the transformation of the hegemonic discursive frame of reference was very deep. Intergovernmental relations, and the role played by the federal government, were a powerful vector of redefinition of the Montreal urban regime.

To summarize, the 'Picard Report' structured an urban regime integrating all governmental levels and a plurality of private actors in the double territorial logic of economic tertiarization in the inner city (particularly through the stimulation of office space construction) and of the localization at the metropolitan scale of the knowledge economy enterprises. But mostly, the main result of this episode is the legitimization of the post-fordist breakthrough by opening a new territory of action at the metropolitan scale and mostly because of the absence of sociopolitical critiques of this neoliberal entrepreneurial agenda on the part of progressive social movements that remained very active at the neighborhood scale and even helped the election of a progressive party at City Hall in 1986 (while ignoring the metropolitan scale). This was clearly stated in our interview with one of the leader of the Picard Report: 'it was time to stop subsidizing whole sectors of the economy at a lost and on the back of tax payers. Even at the price of creating massive unemployment'. (Interview with one member of the Picard Report, December 16, 2003, translation by the authors.)

2.2. Structural changes in metropolitan government

The Quebec government is a key actor in metropolitan governance: it has restructured the legal framework regulating relations between municipalities and

with the province (particularly its 2000 reform and its 2004 counter-reform) (Hamel, 2005b). It has also referred to a series of fiscal devices, without hesitating of making use of its many public enterprises in order to influence the economy of Montreal. By acting directly through the bias of laws structuring very strongly the formal framework in which the regulation of relations between municipalities operates, by utilizing particular tax devices or, in an indirect way, by putting many government enterprises to action in the Montreal economy (Société Générale de Financement, Caisse des Dépôts et Placements, etc.), the Quebec government has been very proactive on the metropolitan scale.

With strong demographic and urban growth, Quebec's major urban centers, particularly Montreal, have been very difficult to manage due to existing tensions between municipalities which prevented effective coordination and the share of the burden between the inner-city and its suburbs. Already at the end of the 1970s, Montreal's problems came to the forefront of the public debate when it was no longer able to even pay for its own police force because of a budgetary crisis. As in many other city-regions, Montreal had been experimenting with some coordinating mechanisms through various waves of amalgamations and attempts to set up a metropolitan fiscal system (Collin, 1988). The creation of the Communauté Urbaine de Montréal (CUM) in 1969 completed this long evolution. The CUM was responsible for police, public transit, the environment (water purification, drinking water supply), regional planning, and economic expansion. Its budget was composed of transfers coming from municipalities in proportion to their tax base (calculated on the basis of real-estate commercial value). This was theoretically going to allow the redistribution of resources between municipalities. However, it failed and generated a financial and political crisis which was to be fatal to this metropolitan institution. During the 1990s, real-estate values were unequally depreciated across building types and municipalities. While suburban real-estate markets remained stable, office and industrial buildings downtown depreciated considerably. This fiscal stress, which weighed more and more on suburban residential municipalities, became more significant as relations with the inner-city were ever more conflicted (after a relative attenuation in 1982 and 1990). Simard (1998) proposes the following periodization of the relations between Montreal's central city and its inner suburbs:

1. From 1970 to 1982, the municipality of Montreal acted in a dominating position, a situation facilitated by the fact that the CUM gave to Montreal the majority of votes.
2. This law changed in 1982 and opened the way to a more peaceful period until 1990. Suburban elected officials obtained a reform imposing a double majority and giving, in fact, veto power to the suburbs. It was during this period that the metropolitan dimension was most relevant.
3. A period of instability re-emerged during the 1990s with controversies surrounding suburban contributions to metropolitan governance. During this period, the metropolitan ambitions of the CUM were rethought. It was transformed into a merely administrative and technical agency and lost its power to launch metropolitan large-scale projects.

Suburban mayors' hostility towards a collective metropolitan development convinced the provincial government to create a Working Group on the Montreal issue. The report of the Working Group published in 1993 (known as 'Rapport Pichette') insisted on the necessity to foster metropolitan policies in order to alleviate Montreal's economic crisis, and questioned the capacity of the CUM to do so (Pichette, 1993).

But rather than addressing the recommendations of the 'Rapport Pichette', it is the public transit agenda that received most attention from the provincial government with the creation of the 'Agence Métropolitaine des Transports' (AMT) in 1996. Directly under the authority of the new Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Metropolis, funded by a tax on gas products imposed in the municipalities integrated in the territory of the AMT, this agency successfully re-launched a voluntary and coherent policy in favor of public transit. Benefiting from the support of the provincial government and playing skilfully the interface between local councillors, the AMT implemented a daring policy fostering the revival of suburban trains and made it possible to stop the slow erosion of the market share of public transit to the profit of private cars. By stripping the CUM of its public transit planning capacity, by easing tensions between local councillors, and by allowing a stable and significant financing structure, the provincial government's proposal was thus able to solve the CUM's stalemate.

But persistent budgetary difficulties forced the City of Montreal to ask once again for the help of the provincial government in forcing suburbs to assume a bigger share of the costs of public services and infrastructure in the city-region. At the end of the 1990s, the Lucien Bouchard government (Parti Québécois) negotiated with social actors the diminution of the public deficit (a requirement of the federal government, which had limited its transfers to the provinces in order to refund the federal national debt, at the price of drastic cuts in social programs). In this context, it was inconceivable for the Quebec government to increase its transfers to municipalities (and particularly to Montreal). Unions in Quebec looked to their neighbours in Ontario in order to find solutions. Led by the center-left New Democratic Party (NPD), Ontario was then confronted with a public deficit of 10 billion dollars. The Prime Minister of Ontario thus unilaterally decided to cut social programs, without any negotiation. It was politically dreadful for the NPD. In order to avoid such fiasco, the Prime Minister of Quebec invited trade unions to a roundtable. They negotiated a massive disengagement of the State in certain sectors, particularly in health care where the State proceeded with hospital closures, the non-replacement of 16,000 retired nurses, and the renegotiation of working conditions for newcomers on the labour market. By accepting these terms, unions avoided severe cuts in other public offices, while preserving working conditions for senior employees. Newcomers on the labour market, health services, and the suburbs paid the price for this budget policy.

In this budgetary context, the solution to the fiscal problems encountered by inner cities throughout the province of Quebec was to look for local resources. The Quebec government found the amalgamation policy of its Ontario neighbour attractive and

voted on Bill 170 on December 20, 2000. Despite a strong mobilization of suburban elected officials and inhabitants against amalgamation in the name of respect of ‘local democracy’ (Boudreau, 2003a), the law came into effect on the 1st of January 2002. It was never admitted publicly, but the fact that most of the suburban municipalities that mobilized against amalgamation were primarily wealthy Anglophone communities gave the impression that they refused solidarity with Montreal’s central city where one can find the biggest concentration of poverty in the city-region, as well as a majority of francophone residents.

2.3. Amalgamation, de-amalgamation, confusion: the recognition of local officials

When the Quebec government began its city-regional restructuring process in 1996 (with the recommendations of the Picard Report in mind), it adopted a method of dialogue with the main socio-economic actors of the Montreal region. This led to a proposal for the creation of the Commission for Metropolitan Development, which was to be composed of elected officials and representatives of civil society, with the mandate of suggesting a new model of governance for Montreal. However, this commission never met as the government chose along the way to change its approach to metropolitan restructuring (Hamel, 2001). Rather than fostering a deliberative process in order to find a good metropolitan governance structure, the Quebec government unilaterally decided to proceed with amalgamation, following the recommendations of a government agent, Louis Bernard. In his report on the problems of Montreal, Bernard indicated that the Montreal region is made of ‘three poles (Montreal, Laval and Longueuil), therefore the variable degree of economic performance and demographic growth, during the last ten or twenty years, is explained by a different level of municipal fragmentation’ (Collin, 2001: 260). In other words, because of this particular regional ecology composed of three socio-economic poles, he suggested, it was imperative to diminish the level of municipal fragmentation in order to capitalize on these three poles. Moreover, the Quebec government had proceeded to a series of successful municipal amalgamation in 1965 (what became the City of Laval). This was given as an example of the route to follow. In sum, Bernard asserted that ‘municipal fragmentation is at the origin of the difficulty, for the island of Montreal and Rive-Sud, the two other poles of the area, to develop to the maximum of their capacity’ (Collin, 2001: 260).

Despite resistance, the new amalgamated cities of Montreal and Longueuil held their first elections on November 4, 2001. These ‘mega’ cities were incorporated on January 1, 2002. In addition to these amalgamations, the Quebec government’s reform package for Montreal also stipulated the creation of a regional decision-making authority, the Metropolitan Community of Montreal (MCM). Covering the whole Census metropolitan area determined by Statistics Canada, the MCM is responsible for city-regional planning and coordination. More specifically, it pursues two objectives: (1) addressing metropolitan and internationally oriented development at the city-regional scale, and (2) establishing a city-regional fiscal system in order to foster a greater equity in the share of the tax burden across the city-regional territory.

But resistance to amalgamation took the front stage of the public debate and resulted, in the spring of 2004, in a process of de-amalgamation. The Quebec government reform (under the leadership of the Parti Québécois) encountered fierce opposition, particularly from West Island suburban mayors. Moreover, at the provincial level, the Parti Québécois was facing serious electoral challenge from the Liberal Party that was capitalizing on opposition to amalgamation in order to gain votes. The Liberal Party promised to reverse amalgamations if elected. And it did so once it took power in the spring of 2003 by voting a legislation allowing the former municipalities to proceed to de-mergers if they gathered the support of a majority of residents.

As it stands now, a number of municipalities in the Montreal region recovered their municipal status. Bill 9 created a 'Council of agglomeration' composed of representatives of both the reconstituted cities and the central city in order to clarify the division of labor between the remaining amalgamated city and the reconstituted suburban municipalities. The remaining 'megacity' is responsible for land evaluation, public safety, the elimination and valorization of residual waste, public transit, streets and roads management, social housing, etc. These responsibilities represent a budget twice as large as that of the former CUM (Secor conseil, 2004). Despite having recovered their municipal status, therefore, suburban municipalities were considerably stripped of their power, which remain centralized in the megacity of Montreal.

If some researchers saw in the transformations brought by recent municipal and metropolitan reforms in Montreal, the expression of a true change of 'political culture' giving place to 'new practices of collective mediation', and the emergence of a 'completely new territorial symbolic system on the scale of the island' (Faure, 2003: 15), the de-amalgamation process leads us to question this optimism. From its inception, this restructuring process was strife with tensions with suburban actors who saw it as an attack on local democracy. It revealed how center and peripheries had different civic cultures. We could even argue that this de-amalgamation episode represented a middle-class rejection of social solidarity (what Donzelot and Jaillet (1997) called 'urban secession' (see also Boudreau and Keil, 2001)).

Indeed, the amalgamated City of Montreal created in 2001 was meant to respect local democratic principles through the creation of a strongly decentralized structure (something that was absent from amalgamation in Toronto), in which boroughs were responsible for local services. Moreover, Bill 33 (2003) increased the powers of boroughs in order to further satisfy suburban demands and respect their specific identity. Bill 33 replaced borough 'presidents' with borough 'mayors', and it increased the borrowing capacity of boroughs. This was nevertheless insufficient to prevent de-amalgamation.

Differences in political cultures between suburbs and the central city of Montreal remain important because of their specific social and cultural histories and social composition. For example, the proportion of tenants in the central city is much greater than in the suburbs, despite a strong revival of construction in the last four years. Suburban political culture is very rooted in an Anglo-Saxon tradition which sees municipalities as the expression of the civic values necessary to democracy. Since

their creation, these municipalities had developed municipal services whose quality was definitely higher than those which prevailed in the old City of Montreal. As Andrew Sancton puts it:

As the majorities were relatively fortunate, they had the means of offering high level municipal services, particularly in the fields of police, libraries, parks and leisure. The existence of independent Anglophone municipalities in the West of the island of Montreal constituted, without any doubt, one of the most significant institutional bastions for the Anglophone community of Montreal (...) (Sancton, 2004: 2).

The position of Anglophones in Montreal changed considerably in the 1960s, when Francophones began to affirm their language rights during and after the 'Quiet Revolution'. As Levine (1990) indicates, Montreal used to be the center of English Canada, but the economic, political, and cultural rise of Francophones changed power relations with Anglo-Montrealers who gradually started to act as a minority in the city and the province. As M. Radice writes, 'it was possible for Anglo-Montrealers to grow in the 1950s in Westmount without suspecting, before reaching the age of 18, that they lived in a city with a francophone majority' (Radice, 2000:36). This disempowering process was further exacerbated by the departure of many Anglo-Montrealers for other provinces (particularly Ontario).

Consequently, many Anglo-Montrealers felt compelled to preserve their local community where they felt they were most able to express their social and cultural specificity. This explains why they were so numerous to vote for de-amalgamation (Boudreau, 2001). As Martha Radice (2000) explains, the margin between comfort ('to feel at ease') and discomfort in daily urban life is very small for Anglo-Montrealers. Even if amalgamation has not changed in practice the quality of urban services offered to the residents (analysts such as Sancton, 2004: 13 would disagree with this), it did not prevent Anglophones from 'making common decisions in the name of their community.' However, amalgamation transformed 'the capacity to make different decisions in the name of various Anglophones groups, according to their place of residence' (Sancton, 2004: 13).

There were also tensions on the politico-administrative level as a result of the 2001 reforms. The integration of many services at the scale of the megacity, combined with the implementation of new methods of decentralized management at the borough level was not fully in place when the newly elected provincial government of Quebec announced the possibility for former municipalities to hold de-merger referendums. The difficulties in harmonizing central city and suburban administrative cultures became evident in the formation of polarized political parties. Indeed, the party of mayor Tremblay, l'Union des citoyens de l'île de Montréal (created out of the old MCM with the support and inclusion of suburban mayors opposed to amalgamation as an attempt to gain legitimacy in the city center) ran against the party of the outgoing mayor Pierre Bourque, Vision Montreal. As mentioned above, the MCM came to power in the former City of Montreal in 1986 and 1990. It was created in 1974 with the active support of trade unions, community organizations, and social movements. Its program promoted a social and democratic

vision of the city, even a democratization of the management of the urban services, planning, urban policies as well as the operation of the municipal bureaucracy as a whole. It was akin to the Toronto reformist movement at the same period. Following the 2001 reform in Montreal, the MCM supported decentralization in the name of local democracy, in continuity with their previous platforms.

Over the years, the MCM maintained an organic relationship with civil society and community organizations, but when it held power at City Hall, this relationship was more conflictual. The MCM began as the herald of participative democracy, not solely by making the local administrative scene more transparent, but also by offering to workers and residents the possibility to contribute directly to city management and planning. In short, we can say that the MCM period, despite of its limitations, materialized a number of social demands for more participation and the democratization of the local state apparatus, and mobilized many Montreal citizens for more than a decade. However, this experiment was abruptly ended with the MCM electoral defeat in 1994 and the victory of the mayor Pierre Bourque (who represented a return to traditional municipal politics). Allied with commercial and financial elites and encouraging before all the international promotion of Montreal—with the same vision as former mayor Drapeau—Pierre Bourque and his party were also decisively populist, courting ethno-cultural communities in a paternalistic way.

With the newly amalgamated municipal elections of 2001, Gerald Tremblay won the mayorship and the majority of districts by promising he would harmonize the administrative and civic cultures of suburbs with that of the central city. Once in power, he began by holding a series of summits in 2002 in order to assess the situation and bring together a multitude of socio-economic partners with the aim of beginning a dialogue with the municipal administration in order to build the new city.

Despite of the undeniable success of this operation, once effervescence subsided, the major problems of the new municipality had not dissipated. Actors who had expressed much enthusiasm at the time of the summits were not always ready to defend the new city or to work on transforming mentalities, practices, and old 'local' habits. Moreover, although many civil society actors agreed to take part in the dialogue initiated by the mayor and his administration at the time of the summits, they quickly retreated behind a more defensive attitude and did not engage as strong supporters of the new city.

But the hardest hit on the newly amalgamated city's capacity to act was Bill 33, which reinforced boroughs (decentralization) while concentrating more power in the hands of elected officials (to the detriment of civil society actors). This represented a victory of the suburban political culture over the practices of open management developed by the MCM in the central city over the last decades. In other words, the civic and administrative culture of the suburbs slowly replaced the culture of the inner-city. As discussed below, the opposite process resulted from amalgamation in Toronto.

This suburban victory is tempered by the fact that de-amalgamated cities only control 20% of their budget; the remaining 80% is under the auspice of the Conseil d'agglomération (comprising the City of Montreal and the de-amalgamated cities and thus recreating amalgamation through the back door). There is much debate

surrounding this institution given that it recentralizes power, a situation akin to what prevailed during the time of the CUM (1970–1982).

In addition to these difficulties at the scale of the megacity, the main problems, however, proved to be at the scale of the city-region. The Montreal Metropolitan Community (MMC) created in 2001 to address city-regional questions has limited resources. Moreover, the dual structure of the megacity (the megacity and its boroughs) complicated further coordination at the city-regional scale. The MMC comprises 82 municipalities and is chaired by the mayor of Montreal. It cannot levy taxes (75% of its very limited annual budget of 96 million dollars comes from transferred payments from municipalities and 25% from budgetary transfers from the Province). Conceived by the legislator as a strategic planning authority, the MMC has jurisdiction over territorial planning, the environment, economic development, social housing, garbage disposal, and metropolitan infrastructures and services. In many ways, the MMC resembles new generation metropolitan institutions such as those in London or in Stuttgart, i.e. institutions without real capacity to act directly. They serve as steering structures to make collective choices, developing decisions which will be implemented by other authorities, and controlling potential conflicts (often caused by asymmetrical relations between municipalities, encouraged by the fact that municipalities have proportional representation according to their demographic weight). Within the MMC conflicts arise as well because suburban municipalities refuse to regionalize the costs of certain infrastructures, particularly the subway. To complicate the picture even more, suburban municipalities often act in concert with another type of structure, the *Municipalités régionales de comté* (MRC) created in 1979 to manage rural and semi-rural planning. Gradually, these MRCs saw their mandate being extended to incorporate economic development. Finally, another administrative structure also acts at the city-regional scale in Montreal: administrative regions (five of them on the territory of the MMC). These structures were created by the Quebec government as a means to divide up the territory of Quebec. In sum, within the territory of the MMC (itself with a limited budget and subject to internal conflicts), there are also six other types of overlapping institutions operating with each its mandate, budget, and administrative culture: the boroughs of amalgamated cities, the megacities of Montreal, Laval, and Longueuil, the recently de-amalgamated suburban cities, the *Conseils d'agglomération* of Montreal and Longueuil, the MRCs, and the five administrative regions of the Quebec Government.

The process of political rescaling operated by the creation of the MMC can be understood as an attempt to make the functional territory of the Montreal metropolis coincide with the strategic territory in economic terms. Indeed, there is a clear trend towards the consolidation of economic and commercial poles in the suburbs. The MMC is for this reason a space that has been invested by economic actors whom, for many years, did not cease to pressure the provincial and federal governments to impose this new territorial framework. To paraphrase Kevin Cox (Cox, 1998), the metropolitan institution constitutes 'the space of engagement' of the global firms (biotechnologies, aeronautics, NTIC) which have been benefiting from massive financial supports from higher levels of government since the second half of the 1990s (Jouve, 2004).

It is still too early to assess the MMC's operation and the relation between municipalities. Yet, there is a clear trend towards polarization with, on the one side, 'managerial' mayors anxious to limit their activity to the supply of public services, and on the other, 'entrepreneurial' mayors (Longueuil, Montreal, Laval) who, while not turning their back on this management logic, see in urban competition the solution to the economic crisis. At the present time, the metropolitan political scene is structured by this opposition between a British-style local authority and an entrepreneurial regime directly inspired by the growth coalitions of American large cities (DiGaetano and Klemanski, 1999). Internal contradictions within the political and administrative apparatus at the provincial scale play a central role in attenuating the pressure of 'entrepreneurial' mayors, in particular by preserving regional units which parcels out the territory of the MMC and create opportunities for small mayors to directly access the provincial technocracy (and thus avoid dealing directly with the three megacities). This can be interpreted as an attempt by the province to limit the power of its major city-region, Montreal, which concentrates 50% of the population of the province and 50% of its GDP. As an administrative representative of the MMC was saying to us, 'it is inconceivable that the province of Quebec gives to the metropolis of Montreal the real administrative and political means to be autonomous. This would mean the end of Quebec's territorial unity.' (Interview with representative of the CMM-, December 10, 2003, translation by the authors.)

The recent creation, by the new elected provincial government of the *Conférence Régionale des Élus* (CRE) will further contribute to increase the political fragmentation of the territory of the city-region. This replaces the Regional Councils of Development created in the mid-1990s. The previous structure was following a deliberative model incorporating civil society. But in an attempt to transform this social democratic political culture, the new Liberal government of Quebec has decided to diminish the influence of trade unions and all components of the civil society (feminist groups, environmentalists, and so on). There are 7 CREs on the current territory of the MMC.

Faced with such institutional complexity and internal tensions, will this mode of metropolitan governance through the heavy hand of the provincial government be sustained? What will be the role of economic actors in pushing for a simplification of this scheme in order to increase the 'exchange value' of the MMC? What can be the role and capacity of other civil society actors in defining the kind of city-regional space that is best for Montreal? Will civil society actors mobilize at the city-regional scale? What are the chances that the MMC succeeds in fulfilling its ambitious goals while incorporating civil society actors? The MMC did organize public consultations for their metropolitan strategic plan and for their waste disposal strategy (as required by law), but they did not generate much enthusiasm. No one seems convinced that the MMC can become a true vector of metropolitan governance, in particular because of the tension between the three 'large mayors' of Laval, Longueuil and Montreal, and the elected officials of the small municipalities, and these small municipalities are currently benefiting from these internal contradictions.

3

Toronto: a more fluid city-regional political space

The situation in Toronto has differed in many ways. To begin with, there are no formal institutions at the city-regional scale and the province of Ontario has until recently been much less proactive than in Quebec. This is not to say there are no efforts at building a city-regional political space in the greater Toronto area. To the contrary, projects and networks across social, political, and economic sectors are leading towards the emergence of a city-regional ‘fix.’ One qualification here is the recent addition of the Ontario Greenbelt and the Greater Golden Horseshoe as operative spaces for the restructuring of the Toronto region. The path towards this city-regionalism, however, is more fluid, ad hoc and project-based than in Montreal, where institutionalization and top-down planning prevails. Moreover, there is more social mobilization at the city-regional scale than in Montreal, where it is virtually absent. A third major difference between Montreal and Toronto, as it will become evident below, is the success of economic elites in constructing a city-regional space to their benefit in Toronto. Economic elites in Montreal have not been able to capture the new regionalist agenda to the same degree, and they have been slowed down by a more social-democratic political culture of state intervention and economic planning characteristic of Quebec.

This section thus reflects on the results of metropolitan governance restructuring in Canada’s largest city, Toronto. We also discuss the more recent developments including the establishment of more moderately liberal and social democratic administrations in Ontario and Toronto. Through a discussion of the search for new ‘fixes’ at the city-regional scale in Toronto, particularly in the sectors of competitiveness, transportation, and the environment, we highlight how social movement demands have been rearticulated in the period following revisions of municipal governance mechanisms such as the debates about the municipal charter in Toronto.

3.1. Toronto: the city that worked

Since the 1950s, the Toronto region has been in the center of attention for students of urban affairs from around the world. The two-tier system of municipal government, which was typical for Toronto, was first introduced in 1953 and became the basis for the widely used moniker ‘the city that works’. It combined a metropolitan level of government responsible for various local welfare state and collective consumption services with a number of local municipalities that had retained autonomy in many areas of municipal concern including fire and waste disposal services as well as water. School boards were also localized. At the beginning, there were 20 local municipalities under the umbrella of the regional Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. Metro Toronto was first a government of appointed politicians but after 1968 there was direct election of Metro councilors by

the citizens of the fast growing region. The provincial government, which had introduced this momentous and far-reaching model of two-tier governance, saw the opportunity at the time, to use the exploding and rich tax base of the job-rich central city to subsidize development in the suburban areas. By ‘milking the tax-base of the inner city’ (Kipfer and Keil, 2002: 238) large-scale infrastructure investment in housing, sewers, transportation was to be distributed ‘evenly’ across the vast expanse of the sparsely populated areas in the North of the city. Steeles Avenue became the horizon of Toronto’s further expansion as strategic investments into social housing (Jane and Finch, for example), roads, educational institutions (York University), and tourism (Black Creek Pioneer Village) in the far reaches of the regional municipality created, at least on paper, a new balance of spatial justice as immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe, and after 1965 also from the global South, continued to stream Canada’s most dynamic urban area. In fact, the newly developed subdivisions of single family homes and highrise apartment buildings in the ‘periphery’ not only created the typical Toronto landscape we know but they also laid the groundwork for today’s rich diversity but also social volatility in what is now called ‘the older suburbs’ such as Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke.

The initial metropolitanization of Toronto was also helped along by the devastating storm Hurricane Hazel, which swept the area in 1954 and killed more than 80 people. The subsequent integration of flood control and conservation efforts at the regional scale and organized by watershed (Don, Humber, Rouge, etc.) created a subterranean regionalism which could be built on in later top-down restructuring of the urban area. Thinking about the region in environmental (conservation, remedial action plans) terms as was visible in the channelization of rivers and in protection of flood plains created a mould into which much later sustainability schemes would be poured.

The—some would say ‘Orwellian’—engineering genius of the big projects of the 1950s and 1960s under the leadership of such giants as Metro Chairman Fred Gardiner and planner Hans Blumenfeld helped create a unified but divided city: a Vienna, Austria, surrounded by a Phoenix, Arizona as one senior transit bureaucrat once called it: a dense, urbanized core with a sprawling aurora of suburbs. There was, in fact, a double helix of suburbanization around Toronto: one that was in the orbit of Metro and would form the ‘older suburbs’ eventually, and one in the exurban expanse of the surrounding region. While the former created an internal rift between the inner city of Toronto and its sister Metro-municipalities—ultimately Etobicoke, North York, York, East York and Scarborough—, the latter has been the basis of the larger seismic faultline between the 416 (metropolitan) and 905 (exurban) telephone areas which continues to haunt the region to date (for an extended version of this development see Kipfer and Keil, 2002; Donald, 2002a,b).

The big story of Toronto in the mature years of the Metro era, and particularly since the early 1970s, was the strengthening of a particular regime in downtown Toronto, which solidified a particular ‘urban’, progressive, liberal *reform* program that coalesced around a notion of urbanity, which was buiet on a particular idea of the homology of built and social environments. Strongly influenced by the writings and activism of the legendary Jane Jacobs (a Toronto resident since the late 1960s) a

group of middle class reformers around David Crombie and John Sewell established a strong center–left–oriented politics of the urban center through housing provision and architectural conservation. Crombie and Sewell were the most visible figureheads of this reform regime. While different in their ideological leanings—Crombie a Tory, Sewell an independent liberal—their consecutive mayoralities in the 1970s created a robust foundation for the kind of city Toronto is today: a rapidly gentrifying, deinindustrialized middle class habitat, still culturally diverse, but increasingly inhospitable to those populations that are in the lower income groups. The preservation of the downtown neighborhoods—praised as markedly different from the American donut city—was the perfect screen onto which later models of urban renewal could be projected.

The counter-model to the Toronto experience of middle-class urbanity were North York, another municipality in Metro Toronto, and Mississauga, just to the west of Metro. In North York, the idiosyncratic mayoral governing style of former appliances salesman Mel Lastman catered to a distinctly suburban population of home owners. While North York was the site of large social housing projects, especially in its northern and western peripheries, most of the local regime's efforts went towards the needs of the class of modest homeowners that populated the plains of that rapidly growing city. Lastman himself understood well the desires and demands of these petty-bourgeois constituencies and rode to consecutive landslide victories for over 20 years. He used the rapidly growing tax base of North York to build a faux city center north of Highway 401 on Yonge Street, which combined public buildings and amenities with an emergent condominium boom. Despite its inner city appearance (actually it looks more like an office park), Lastman's North York Centre was kept exceedingly clean and sterile under the Mayor's reign.

Lastman finds his equivalent in the charismatic mayor of Mississauga, Hazel McCallion. This octagenarian former hockey player has also governed her home owner paradise for more than 20 years and created a low tax environment on the basis of massive development fee extractions, which she used to guarantee not just a continuous sprawling expansion of her city but also a civic centre of note, which combines big box retail and entertainment with condominiums and a bizarre neo-constructivist City Hall. McCallion's scrappy style matches Lastman's salesman personality. In contrast to the urbane mayoralities of Crombie and Sewell downtown, these two mayors exemplified the greedy growth machines of ex-small town suburban growth poles where anything that is development can be legitimized by conjuring up a growing tax base alone (Fig. 4).

Consecutive provincial governments have attempted to come to terms with the metropolitanization of Toronto. An important aspect of this provincial regime has been since the 1950s the provision of private road transportation and public transit. In the region, the watershed event of this paternalistic provincial attitude of providing for Toronto without giving the city financial or decision-making autonomy in transportation matters came in the early 1970s when the Conservative government under Bill Davis conceded to widespread citizen protests and unrest over the extension of the Spadina expressway through some of the most cherished inner city neighborhoods. Under the leadership of Jane Jacobs, a resident of the

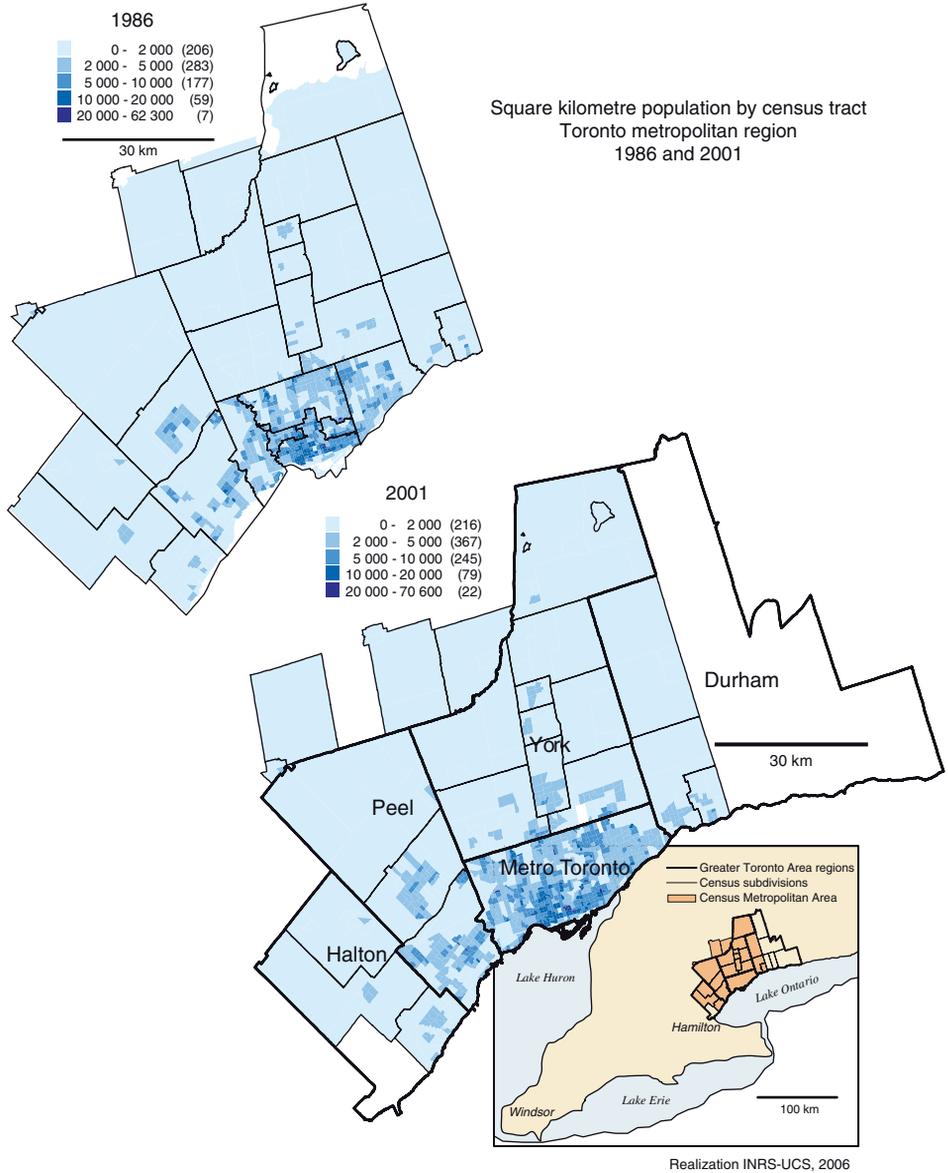


Fig. 4. Population density and administrative boundaries, Toronto Metropolitan region, 1986–2001.

area, the Annex neighborhood in the western downtown was spared by the bulldozer as alternative transportation systems were ultimately favored by the province.

Since the 1970s, a series of grand schemes were applied to the Toronto region as provincial and federal governments attempted to influence the ways in which

Toronto might grow. The Toronto-Centered Plan was one distinct ‘strategy to limit urban sprawl and to extend regional governance to the exurbs’ but the plan was not realized due to resistance by a coalition of rural landowners, developers and political opponents. In addition, growth oriented provincial infrastructure policies also militated against the success of such growth controls (Kipfer and Keil, 2002: 239).

Other important milestones in the development of a set of regional policies were the establishment of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area under Deputy Minister Gardner Church in the late 1980s by the provincial government. While ultimately ineffective in the larger framework, Church’s office was an indication of continued upper level interest in the governance of the Greater Toronto Area as a comprehensive region. This attention was funneled ultimately by the future social democratic NDP government under Bob Rae into a distinct commission under the leadership of Anne Golden to analyze Greater Toronto and to come up with recommendations for a fundamental review of the region’s governance model. Golden’s report was ultimately published after the NDP government was voted out of office. The new conservative government under Mike Harris decided to turn their attention away from regional integration and opted for the amalgamation of Toronto instead.

Arguably the most far-reaching discursive and planning turn in Toronto’s regional governance regime prior to the 1990s came with the launching of the joint federal and provincial Royal Commission on the Toronto Waterfront under the chair of former conservative cabinet minister and reformist Toronto mayor, David Crombie. By defining his mandated area as inclusive of a long stretch of waterfront (rather than the Toronto area alone) and reaching inland to the headwaters of the rivers that flow south into Lake Ontario, Crombie gave Ontarians for the first time a regionally scaled view of the Toronto area. Adding the eco-modernizing concept of ‘ecosystem planning’ to the formal expansion of his mandate, Crombie created a visionary and hotly discussed framework of planning, which would become influential in the 1990s and survived, albeit in altered shape, the neoliberal assault that was about to come.

3.2. Toronto since the 1990s: the battered metropolis

Toronto is the city in Canada that most closely resembles a global city. It is the country’s leading economic and financial hub and is considered by many the most multiculturally mixed city in the world. In recent years, Toronto has been subject to major economic restructuring, local state reforms, and social struggles. The city’s globalization was accompanied by the neoliberalization of its economy, its governance system and its everyday life (Keil, 2002). The sum of this development earned Toronto the title of a competitive city, where entrepreneurialism, revanchism, and diversity coalesce to a greater degree than in Montreal. In the early 1990s, the booming economy of the 1980s had collapsed, and both industrial restructuring (with soaring welfare rolls and unemployment figures) and an unprecedented real-estate crisis (with plummeting prices and glutted markets) took their toll on workers and communities both in the central city and in the sprawling industrial and residential suburbs. Jobs were lost due to the cyclic downturn in construction and

real estate but also due to NAFTA-induced restructuring of the Canadian economy. Politically, the combined regime of an aggressively neoliberal provincial government in Ontario, which holds the constitutional powers and purse strings over its municipalities and a local boosterist mayor meant that the social structure of the city continued to develop greater socio-economic and socio-spatial polarities during the 1990s. Income gaps were widened, homelessness increased, and poverty became more and more visible as a result of specific policy decisions in the areas of housing and social services.³ The Tory government, first elected in 1995, had promised to bring the public deficit to zero while reducing income taxes by 30%. This meant aggressive cuts in social services, shifting much of the burden of welfare costs to municipalities (which only had revenues coming mostly from property taxes and decreasing provincial transfers), cuts in public education, in the healthcare system, and so on. The government engaged in a wave of amalgamation (of municipalities, school boards, hospitals) in order to ‘reduce duplication and waste’ and diminish the tax burden of ‘over governed’ Ontarians. This overhaul of governance in Ontario was particularly focused on cities, with a series of other policies affecting daily life directly: cuts in public transit funding, loosening of environmental regulation (to the benefit of real-estate developers), crackdown on panhandling and homelessness, end of rent control, and the list goes on. It is in this context that the Tory government imposed the much-contested amalgamation of Toronto, eliminating the metropolitan institution that had been in place since 1953 without replacing it with another institution at the larger scale of the city-region (the GTA), except for a very weak Greater Toronto Service Board (which was created years after amalgamation and dismantled shortly after).

The socio-spatial restructuring of Toronto also shifted the terrain for political activism and social movements. The conservative-induced amalgamation of six municipal jurisdictions and one regional municipality engendered a broad but ultimately unsuccessful white middle class citizen movement mostly in the inner city. This movement was unable to make strategic and organizational links with other struggles against neoliberalizing tendencies brought in by the Tory government. Neither labor, anti-poverty, anti-racism and other more actively progressive groups were brought into the struggle and Citizens for Local Democracy (C4LD), the leading group in the fight against amalgamation, which made little inroads into the political arenas where the unemployed, the homeless, the poor and the new immigrants were active (Boudreau, 2000). There have been several important social justice type interventions into the municipal (and even regional) political arena—by groups as diverse as the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee (TDRC) and the Toronto and York Region Labor Council. But perhaps the most pervasive and enduring story of citizen activism during the 1990s may be the one of the Metro Network for Social Justice, which innovatively re-scaled its activities during the many changes that pulled their original

³ Several reports have shown these results in the past decade. For more information, see the information released continuously on websites such as www.tdrc.net/cathycrowe.htm; www.dailybread.ca; www.web-net/~ccr/statusreport.pdf; http://www.unitedwaytoronto.com/who_we_help/social_issues.html

base of organizing—the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto—out from under them, a story eloquently told by Janet Conway (2004). Recovering from various defeats at the hands of the Tories, progressive forces have been able to regroup at the scale of the newly amalgamated city (and potentially at the regional) level and to use the new scale of metro politics as the terrain of their action. While activists have always focused their efforts at the provincial and federal levels, what has recently changed is a more explicit focus on the metropolitan level. This result contradicts, at first glance, the stated goal of neoliberal policy makers at the provincial level to chase ‘tax-and-spend’- progressives from city hall. This does not mean that progressive forces have retracted from provincial and federal politics, but they are increasingly strategizing at the regional scale as well. The new political regime under social democratic Mayor David Miller will face demands by continued citizen activism to roll-back some of the downloading that came with boundary change during amalgamation in 1997. Whether the various social movements which opposed downloading and amalgamation in the late 1990s—many of which supported Miller in the fall 2003 municipal election—can sustain independent pressure on various levels of government or whether they will be co-opted, remains to be seen.

Indeed, much of civil society mobilization at the city-regional scale in Toronto does not come from progressive forces, but from globally-oriented economic elites, who were able to integrate segments of community organizations and the voluntary sector in a coalition called the Toronto City Summit Alliance (TCSA), which has become very active since June 2002, when it was created.⁴ In their own words, the TCSA’s membership includes ‘private, labor, voluntary and public sectors in the Toronto region’, as well as a ‘network of hundreds of volunteers’. The TCSA states that the reason of its coming into existence is ‘to assess our urban region’s strengths and challenges’, and these challenges are defined as ‘expanding knowledge-based industry, poor economic integration of immigrants, decaying infrastructure, and affordable housing’. They published a policy document in April 2003 entitled *Enough Talk: An Action Plan for the Toronto Region*, which summarizes the policy objectives of the alliance as: (1) a new fiscal deal for cities, (2) improvement of the physical infrastructure, especially regional transportation and the waterfront, (3) reviving tourism in Toronto, (4) creating a world-leading research alliance, (5) investing in people’s education, (6) integrating immigrants into the economy, (7) strengthening social and community infrastructure, especially affordable housing and community services, and (8) supporting arts and culture.

A striking sociological characteristic of the TCSA is that many participants come from what Paul calls the transnational capitalist class (TCC) composed of transnational corporation executives, ‘globalizing bureaucrats,’ ‘globalizing politi-

⁴ The chairs of the Summit were Elyse Allan, then President and CEO of The Toronto Board of Trade; Hon. David Crombie, President and CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute; Frances Lankin, President and CEO of United Way; and John Tory, President and CEO of Roger Cable. The City Summit was financed by the private sector; fund-raising efforts were led by Courtney Pratt, President and CEO of Toronto Hydro Corporation (http://www.city.toronto.on.ca/city_summit/).

cians and professionals,' and the urban consumption-oriented middle-class (Paul, 2002). Out of 56 Steering Committee members, 21 members represent transnational capital (transnational corporations, consulting firms servicing these corporations, finance, marketing, high tech, legal services). As a Toronto labor leader explained to us, the TCSA is heavily involved with financial capital, in large part because of the influence of United Way (which has a long history of collaboration with big corporations for their fund raising drives) (Interview, May 19, 2004).

If we examine the general discourse of the TCSA as presented in their publications, it is clear that it has a globally-oriented agenda of local economic development. Issues such as transportation, the tax burden, recreational facilities, safe communities, friendliness, access to early childhood development care facilities, a very good public education system, a vibrant core city that is safe, clean, and has many parks, were raised in many interviews as essential elements for generating growth and for transnational business. As a representative of a major Toronto bank explained when we asked him why globally-oriented business is getting involved at the city-regional scale: 'This is our backyard. We employ a significant number of people and we cannot attract the best and brightest unless the quality of life in the city or surrounding region is at a level that they will accept.' (interview, Feb. 9, 2004). A representative of the Toronto Board of Trade noted (interview Dec. 7, 2004) that business has now a more 'sophisticated understanding of what is involved in competitiveness,' that it is not only about lowering costs and taxes. For him, being competitive requires a governmental role in investing in infrastructure in order to generate opportunities for business to innovate. Not surprisingly, the TCSA's program is built in order to channel most of the public monies to infrastructure (waterfront revitalization being the most important one), and to research and innovation.

The coming together of this coalition and the involvement of transnational capital in the construction of a city-regional political space was described to us as the result of bad political leadership at City Hall following amalgamation. A banker said accordingly:

There is an understanding that Toronto peaked in 1996 and there is evidence to show that since 1996, Toronto has been in a rapid and steady decline. ... Why is it that we have a level of child poverty in this city? Why is it that we have 17 000 kids waiting for subsidized childcare? Why is it that the physical infrastructure is the way it is? Why is it that the Waterfront is such an embarrassment? It's been a combination of the absence of effective political leadership at the municipal level, at the provincial level, a government that didn't pay a lot of attention to the City of Toronto, not many members of that particular party are from this area, and that particular government, downloaded a lot of responsibilities, a lot of services, but didn't flow the funds.... So political leadership at both provincial and city level, the fact a city of the size of Toronto, 3 million people, has no voice at the federal table of Canada... hence the talk of a new deal for cities, and I would also argue that we have declined because concerned citizens [including corporations as mentioned earlier in the interview] did not speak out,

or there was not perhaps a process to speak out in an organized, effective way (Interview with representative of major Toronto bank, Feb. 9, 2004).

This sociological makeup incorporating transnational capital and its thrive for global competitiveness is interesting given the fact that the TCC has traditionally not been interested in city-regional or local politics. Molotch noted decades ago, and this remains largely true for Toronto, that the growth-machine is usually dominated by the locally -oriented real-estate sector. This is an indication of the ability of economic elites in steering the city-regional agenda in Toronto; something that their Montreal counterparts have not been able to achieve yet.

3.3. An emerging consensus: the New Deal for Cities and a new city of Toronto Act

During the 1990s, new and sometimes surprising responses to the ‘questions of equity, effectiveness and efficiency in public service provision within metropolitan areas’ (Kübler and Heinelt, 2005: 11) were found by ideologically widely divergent regional and municipal government and social movement actors. The surprising part referred to the perplexing situation that in Toronto the government paradoxically entertained a predictable anti-statist neoliberal line of arguments to give birth to the largest, most centrist local state institution in Canada: the amalgamated Toronto megacity. What was less surprising was that the discourses on governance restructuring and the real changes in governance arrangements, reflected only a limited range of options. Governance change was closely linked to a discourse of ‘competitiveness of metropolitan areas on a global scale’ (Kübler and Heinelt, 2005: 11), yet little attention was paid to internal democracy of metropolitan regions despite persistent claims to local democracy put forward by local autonomy movements such as C4LD. Both social movements of the political right and left entered the fray of the local governance debate with well articulated claims for local democracy, autonomy and citizenship.

As the new governance systems congealed in Toronto, political actors re-focused the metropolitan debate around potential ways in which metropolitan unity could be forged beyond the current state of affairs and debate. The losers in the fight against amalgamation sought for solutions to issues of missing local democracy and autonomy left unresolved or exacerbated by the combination of amalgamation and downloading. As citizens, politicians, social and business interests woke up to the new reality of a larger but ostensibly less powerful municipality, they entertained a host of ideas for changes to the existing governmental division of labor. Disgruntled opponents to amalgamation re-grouped as proponents of more autonomy for the Greater Toronto Area in defiance of the clearly debilitating amalgamation process. Among several proposals ranging from provincial status for Toronto to minor changes to the tax system, the proposal of a Toronto charter carried the day, at least for a couple of months, before being reappropriated by politicians at all levels of government in the guise of a new agenda for cities.

The New Deal for Cities was announced by Paul Martin when he became Prime Minister of Canada in 2003. As an integral part of the Liberal Party’s electoral

platform, and central to the first Throne Speech delivered by Martin, the New Deal reflects many of the concerns that had been pushed by big city mayors across Canada since the wave of municipal amalgamation of the mid-1990s. Urbanist Jane Jacobs had called a meeting of the five big city mayors in 1999, with the help of Glenn Murray, who was then mayor of Winnipeg. Known as the C5, these mayors lobbied intensively the federal and their respective provincial governments. They got some response, at the federal level, from the New Democratic Party (which had elected former Toronto councilor Jack Layton as their leader) and from the Liberal Party. When Paul Martin became the new leader of the Liberal Party after the departure of Jean Chretien, he appointed John Godfrey as the Minister of State responsible for Infrastructure and Communities in order to implement this new urban agenda.

The New Deal for Cities also concerns provincial governments, as municipal affairs are strictly under provincial jurisdiction. It is still fraught with tensions between levels of government (which are particularly acute in Quebec), but also between large cities and other towns in Canada. Because of the necessity to create intergovernmental cooperation in order to implement a new urban agenda, the federal government has slowly drifted from an 'urban' agenda conceived as a new regionalist philosophy encouraging winning city-regions on the global market, to a 'municipal' agenda destined to rethink the division of labor between levels of government and providing more autonomy to municipalities, large and small. Indeed, pressures for more municipal autonomy had been increasing for decades, led mostly by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). The FCM made important breakthrough in this respect during the constitutional debates of 1988–1992 (both the Meech Lake Accords and the Charlottetown Accords were ultimately defeated however). But they were unable to capture the attention of Federal leaders nor the public debate. With the hype around global cities and the new regionalism, Paul Martin and his Liberal Party were more receptive in 2003. However, they encountered resistance when they attempted to focus on large cities rather than thinking of all municipalities. In other words, their rationale for increasing the powers of large cities (for economic development and global competitiveness) has lost its relevance in this slide towards empowering municipal governments across the map, mainly because the economic role of cities does not mostly derive from municipal governments. The argument pushed forward by coalitions such as the TCSA is that wealth is created by Toronto for the benefit of the rest of the country; it should therefore have more power and resources to encourage this development. A representative of the Urban Economic Development Office of Ontario insisted in an interview:

So to me the urban agenda is saying it doesn't matter which level of government does it, but put the investment capital where you're actually going to get a return. That doesn't mean that Toronto is not going to have some net outflow money to the rest of the country. I don't think anybody is saying that every place in the country should net out in a zero. But 17 billion dollars a year, when at the same time we're being told 'no, you can't build this, and you can't build that, and you can't do this, and you can't do that...' I think people are finally

fed up with it. ... And I can understand why groups like the FCM wanted to wrap their arms around the urban agenda because they want it to be about municipalities. ... I mean I saw in the Toronto Star the other day, an editorial, and they were talking about this new deal, and they said that we all know that it's municipalities that are creating wealth in 21st century Canada. What are you talking about!?' (Interview, Feb. 12, 2004)

The Federal government responds to these criticisms on their decision to focus on all municipalities, by saying that they perfectly understand the role of large cities, but that a New Deal needs to understand better the 'wiring between large and small, or the hydraulics between large and small' and that 'if we don't attend to both sides of the equation, then Toronto or large cities become dominical last resource for people who cannot make it elsewhere. And so understanding the whole thing seems to me a very appropriate function for a national government' (Interview with Federal Government Minister, Nov. 26, 2004).

Yet in Toronto, the idea of fixing the demands for more autonomy in a strong consensus document that would force higher level governments to respect Toronto's special needs was supported by many because it allowed change to happen without entering the murky territory of constitutional alterations which would be almost impossible in a nation stalemated over the question of Quebec sovereignty. A provincial-city joint interim report for a new City of Toronto Act was published in May 2005 with important advances in providing Toronto with specific powers. The bill was ultimately passed in June 2006. Most importantly, Toronto will be granted 'permissive powers,' that is it will have legislative power in certain clearly defined areas whereas other municipalities don't (they can only pass bylaws on issues predetermined by the province).⁵ The City will be able to levy a new hotel tax and taxes on parking lot spaces, but it would not get a share of income or sales taxes as Mayor Miller had originally advocated.

Neither the new City of Toronto Act (which resembles a charter) nor most other proposals for more autonomy, however, made any concrete and believable proposals for increasing the influence of urban civil society on the institutionalized metropolitan governance process. To the contrary, the new City of Toronto Act will give the mayor more powers, while imposing an executive committee structure in Council. All proposals concentrated on the functional efficiency and effectiveness of local as opposed to supra-local governments instead of demanding a broadened bottom-up governance (Keil and Young, 2003; forthcoming). Not surprisingly, while hailed by some as a major breakthrough in granting important new legislative powers to the City while giving the Mayor license to create a more executive style of city government, critics pointed to the limited granting of local autonomy and to the

⁵ As the Globe and Mail puts it: "The proposed change means that Toronto—not the province—would have the right, for example, to extend bar hours for special events, set speed limits on local roads, impose new taxes, establish a lobbyist registry and determine the size of council." (Lewington, 2005)

further removal of civic politics from the neighborhoods and grassroots concerns that had traditionally made Toronto a ‘city that works’.⁶

3.4. Toronto’s new regionalism: a networked, project-based, space with elastic boundaries

We have seen how the rescaling of the Toronto region during the 1990s has left many questions unanswered. Amalgamation has stopped short of regional integration, a significant fact given the loudly touted idea that globalization is realized through the leopard skin of regional growth and development. Yet, immediately after amalgamation, elite groups in the region attempted to capitalize on the newly created political reality with a series of Toronto-centric megaprojects and a number of more or less half-hearted attempts to compensate for the lack of regional scope in the amalgamation of the central metropolitan area. Most eminent in the elite projects following amalgamation was the failed bid for the summer Olympics in 2008. While the Toronto Bid Committee suffered an embarrassing defeat when Beijing was selected, the core of the Toronto project, the renewal of the waterfront, continued to capture the imagination of developers, politicians and citizens alike. Yet, clearly, the tide has now turned on the waterfront: While strongly in favor of waterfront development, Mayor Miller’s winning campaign in 2003 was centered on his opposition to the most utilitarian expansion of the waterfront: the expansion of the inner city Toronto Island Airport (Bunce and Young, 2004). In addition to the perennial expansion of the waterfront, the other major elite project (here more the professional elites) has been the revamping of the City’s official plan (Kipfer and Keil, 2002). Blackwell and Goonewardena have characterized the Toronto Official Plan as based on the assumptions ‘that planners will be reasonable, developers will be benevolent, architects will be brilliant, and citizens will be quiet’ and that it is geared towards three relevant groups in the urban process: developers, taxpayers and global capitalists (Blackwell and Goonewardena, 2004: 222–223).

On the regional scale, a toothless Greater Toronto Services Board, which existed briefly in the late 1990s was meant to coordinate transportation and rural planning for the Greater Toronto Area. While full of promise and with the wind of public opinion and most pundits in the back, the GTSB was dismantled in 2001 in another haphazard reshuffling of government responsibilities in the late provincial Tory regime. Similarly, the other big piece of legislation affecting regional planning in the GTA, the protection of the environmentally sensitive Oak Ridges Moraine, was advanced with huge exemptions to please the development industry. While there have been some changes since the political shift towards more liberal regimes in both the Province (the proposal of a regional greenbelt in particular), the overall porosity of rural landscapes to urbanization has not yet significantly decreased.

Many political actors are now in a search for new political horizons. This all occurs in an environment, where the ‘region’ as it is commonly understood is

⁶ For an ongoing discussion of these matters see a website coordinated by former Toronto Mayor and local pundit John Sewell: <http://www.localgovernment.ca>

institutionally a non-entity. As Sancton notes, regional politics have never captured the imaginations of voters or civil society in the Canadian context:

Directly elected Canadian regional governments have never been able to establish themselves in voters' political consciousness because they have not been able to carve out a credible niche for a fourth level of government (Sancton, 2001: 547).

Unlike in Montreal, Toronto was not the target of as much policy experimentation in regionalism. It has long been heralded as a model of metropolitan governance with Metro Toronto, created in 1953 as a two-tiered structure in order to manage growth and distribute social housing across what was then the city-region (making space for downtown redevelopment). By the time of amalgamation in 1997, Metro Toronto (or its affiliated commissions) was responsible for about 75% of service provision (including property assessment, major infrastructure, policing, housing, transit, as well as covering 20% of the municipal share of welfare costs). The amalgamation of Metro Toronto with its six local municipalities created what is now the new City of Toronto.

Amalgamation did not solve the problem of cooperation given that the city-region had silled over the territory of former Metro Toronto. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Ontario government was much more active at that broader regional scale than it was in the 1990s. In the 1960s, it stripped Metro Toronto of its planning responsibilities and transferred them to a provincial agency that was working around the concept of a Toronto-Centered Region (TCR) which covered nearly three times the size of the present Greater Toronto Area (GTA), which is a regional delimitation covering about 4400 km² (or 0.8% of Ontario's land) that was established in the 1980s. Provincial bureaucrats were then very active in regional planning, infrastructure development, and commuter transit (with the successful regional GO Transit system created in 1967) for which it paid all capital costs and operating deficits. But with amalgamation in the 1990s, the GTA-scale city-region disappeared from the provincial policy radar.

Despite these weak institutional boundaries, the appellation of the region is a common occurrence in the context of the new regionalism, which has entered the public rhetorical arena together with smart growth, local democracy, and sustainability. In Toronto, it is possible to argue that popular regionalism is tightly linked to the existence of a few connecting and pervasive landscape features, which give the Greater Toronto Area profile and contours: The Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment, the Waterfront, the Don River, the Humber River and the emergent governance space of the Greenbelt. Both downtown-waterfront and exurban growth conflicts emanate from the same dynamics of regionalized global city growth and refracted in popular imaginations of what should be where in the urban region (Desfor et al., 2006). Other arguments for regional identity have come from economic analysts, who speak of the high quality of southern Ontario production clusters and the Toronto 'learning region' (Gertler, 2001; Wolfe and Gertler, 2001; Gertler et al., 2000). For environmentalists and others, the political region is always present as a potential panacea of all manner of ills.



Fig. 5. Simultaneous, but separate advertisement campaigns by the Board of Trade, the United Way, and the Toronto-York Regional Labour Council, 2003–2004.

In Toronto now there are various areas, where elite politics and popular resistance are groping for attention in the regional political game. Three areas shall briefly be highlighted here: The politics of competitiveness, the politics of the environment and the politics of transportation. In all three fields, elite and popular concepts of regionalism vie with but also sometimes complement each other. Beyond the rudimentary physical, economic and political reality of the post-amalgamated Toronto region, a metaphysics of regionalism exists in discourses of the Greater Toronto Area.

1. *Competitiveness*: In the current intergovernmental arrangement in Canada, Toronto elites are concerned about achieving more autonomy by embarking on a discourse combining ‘global pressures for competitiveness’ with the right for ‘local democracy’ and the fact that Toronto is the motor of the Canadian economy and therefore should ‘get its fair share.’ Here, the core of the debate on city-regional state capacities revolves around the question of their margin of maneuver in the face of societal and/or economic forces. Savitch and Kantor frame the question in terms of the ‘bargaining position’ of various cities, which determines how cities can enlarge their choices in the face of increased global exposure to competitive pressures (Savitch and Kantor, 2002). Toronto’s business elite, and to a degree other social groups that have been invited to the various roundtables such as the Toronto City Summit Alliance (TCSA), have bought into the idea that place marketing along the lines of the fashionable concept of the ‘creative city’ (Florida, 2002) is the right strategy to compete internationally. Most of the rhetoric and discussion in this respect is—unsurprisingly given the domination of financial capital and the transnational class within the coalition—linked to the imaginary of Toronto as a place of centrality within the GTA and the Golden Horseshoe. For instance, the simultaneous advertisement campaigns launched by the three major partners of the TCSA (the Board of Trade, United Way, and the Toronto-York Regional Labor Council) depicted the central city as the motor of regional development (Fig. 5).

Yet, there is also the assumption that the metropolitan diversity of Toronto is an asset that works in a decentralized fashion from the multicultural fringes of the urban region to the condo-lined central waterfront. Business elites and political opinion makers have embraced the region as a work bench on which the future and sustainability of Toronto in the global interurban competition will have to construct. This regionalization of the urban imagination in Toronto has entailed a partial incorporation of civil society groups into the hegemonic projects of the TCSA and similar organizations. But it has also engendered emerging alternative notions of regionalism. These groups strive for greater regional justice and healthier environments in the vastly diverse urban region without catering to the rhetoric of global competitiveness.

2. *Environment*: There is now a lively debate about the scale and ‘right-sizing’ of environmental decision-making (Paehlke, 2001; Swyngedouw, 2004). We have argued above that the Toronto region is most visible in its physical form as a bioregion: wedged between the escarpment, the moraine and the lake. The deceptively ‘natural’ urban region has, of course, been consistently un-manageable due to its boundary-stretching and scale-exploding characteristic that defies the artificial boundaries set by colonial and more recent political and property lines. One way in which the ‘natural region’ is problematized now is through the growing awareness that no bioregional containment has been achieved but that the urban-regional metabolism that keeps Toronto moving relies on material streams and social relationships that are generated and constituted in more than local or regional processes. As products like water, oil and food are entering the region from far away and as trash is shipped beyond national borders, the appearance of the ‘natural region’ is clouded. While regional ecological cycles are evoked in debates on the moraine and the waterfront (where environmental damage is supposedly staved off by half-hearted conservation measures), and while the region accordingly is imagined as a scale of containment, of a ‘sustainability fix’ as suggested by Andy Jonas, David Gibbs and Aidan White (2004; forthcoming), in reality, the environment is a very unstable plain on which the current regional identity can be built. While the core city of Toronto has put in place a whole series of ameliorative measures that add up to a ‘roll-out environmentalism’⁷, it is hard to imagine that these measures are sufficient to make the region cohere from the inside out in the face of the many centrifugal dynamics of its global city metabolics.

3. *Transportation*: In the transportation field the huge varieties in wants and needs at different ends of the socio-economic spectrum and on both sides of the urban/suburban divide are the greatest. On one level, there is a classical use value/exchange value conflict at work here, where, on one hand, there are huge expenditures for transportation megastructures that serve mostly globalized business interests: despite

⁷ We are here taking our cues from from Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell’s recent paper on the switch from roll-back to roll-out neoliberalism in the 1980s and 1990s (2002). We argue that the establishment of a neoliberal regime in Toronto during the 1990s had the unexpected and somewhat paradoxical side-effect of a strengthened urban ecological agenda. See Keil and Boudreau (2006), for a more detailed discussion of this phenomenon.

the defeat of the Toronto Island Airport, which was the most frivolous attempt by Toronto downtown place entrepreneurs to lift their profit interests above the use values (and ecological viability) of the central waterfront (and competing profit interests who saw their investment endangered by air traffic in front of condo balconies). The political enthusiasm about the end of the Island Airport, which arguably made David Miller's mayoral victory possible, eclipsed the fact that the major air transportation story in the region was happening elsewhere: at the \$5 billion refurbishing of Toronto's international Pearson Airport west of the city. As a largely unaccountable Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA) built its shiny new terminal and access roads, the everyday transit needs of the masses of commuters and other travelers suffered both in the form of gridlocked streets and a grossly underfunded public rail and bus system. This connection was not made by the TCSA. They argue for both globally-oriented transportation infrastructure and a good public transit system, in order to increase the quality of life and thus to attract more qualified workers. While such obvious differences and contradictions exist in the regional transportation universe (reflected imperfectly but still powerfully in the urban/suburban modal split of private auto and public transit), there is also reason to believe that if anywhere, the public would think of the region as an appropriate scale to regulate and come to terms with the mobility crisis of this booming metropolis. This is surprising, of course, as the field of regional transportation is the most globalized area in terms of its transnational constitution. If anything, it is the infrastructures of the global city (Erie, 2004) that create the conditions for the 'success' of the region in the world economy. We can assume there are major contradictions between various user groups and speeds: While much 'global city' related transportation of people and goods both internally and externally supports the city's international competitiveness, it actually endangers the social and environmental sustainability of the region. Whereas the globalized travel and trade patterns of the world city explode the regional coherence of production and consumption patterns, urban transportation planning discovers the region as the real scale of solution. Most visibly, then, there is a huge potential for use-value based claims for better transportation services as other urban citizens continue to exercise their exit options and flee towards yet another leapfrogged housing belt beyond the greenbelt hoping to beat the traffic in 5 am commutes. For both the economic and technocratic elites and the stranded citizens on the highways and in buses and trains, the region is an alleged wonder-scale where dreams of mobility could be resolved. The trouble with this thinking is, of course, that both groups imagine quite different kinds of solutions at the regional scale.

In the near future, the Toronto metropolitan area will have to face serious questions about regional issues that demand attention through an insufficiently prepared set of institutions. The urban area's structured coherence now has to be re-integrated through political action at various scales. Questions of federalism and in particular province-city relations are prominent. Regional elites rally once again around more or less coherent and coordinated programs and projects of international competitiveness based on kaleidoscopic neoliberal measures, cultural and 'creative' strategies and overblown megaprojects. Alternatives to the growth

agenda of the late 1990s are considered as citizens voice their objections to further compromises to the living environments known, as it happened in the 2003 Toronto mayoral election (which was arguably decided over the staunch opposition of the victorious candidate to a high profile airport expansion project in the inner city). At present, regional consensus even among the traditional elites both urban and suburban is elusive, yet still less conflictual than in Montreal. Still, in contrast to their predecessors in Queens Park, the current Liberal provincial government has sought to lay down clear lines along with regional growth management is to take place in Southern Ontario. Development is to halt in the Greenbelt area as growth is to be intensified in an area governed by the growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe called 'Places to Grow'. This clear delineation has led to pitched discursive and legal battles between the provincial government and the development industry, which cries foul over taking land out of possible development. At the same time, it has forged a supportive citizens coalition in favor of the greenbelt proposal (with the demand to expand the greenbelt designation to additional areas). With an estimated 80 percent of the growth projected to occur south of the Oak Ridges Moraine, sensitivities of populations there to growth have also risen. This all occurs at a time when decision makers and citizens alike begin to embrace the Golden Horseshoe as the actually meaningful space in which the metropolitan region has to be rethought. The Greater Golden Horseshoe begins to replace the Greater Toronto Area as the operative term and area in which the region is envisioned. Meanwhile, the metabolic processes by which the region sustains itself—water, energy, waste, etc.—are equally reconfigured with a strong leaning towards more sustainable relationships. Our focus here is on garbage, where currently much is shipped across the border to Michigan, as the City attempts to develop a very strict waste diversion and avoidance program until 2010. It is no secret, though, that both the city and the province are looking for additional possible landfill sites in the region. Business elites and those (more or less) public officials who run the area's major infrastructural projects around the airports, the waterfront, the transit system, etc. also are clear on the necessity to think big and expansive when it comes to the re-imagining of the Toronto region.

Conclusion

Globalization processes lead to uneven rescaling of municipal and regional governments, because each case is unique in many ways as waves of neoliberalization are met by diverse activity of accommodation and resistance in urban regions. The tendency to create more municipal autonomy, regional integration and metropolitan governance must be seen in the context of more broadly defined (and contested) trends towards a reform of federal relationships among various state levels, something that takes a very different meaning in Montreal and Toronto given Quebec's long-standing claims for more provincial autonomy. Urban-regional integration is clearly dependent on the continued re-articulation of state spaces and scales of political and social action in North American societies (Brenner et al., 2003).

Rescaled policy-making capacities and the development of a collective actor at the city-regional scale are developed not only through institutional building, but also in relationship with social and economic mobilization. In trying to understand uneven patterns of city-regional state capacities, therefore, we argued that it is necessary to explore the degree of civil society mobilization at the city-regional scale (as opposed to the provincial, local, or national levels). The ability of a city-region to effectively rescale the exercise of power (to build a new 'structured coherence' at the city-regional scale) depends on the incorporation of social movements (both on the Left and on the Right). This integration or co-optation can work only if social movements have themselves re-territorialized their social claims at that city-regional scale.

Upon close analysis, mobilizing strategies in Toronto seem to be reterritorializing at the city-regional scale, particularly in the fields of competitiveness and the environment (although in the latter case the recent provincial Greenbelt initiative exploded the traditional notion of regional scale). In both the new City of Toronto and in the GTA, civil society organizations are struggling to stay afloat and develop new metropolitan and regional identities in a post-amalgamation environment. In transportation, environmental and internationalization politics the reorientation towards the larger scale of operation has just begun. This process remains uneven, with, for example, an odd lack of movement activity in the field of transportation (compared to other cities such as Los Angeles). In the environmental field, there is much action (particularly on the issues of waste and urban sprawl), but it remains tightly connected to the old City of Toronto (more than at the regional scale). In terms of competitiveness, social movement activity has been largely co-opted with the agenda of economic elites in the TCSEA. There is, of course, important sectors of the Left that are still struggling against the neoliberal competitiveness logic, but they remain concentrated in the inner-city. The Toronto case is however notable for the degree to which transnational capital has captured the political agenda and filled the vacuum created by the lack of city-regional institutions. But beyond these 'formal' social movements, one needs to acknowledge there is action and mobilization at the city-regional scale even if it is not always visible. The region has also become very relevant in the public discourse.

In Montreal, for social and political actors, it seems very difficult to imagine collective action at the scale of the amalgamated city or at the scale of the city-region, even if the political opportunity structure for such mobilization is wide open given the many (often contradictory) institutional reforms implemented. Social movements continue to mobilize mostly at the borough and municipal scales, as it has been the case since the heydays of the Montreal Citizens Movement.⁸ This can be explained by the fact that the political rescaling operated by the Quebec government since the late 1990s has reinforced the weight of politicians and technocrats in the regulation process. Indeed, while the Quebec government has traditionally worked hand in hand with civil society organizations (which have served as an important support base for the national affirmation project), the neoliberal state restructuring project implemented since the mid-1990s (by both the Parti Québécois and the Liberal Party) has transferred responsibilities to local officials. Civil society organizations now have to negotiate more and more directly with provincial representatives. The situation is very different in Toronto, where the absence of state institutions at the city-regional scale makes it a relevant space for social and economic mobilizations. In the case of Montreal, the fact that local actors choose to ignore the metropolitan scale, is also related to the resources available to social actors as well as to their legitimacy. Local actors mainly receive their funding from provincial government, which means they should focus their energies to alleviate social problems where their expression is most obvious, that is to say at the scale of the borough or the neighborhood, instead of taking part in political and social conflicts or challenging the authority of elected officials. In many ways, collective action by community organizations or by civil society's actors has been channeled by the Provincial government's financing of their activities.

There is also another reason why local actors did not choose to act at the metropolitan scale and prefer the borough level. With municipal and metropolitan reform, the boroughs gained more power to manage public services. This is true at least for the boroughs within the limits of the old city of Montreal, where collective action has been particularly dynamic since the 1960s regarding the defense of social policies and the creation of social solidarity networks. In this respect, the borough level appeared to be particularly attractive to community and local actors. These actors are used to act at this level and/or at the provincial one where the main

⁸ This is at least what was observed within a research on local development at the metropolitan scale in Montreal. Traditionally, local development in the urban context has been defined at the level of neighborhoods. If in theory with the influence of globalization, social actors, particularly those involved in local communities, should be turning toward the metropolitan scale because this level is pertinent not only for economic development but also for managing environmental problems, this is not what has been observed, during an investigation conducted in 2003 about the activities of community organizations in Montreal. For that research, a selection of 16 community organizations located on 4 different areas of the city-region (one neighborhood and one borough of the central city, and two outer suburbs) were identified for in-depth investigation. The research examined empirically the practices of community organizations and their actors, particularly their approach and plans for local development and their commitment to local democracy. Even though those actors are willing to recognize the importance of the metropolitan scale in their discourse, in their daily practices the metropolitan reality remains absent (see Fontan et al., 2006).

resources are located. Changing their routine in that respect could bring uncertainty. And this is certainly true if we take into account the fact that they know that the governing bodies at that specific level do not control the type of resources they are looking for.

Depending on places and national contexts, city-regional state capacities vary (for example, some focus on competitiveness, others on neo-keynesian compromises). In [Table 1](#), we have summarized (and simplified) the main characteristics of city-regional political spaces in Montreal and Toronto. This uneven geography of emerging political spaces challenges existing schemes for both state intervention and activism at multiple scales. In this institutional, territorial, and political flux, the goal for public policy-making is to stabilize a place for exchanges between institutions at the city-regional, provincial, and national levels. The extent to which one can speak of the emergence of a collective actor at the city-regional scale which affects intergovernmental relations and, more generally, the very role of the state in society and in the economy, depends on the degree of consensus in each city-region.

Overarching social and technical infrastructure issues such as the control of sprawl, the easing of transportation gridlock, and the provision of water and sewerage services stretch the regional imagination and policy making capacities of politicians, experts, corporations and activists across the urban region ([Erie, 2004](#)). Citizens everywhere cross traditional urban/suburban, ethnic, racial and class divides in fashioning a new urban political ecology that encompasses notions of environmental justice and regional ecological integrity ([Pastor et al., 2000](#); [Wolch et al., 2004](#); [Desfor and Keil, 2004](#); [Brenner, 2004](#)). Various actors will continue to struggle and interact with the aim of creating a structured coherence of the metropolitan region. However, the systemic, urban forces defending the status quo and the continued expansion of the space of accumulation and commerce will not cease to run up against the limits imposed on them by the insurgent practices of everydayness based in the lived urban experiences of urban collectives ([Lefebvre, 2003](#)).

In both urban regions which we have looked at in this paper, processes of rescaling have occurred in various directions. Using concepts derived from Neil Brenner's magisterial study of urban governance rescaling in Europe (2004: 267-294), we can conclude:

1. Rescaling (back) upward: metropolitan reform:

Both Toronto and Montreal have been remade into metropolitan regions of a new scale. Nothing in their recent history, however, suggests that there is stability in the newly found spatial compromises struck between various territorial interests in the urban regions. In Montreal, the de-amalgamation process slowed down municipal institutions for two years. Uncertainties at the scale of the new City and the city-region remain important as the new institutional configuration is far from being stabilized. We will need to wait a few years before these newly created institutions will be able to function with clear rules accepted by all. In Toronto political actors have begun consider various new models of up-scaling to a super-regional level of governance, possibly as extensive as the Golden Horseshoe area, without, however, considering the creation of state institutions as it is the case in Montreal.

Table 1
City-regional political spaces in Montreal and Toronto

	Montreal	Toronto
Main state institutions and public-private partnerships active in the city-region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Montreal Metropolitan Community ● Agence métropolitaine de transport ● 5 provincial administrative regions ● 7 Conférences régionales d'élus ● Municipalités régionales de comté ● Megacities of Longueuil, Montreal, and Laval ● De-amalgamated suburban municipalities ● Boroughs within the City of Montreal ● Montreal International ● Conseil d'Agglomération 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance ● Greater Toronto Airport Authority ● Greenbelt area of regulation ● Megacity of Toronto ● Suburban municipalities ● Regional councils outside of Toronto (Halton, Peel, Durham, York) ● Waterfront Revitalization Corporation
Main civil society coalitions active at the city-regional scale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal ● Conseil Régional de l'Environnement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Toronto City Summit Alliance ● Metro Network for Social Justice ● Toronto Disaster Relief Committee ● Ontario Coalition Against Poverty ● Toronto-York Regional Labour Council
Influence of economic elites in steering city-regionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Economic elites and entrepreneurial megacities (Montreal, Longueuil, Laval) are tempered by the province and suburban municipalities ● Promotion of high value-added clusters at the regional scale ● Attraction of international organisation headquarters in the city center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Important involvement of transnational capital, as well as locally oriented capital (a Molotchian growth-machine) through the Toronto Board of Trade and the Toronto City Summit Alliance ● Downtown-centered vision of economic development combined with a decentralized vision of capitalization on multicultural diversity
Representations of the region that are prominent in the public discourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Census metropolitan area covering the Island of Montreal, the North Shore, and the South Shore ● The MMC territory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The bioregion confined between the Oak Ridges Moraine, Lake Ontario, the Niagara Escarpment, the Don River, and the Humber River ● The Greater Toronto Area (comprising the communities served by telephone area code 416 and 905) ● The Golden Horseshoe (industrial Southern Ontario) ● The global city (the motor of the Canadian economy)

2. Rescaling outward: interurban cooperation:

Both cities have been crucially important in attempts to make the federal and provincial governments in Canada more responsive to urban issues. Both Mayor

Tremblay in Montreal and Mayors Lastman and Miller in Toronto have been instrumental in the Big City Mayors conference (C5), which has kept up the pressure on upper levels of government in creating a New Deal for Cities.⁹ David Miller has actively sought cooperation with international cities, too, among them are fellow global city regions Berlin, Frankfurt, New York and Chicago.

3. Rescaling (further) downward: the neighborhoods:

There is a marked difference here between Toronto and Montreal. As downward rescaling of urban governance after amalgamation has proved to be pushed politically by what we have described above as NIMBY forces, in Toronto the traditional (in that city) progressive belief in smaller, more local democratic units has resurfaced. Once again, political thinkers and decision-makers have returned to the question of the size of government and are discussing a potential future upward rescaling of the amalgamated city to regional government and a potential future downward rescaling of local government back to some form of sub-municipal division.

This mix of scalar strategies is entirely different in composition and reach than earlier attempts by upper level governments to influence governance at the regional level in Toronto and Montreal. What we can conclude now is that the upward, outward and downward direction of governmental policy initiatives in both cities is ultimately governed by the overall rescaling of governmental ambition to the global scale of action. While local and regional problems continue to be defined and addressed, and while the region as a collective actor gains shape and significance, the real frame of reference in these activities is the globalized territorial competition among economic and political elites in the region. These elites position themselves in a supra-urban game of collective action where common interests are defined at the regional scale of economic activity and where strategic interventions are geared towards that regional scale. For subaltern actors, this redefinition of strategic goals and terrain of action leads to a challenge which changes the arena of politics in fundamental ways: the older municipal and metropolitan frames of reference in political action and activism are abandoned wholesale in favor of a newly regionalized narrative where Montreal and Toronto are cast as players that compete and play in the big league of global city regions. Regional elites in Toronto and Montreal receive constant reinforcement of their homegrown and nurtured ideas that they mean something in the world out there. Michael Harcourt, former premier of British Columbia and now Chair of (former) Prime Minister (Paul Martin's), External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities, chanted the now familiar mantra at a recent OECD meeting in Paris: 'Cities must now compete with each other not just domestically, but with other cities around the world. ... This is because cities function as the economic engines for the country—and to be those engines they must be able to function in the global arena'. But Harcourt also points

⁹ One can arguably say, however, that David Miller sees his role as a pan-Canadian one (helping other large cities getting more powers and resources) more than does Gerard Tremblay (who is more concerned with regaining prestige for Montreal).

to Canada's six largest urban regions (including, of course, Montreal and Toronto) as largely meeting the challenge and setting the pace for the rest of the nation (quoted in Crane, 2006; see also Canada External Advisory Committee, 2006). Confirming the multi-scalar challenges we have analyzed for Toronto and Montreal in our paper, Harcourt's report clearly states: 'At the level of the CMA or city-region, the main challenge is to sustain continuing economic progress and raise the potential of poorer performers. At the neighborhood level, an emerging problem within most CMAs is the negative effects arising from concentrating poverty—places are becoming less clean, less green and much more mean. And at the wider environmental level, city growth patterns could affect strategies directed to the issue of climate change' (Canada External Advisory Committee, 2006: 8). Despite such keen and emphatic endorsement of the regional scale as the one that matters in a concert of decision-making at other scales, local actors continue to struggle to keep pace with the newly regionalized/globalized elites and the new national recognition of urban matters. As tremendous challenges of global integration both haunt and entice regional elites, localized (downscaled) collective consumption issues, welfare state concerns and housing needs, regionalized (scale-stretched) environmental metabolics (water, trash, air, etc) and metropolitan cultural issues (racism, diversity) continue to be regulated in the interstices of the new global governance architecture. While elites articulate clearly their intention and strategy to 'globalize', local actors (individual and collective) are largely concerned with the mundane issues related to the cost of reproduction (daycare, housing, food security) and the social relationships of their community to other communities (schools, police, etc.). Once again, these scalar incongruities between regional elite concerns about global fit and everyday living conditions in urban communities—socio-economic, cultural, environmental—, which we could observe in both Toronto and Montreal, are also recognized by the Harcourt report, which recommends to the Canadian government a stronger but also more focused role in urban matters, 'a place-based approach to policy making', which recognizes the topological differences in an otherwise 'flattened' vision takes into account context of community building. Rather than prioritizing a specific scale, the report opts for a mix of state spatial strategies through a 'double devolution': 'Regional governments in the OECD, similar in scale to Canadian provinces and territories, have crucial strategic roles in selecting priorities for places, policies and programs. Intercity networks, city-region effects and city-to-rural connections are valuable aspects of development that are less than national in scope and more than municipal in their functioning. Devolution to the provinces and territories is important but we believe that the fundamental necessity for better management of places will be for provinces and territories in turn, to devolve clear tasks and resource bases to municipalities. Devolution stopping at the provincial and territorial level misses the point' (Canada External Advisory Committee, 2006: 22). These are strong, and we believe, largely correct guidelines for what the report calls a 'modernization' of Canadian government. As our case studies of Montreal and Toronto have shown, however, any governance restructuring, regardless of similarities in context, content and intent of government-imposed rescaling and state spatial strategy, will lead to diverse and sometimes unpredictable

results. This is due to the irrepressible dynamics and contested nature of political processes through which the urban region shapes its collective agency. As we could see, there are many differences, historical and current, between how these contestations have played themselves out in Ontario/Toronto and Quebec/Montreal. But there are also enough similarities here to continue studying these two Canadian metropolitan areas as comparable units of collective action in a rapidly shifting, globalizing urban world.

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