

Explaining Municipal Multiculturalism Policy Processes in Urban Canada:

An Exploration of the Social Diversity Hypothesis

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I. Introduction

Canada’s commitment to official multiculturalism establishes a normative framework that prescribes a proactive public role in facilitating positive ethno-cultural relations and inter-ethnic equity. This commitment is entrenched in the Constitution and is implemented through a variety of policies and programs in Canada including, for instance, anti-racism programs, employment equity initiatives and immigrant settlement policies. Although Canada’s official multiculturalism is a model of ethno-cultural relations, given immigration patterns in Canada, the model is also, as Canadian political philosopher Will Kymlicka (1998) puts it, “a response to the *pressures that Canada exerts on immigrants* to integrate into common institutions [emphasis added]” (Kymlicka 1998, 40).

Since close to three quarters of Canada’s immigrants choose to settle in its three largest city-regions - Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal – Canada’s multicultural reality is largely an urban, and a highly spatially concentrated one. The social, economic and political consequences of immigration and its associated changes in ethno-racial demographics in Canada are most immediate in these locales. Furthermore, the uneven spatial realities of multiculturalism will only grow as immigration continues. For instance, Statistics Canada predicts that by 2017, close to three-quarters of Canada’s “visible minorities”¹ will be living in Toronto, Vancouver, or Montreal with approximately 45 percent choosing to live in the Toronto region alone (Statistics Canada 2005). In Canada, questions of immigrant integration, ethnic relations, and ethno-cultural accommodation have very important spatial dimensions.

How have the governments that are closest to Canada’s multicultural reality responded to the dramatic changes in the ethnic composition of their populations? A growing literature documents a great deal of variation in the extent to which municipal governments in Canada’s three most important immigrant receiving city regions respond to immigration by adapting their services and governance structures to incorporate immigrants’ preferences and to increase immigrant access to services (Tate and Quesnel 1995; Wallace and Frisken 2000; Edgington and Hutton 2002; Good 2005; Good 2006; Graham Philips 2006). In other words, they vary in the extent to which their responses to social change implement the normative principles of Canada’s country-wide commitment to “official multiculturalism.”

¹ Statistics Canada adopts the *Employment Equity Act* (1986)’s definition of “visible minorities” as “persons, other than Aboriginal people, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”.

Why do municipalities vary so significantly in their multiculturalism policy-making efforts? The paper addresses this question through engagement with the “social diversity interpretation” of politics (Hero 1998). This theoretical framework, which was pioneered by Rodney Hero (1998; 2003; 2007), a student of state and local politics in the United States, argues that there is a causal relationship between the *ethnic configurations* of political units and their *policy outcomes, policy processes, and institutional development*. The paper explores the relationship between multiculturalism policy development and the ethnic configurations of seven municipalities located in English-speaking Canada’s most significant immigrant-receiving city regions: Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Markham in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Vancouver, Richmond and Surrey in Greater Vancouver (GV). In section II, the paper begins by outlining Rodney Hero’s social diversity perspective. Then, in section III, the paper introduces two categories of ethnic configurations that can be found in the Canadian cases – *biracial* and *multiracial* – and develops hypotheses as to how these social contexts might affect policy processes, policy outputs and institutions in these locales. Next, in section IV, the paper presents the findings through a social diversity perspective lens, describing differences in multiculturalism policy outputs, community dynamics and governance arrangements. Section V analyses the findings and assesses the social diversity perspective’s ability to explain variation in the cases. It concludes that although the pattern is not perfect, on the whole, there is compelling evidence to suggest that the ethnic configuration of a municipal society matters to the politics of multiculturalism. Section VI turns to a discussion of whether the social diversity interpretation might offer a cross-national comparative framework within which to study the urban governance of multiculturalism and immigration. The paper concludes (in section VII) with a call to develop a common cross-national social diversity interpretation of the impact of immigration on the politics of local communities.

II. The Social Diversity Interpretation of American Politics

In his pioneering work on American state and local politics entitled *Faces of Inequality* (1998), Rodney Hero develops a new interpretation of politically relevant variation across American states (and to a lesser degree also counties) that rivals dominant theoretical paradigms of American politics. In this work, Hero puts forward and tests the hypothesis that the *ethnic configurations* of political units affect their *political processes, political institutions, and public policies*. Hero develops a threefold typology of ethnic configurations – *homogenous, bifurcated, and heterogeneous* – and theorizes how they might affect the political dynamics or “types of political pluralism” of states. *Table 1* summarizes Hero’s categories:

Table 1: Rodney Hero’s (1998) Ethnic Configurations

Racial/Ethnic Groups	State “Types”		
	Homogeneous	Heterogeneous	Bifurcated
White (Northern and Western Eurpn)	High	Moderate	High
White Ethnic (Southern and Eastern Eurpn)	Low	High	Low
Minority (Black/Latino/Asian)	Low	Moderate	High
Type of political pluralism	Consensual	Competitive	Hierarchical/Limited
Examples	MN, WI, WA, UT	NY, MA, NJ	SC, AL, MS, TX, CA, AZ

This table (with the exception of the last row) reproduces Figure 1.1 in Hero’s seminal work (Hero 1998, 8).

He explores this hypothesis through extensive, systematic, large N empirical analysis of a wide range of dependent variables in all 50 American states and some counties as well. For instance, Hero examines the relationship between the ethnic configuration of states on the one hand and voter turnout, strength of party organization, level of democratization, issue polarization in public opinion, interest group strength, formal governmental institutions, and public policy outcomes in several policy areas on the other hand (Hero 1998, 22). He shows that aggregate measures of policy success often hide that policies vary in ways that affect the *relative equality* of minority racial and ethnic groups. Hero (1998) finds that there are different “faces of inequality” in political units with different ethnic configurations.

Of particular interest here is Hero’s examination of the influence of ethnic configurations on policy debates and general attitudes in the United States that target ethno-racial minorities and immigrants specifically. For instance, he finds that the adoption and support of *official English* policies, which he describes as measures that are “mechanisms of exclusion rather than assimilation ... [that] condemn the multicultural traditions of minority populations”. As he notes, such measures “threaten the continuity of services that are necessary for participation in the political process” (Hero 1998, 108). They threaten support for what Canadian policy-makers refer to as “multiculturalism policies”. He finds a strong relationship between patterns of ethnic diversity and this policy alternative. More specifically, he finds that official English measures are more likely to be supported and adopted in *bifurcated* and *homogenous* locales and least likely in heterogeneous social contexts (Hero 1998, 108). He builds upon Citrin and others (1990) who found that support for English only policies was strongest in Southern states whose populations were primarily Anglo-Saxon with few foreign-born residents (including Hispanics and Asians) and in the four bifurcated states – including Arizona, California, Colorado, and Florida – that experienced the largest influxes of immigrants between 1970 and 1980 these measures were adopted through voter initiative (Citrin et al. 1990 in Hero 1998, 109). In addition, homogeneous states such as North Dakota, New Hampshire, Montana, and South Dakota all adopted official English measures over the 1980s and 1990s (Hero 1998, 109). Furthermore, drawing upon Link and Oldendick’s (1996) work on white attitudes toward ethno-racial minorities in general as well as equal opportunity and multiculturalism, Hero notes that regional differences were apparent in ways that support the social diversity interpretation (Hero 1998, 122). As the social diversity interpretation implies, “the context within which individuals and/or groups are situated is as, if not more, important than the values or ideas that people “bring with them” or “have within”” (Hero 1998, 10). His work suggests that social context influences the social construction of ethno-racial/ethno-cultural difference.

Hero also advances hypotheses concerning how these configurations might exert their causal effect. In his conceptualization, in *homogeneous* states a “consensual pluralism” will exist because of “an underlying consensus arising from homogeneity” (Hero 1998, 16). According to Hero, the greater diversity in *heterogeneous* states leads to greater levels of competition among ethno-racial groups – a “competitive pluralism”. Finally, in Hero’s conceptualization, a bifurcated context “leads to hierarchical or limited pluralism” that is “historically manifested in various legal and political constraints” in these states (Hero 1998, 16).

III. Developing a Canadian Social Diversity Interpretation

Drawing inspiration from Hero's (1998) social diversity perspective, Kristin Good (2005) deduces two non-homogeneous ethnic configuration using Statistics Canada Census (2001) data—*multiracial* and *biracial*. In her conceptualization, a *multiracial* municipal society is one in which visible minorities form a *high proportion of the overall population* and in which the *visible minority population is highly diverse*. In *biracial* municipalities, *visible minorities also form a high proportion of the overall visible minority population*, however, in such social contexts, the *largest visible minority group forms more than 50 percent of the overall visible minority population*. In other words, a *concentration* of a single visible minority (and largely immigrant) group characterizes biracial municipalities (Good 2006). *Multiracial* municipalities' visible minority populations are more diverse. In all cases there is a great deal of overlap between the visible minority and foreign-born populations.

Among the cases in the seven-city sample discussed here, Toronto, Mississauga and Brampton are *multiracial* and Vancouver, Richmond, Markham and Surrey are *biracial*. *Appendix 1* illustrates the composition of these municipalities' visible minority populations.

How might one expect the ethnic configuration of a municipal society to influence policy development, institutional development, and community dynamics? A number of hypotheses can be derived from the social diversity interpretation and the American urban politics literature.

First, one might expect that the ethnic configuration of a municipality would affect the nature of *collective action problems* in the community. For instance, where there is a large number of a single ethno-racial minority group, that group might more easily develop an array of ethno-specific community institutions and social ties that facilitate overcoming collective action problems. To the extent that numbers and spatial concentration matter to the ability of ethno-racial minorities to develop social capital through community institutions, one might expect that the dominant immigrant community in a biracial municipality might have an easier time mobilizing for political action. This might, for instance, influence the immigrant community's ability to pressure a municipality to respond to its concerns or to elect members of its community to local councils.

Second, and related to the first, the ethnic configuration of a municipality might influence whether and how governance arrangements emerge at the local level. Given the very tight fiscal constraints² under which municipalities operate, a great deal of the urban politics literature deals with how local leaders develop the capacity to respond to social change. The dominant theoretical paradigm in the urban politics literature argues that capacity develops through coalition-building whereby local leaders form lasting relationships within which they pool their resources to achieve an agreed upon local agenda. The business community is a central partner in urban coalitions since it possesses a disproportionate share of the material resources in local communities.

Third, according to the social diversity interpretation, one would expect to observe changes local community dynamics – and *types of political pluralism* – as ethnic configurations shift. According to Hero's "social diversity interpretation," differing forms of political pluralism are a "causal mechanism" that explains variations in policy outcomes and institutions.

Fourth, since *multiculturalism policies* are designed to address barriers to ethno-racial equity in access public, social and economic institutions, one might expect a relationship between

² These constraints are both institutional (in the sense that municipalities have a limited range of own source revenues and other fiscal policy instruments from which to chose) and arise from cities need to compete with one another for residents and investment (a political economy constraint).

local leaders' decisions to adopt them and the ethnic configuration of a municipal society. Multiculturalism policies assume that if one were to disaggregate policy outcomes and to assess the extent to which ethno-racial minorities benefit from public policies, that the level of benefit would vary. They are meant to address the very disparities that Rodney Hero (1998; 2007) documents in his work. Thus, if the ethnic configuration matters to the relative equality that ethno-racial minorities experience in policy outcomes, one might expect to find patterns in the relationship between the ethnic configuration of local communities in Canada and their decisions to adopt multiculturalism policies. However, this hypothesis must be considered carefully as although bifurcated contexts resulted in overall better outcomes for ethno-racial minorities, they are also associated with negative white attitudes toward ethno-racial minorities. As we saw above, Hero (1998) found that there were lower levels of white support for multiculturalism initiatives in these political contexts and a greater likelihood that states and counties in these locales would adopt reactionary official English language measures.

IV. Looking At the Findings Through a Social Diversity Interpretation Lens

The seven municipalities discussed below vary in the following related ways³:

- 1) They vary in the extent to which they adopt a *comprehensive* range of *multiculturalism policies* and in the extent to which these policies are *institutionalized* in the municipal civil service (Good 2005; Good 2006).
- 2) They vary in their *policy styles* – whether they are *proactive*, *reactive*, or *inactive* in the multiculturalism policy field (Wallace and Frisken 2000; Good 2005; Good 2006). These two elements are related insofar as the institutionalization of support for the adaptation of municipal services and governance structures fosters a proactive, anticipatory policy style and the failure to do so contributes to reactive policy-making.
- 3) They vary in the extent to which they have developed governance relationships or “urban regimes” to build the capacity to manage immigration and ethno-racial change. Furthermore, where local leaders have formed coalitions that are responsive to the concerns of immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities, leaders of immigrant settlement organizations and other organizations with multiculturalism-related mandates participate in urban governance.
- 4) They vary in the *types of political pluralism* that have emerged in response to changing ethno-cultural demographics as well as the *nature of political debates* concerning immigration and multiculturalism.

To what extent can a social diversity interpretation of local politics contribute to our understanding of the ways in which the politics and policy-making processes of municipal communities in Canada's immigrant-magnet city regions have varied in response to large-scale immigration? Do municipalities with “biracial” and “multiracial” configurations respectively

³ The data discussed in this section were collected through analysis of policy documents, municipal websites, newspapers and close to 100 interviews with community leaders in the municipalities in the sample including local political leaders, civil servants, community leaders and business leaders.

respond in similar enough ways as to constitute a “bundle”? And, if so how does the ethnic configuration matter?

All *biracial municipalities* have responded to immigration by adopting multiculturalism policies. Of the biracial municipalities in the sample, the *City of Vancouver* has been the most active in its efforts to adapt its services and governance structures to immigrants. It has developed a comprehensive range of multiculturalism policies and has institutionalized support for its multiculturalism policy efforts in the civil service. It has been “responsive” to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities (Good 2005). The three suburban biracial municipalities - the *City of Richmond*, *Town of Markham*, and the *City of Surrey* – have all taken an *ad hoc* approach to multiculturalism policy development. They have been “somewhat responsive” to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities (Good 2005).

The extent to which the City of Vancouver has institutionalized support for its multiculturalism policy initiatives is unique among the biracial municipalities. The city’s Social Planning Department has hired a “Multicultural Social Planner,” it has established a separate office to facilitate corporate-wide change – the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office - and has created the Hastings Institute, an arms-length not for profit, city-owned corporation that provides diversity training to a variety private and public sector organizations (Good 2005; Good 2006). These agencies assist in the development and implementation of a wide-range of multiculturalism policies. In addition, the city’s “responsive” approach to managing ethno-cultural relations is evident insofar as it directs a significant portion of its direct service grants to community organizations that serve ethno-racial minorities and immigrants.⁴ These grants address both immediate settlement needs of immigrants and contribute to the development of community capacity on the longer term. These initiatives reflect and support the city’s *comprehensive* approach and *proactive* policy style in the field of multiculturalism policy.

In Richmond and Markham, race relations advisory committees have played a central role in managing their responses to social change. The two municipalities have also begun to translate some city information into Chinese and line departments in the municipalities have made efforts to adapt their services to the preferences of their immigrant communities. However, as will be seen below, the evolution of multiculturalism policy in these two locales tends to be *reactive*. More specifically, policy responses in these municipalities tend to be adopted in reaction to “race relations” crises, inter-cultural misunderstandings, and backlash in the community.

In Surrey, departments and agencies that deliver services on the ground have initiated its most important initiatives in diversity policy. Surrey’s Parks, Recreation and Culture Department has led in this policy area. For instance, in 1996, it launched its *Task Force on Intercultural Inclusivity: Reaching Out in Surrey* to identify and address barriers to equal access of minorities to recreation services. Furthermore, in 2000, the city developed a marketing plan to target ethno-cultural minorities. The city’s libraries have also adapted their services and play a community engagement function. The city also has an inter-department committee on multiculturalism issues. However, a corporate commitment to multiculturalism policy objectives is lacking in Surrey.

In the three suburban biracial municipalities have been “somewhat responsive” to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities in their communities. Their policy responses are limited and *ad hoc* – they respond to the ethnic relations challenge of the day.

⁴ For instance, in its 2005 budget, the City of Vancouver directed 25 percent of its direct service grants (which represent $\frac{3}{4}$ of its total budget for grants of approximately \$ 3.4 million) to such organizations.

The history of advisory committees in Richmond and Markham illustrate the emergence of new community dynamics in these two biracial cities. They also demonstrate that there have been varying levels of political support for a municipal role in intercultural relations as well as their *reactive* policy style in multiculturalism policy development.

In 1990, the City of Richmond established its first intercultural committee in reaction to large influxes of Hong-Kong Chinese immigrants to Richmond and a perceived need to adapt municipal institutions to the dramatic shift in the city's social demographics. However, it was not long before the city shifted its mandate from organizational change to focusing on "promoting harmonious intercultural relationships" (City of Richmond 2002) in response to community *backlash* against immigration. A city report summarizes the situation in 1994:

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

In response, in 1995, the city's advisory committee redirected its efforts in multiculturalism policy from a focus on organizational change to facilitating intercultural bridges between the Chinese community and long-standing residents. For instance, it established "Good Neighbour Month," a street banner program celebrating multiculturalism and set up displays on the Official Community Plan in Aberdeen Mall, Richmond's first and very controversial "Asian mall,"⁵ which was developed in 1992 as an alternative to Vancouver's Chinatown (Huhtala 2004).

Intercultural misunderstandings continue in Richmond. In fact, the genesis of Richmond's current advisory committee – the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee - also lies in a heated community conflict over the location of a group home in the city (Townsend 2004, interview). However, in this case, it was the Chinese community that mobilized in large numbers to protest a council decision to relocate a group home into a predominantly Chinese neighbourhood. Although this example represents a classic case of a pervasive pattern of NIMBYism in the politics of local planning, according to city officials, the issue escalated within the Chinese community in part because of misinformation about the nature of group homes in Canada that was circulated in the Chinese-language media (Townsend 2004, interview). The city's reactive policy style in relation to multiculturalism policy challenges was again illustrated. The city tried to resist taking action for more than eight months before it finally established the *Group Homes Task Force* due to the persistence of Richmond's Chinese community (Huhtala 2005, interview). In the end, the *Task Force* became a massive public education exercise. The city's communications strategy – including an innovative media watch program that monitors Chinese language newspapers in Richmond – is a by-product of this conflict.

After extensive community consultations following the group homes conflict, RIAC developed an ambitious strategic plan. What is perhaps most interesting about the plan is that it is just as much (if not more) of a response to the concerns of long-standing residents as it is to the

⁵ See Lai (2001) in Huhtala (2004) for a description of an "Asian mall".

concerns of immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities. For instance, it identifies the issue of non-English signage in the community as one of its key communications issues (RIAC 2004, 2).

Markham's reactive policy style and the way in which immigration changed the nature of political pluralism there is also most evident in its history of race relations advisory committees and special task forces. In 1988, the Town of Markham established two ethno-cultural advisory committees – the Committee on Race and Ethnocultural Equity of Markham (1988-1995) and the Heritage and Multiculturalism Committee (1988-91). The city reconstituted the former committee in 1995 when it disbanded in the midst of a race relations controversy. The controversy was sparked by comments then Deputy Mayor Carole Bell made at a York region meeting that were perceived to be racist by many in the community. Her comments were critical of the concentration of Chinese immigrants in Markham. She said: “The *growing concentration of ethnic groups is causing conflicts* in Markham” and “[t]he weakness of multiculturalism ... comes when there is a concentration, when you are getting only one group of people [emphasis added]” (Queen 1995). She also added a personal statement: “I wouldn’t come to the region and I would go because of it – and I’m saying that truthfully” (Queen 1995). A coalition of leaders in Markham’s immigrant community mobilized in reaction to her comments to demand a public apology. Dr. Ken Ng and Marlene Magado, prominent leaders in Markham’s Chinese and Filipino communities respectively co-chaired the coalition. An apology was never made despite the concerted pressure of the Coalition. Instead, Bell decided to “clarify” her position in a number of letters to the editor of the local newspaper, raising concerns about the number of Asian malls being developed in Markham as well as the lack of English language signage in these mall developments. However, her suggestion that residents who were the “backbone” of Markham were leaving because of immigration is what particularly aggravated the situation (Bell 1995). The Coalition of Concerned Canadians garnered the support of national organizations and of the Mayors of many of the other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area (Good 2006). However, most notably, despite the massive mobilization against Bell’s comments, both municipal political leaders and a large segment of long-standing residents in Markham mobilized to support her. For instance, according to a *Markham Economist and Sun* report, about four hundred people stood and applauded then Deputy Mayor Bell as she entered council chambers on August 28, 1995, a week after the Coalition of Concerned Canadians made deputations to council in a council chambers crowded with its own supporters.

Eventually, then Mayor Don Cousens (1993-2006) convened the *Task Force on Race Relations* (1995) to study the issue. Following the *Task Force Report*, the Markham Race Relations Committee was re-established in 1997 to manage ethno-cultural relations on an ongoing basis and to assist in implementing the *Task Force's* recommendations. The current committee’s mandate is to encourage harmonious intercultural relations and, to a lesser extent, to promote organizational change. The committee hosts an annual festival called “The Many Faces of Markham”; engages in public education campaigns; offers diversity training sessions to Town staff, and does “corporate outreach” to strengthen relationships between business, faith groups, and other institutions in Markham and the Town. According to Marlene Magado, the former co-chair of the Coalition of Concerned Canadians, the Town has become more responsive to its ethno-cultural diversity since the “Carole Bell incident” (Magado 2003, interview).

Surrey’s community dynamics have also changed in response to immigration. Community leaders in Greater Vancouver note the prevalence of racism in Surrey. For instance, one community leader mentioned: “There is a relatively rampant racism in the lower mainland. We have the feeling on the one hand that the visible minorities get a better shake than Caucasians and

of course visible minorities know that it's not true" (Hardy 2004, interview). This community informant suggested that racism is more of a problem in Surrey than in other municipal communities that have received many immigrants in Greater Vancouver. For instance, in his view, in Vancouver and in Richmond "people practice the simple courtesy of at least pretending tolerance" whereas "in Surrey there is a significant part of the population that proudly resent multiculturalism" (Hardy 2004, interview).

Nevertheless, the new dynamic between the long-standing residents who are largely "white," and the large South Asian immigrant community only describes part of the new dynamics there. Many informants described a highly diverse and even divided South Asian immigrant community making statements such as there are many South Asian "interest groups" and the community is "very political" (Basi 2004 interview). According to community leaders, religious cleavages appear to be a central source of division within the South Asian community. A Superintendent with the RCMP also mentioned that intra-group violence is a problem within the South Asian community (Hall 2004, interview). Despite its concentration, the South Asian community appears to lack the "social capital" to organize to pressure the municipality to respond due to in-group divisions.

Vancouver's community dynamics were also affected by large-scale immigration to the city. In a general way, many residents blamed immigrants for displacing them from the housing market by driving up housing values and ultimately also property taxes (Ley et al. 2001). In addition, many informants in the community cited conflicts over architectural preferences in housing as an area of particular contention between the long-standing residents and Vancouver's large Hong-Kong Chinese immigrant community. For instance, the practice of some immigrants who would tear down existing homes and re-build larger ones that deviated from the neighbourhood's planning norms became known as the "monster homes" issue. According to geographer David Ley (2001), resistance on the part of the long-standing community to the housing preferences of newcomers was a general phenomenon and in some neighbourhoods – namely the upscale, well-established neighbourhoods such as Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale – it was "sustained". In 1992, the city hosted a public hearing on the matter that led to a compromise position on the issue (Ley et al. 2001, 14). David Ley and others (2001) describe the compromise as surprising due to the expectation that the city would favour the long-standing socio-economic elites that live in neighbourhoods such as Shaughnessy and Kerrisdale (Ley et al. 2001, 14). However, as we will discover below, this outcome is less puzzling when one considers the connection between the city's response to its immigrant population and its general economic development paradigm.

The new community dynamics that emerged in *biracial* municipalities contributed, in varying degrees, to the emergence of new governance arrangements to create a joint public-private capacity to accommodate and manage change in the ethno-cultural demographics of their populations. In Markham and Richmond lasting public-private governance relationships have developed around the goal of fostering positive race relations between the largely Chinese immigrant community on the one hand and the long-standing (and largely white) community on the other. These "informal institutions" were a by-product of race relations crises and intercultural misunderstandings in these locales. These relationships are anchored in these cities' advisory committees but are also constituted by strong informal channels of communication and resource pooling between the city and leaders in civil society.

The emergence of governance arrangements to manage social change has been facilitated by the development of strong community-based institutions that represent the Chinese

communities in Richmond and Markham. The strength of the Chinese community in Richmond (and other municipalities in GV) is evident in the strength of S.U.C.C.E.S.S., an immigrant settlement agency that is exceptional insofar as it receives 40 percent of its revenue through donations and fundraising events whereas most settlement agencies rely almost exclusively on government funding (Good 2006). The Federation of Chinese Canadians in Markham is also resourced very well. It integrates the business and social sectors in the Chinese community. The leader of this organization (Dr. Ken Ng) was one of the co-chairs of the *ad hoc* committee and its successor, the Coalition of Concerned Canadians, which organized in response to Carole Bell's controversial remarks. In addition, in both of these municipalities, prominent developers and other business owners are members of the immigrant community.

In Surrey, more limited public-private relationships have emerged at the departmental level. However, these relationships are more tenuous than in Richmond and Markham as, due to cleavages within Surrey's largely South Asian immigrant community, civil servants and "street level bureaucrats" (Lipsky 1980), have a difficult time discerning who the community's leaders are. In other words, the lack of cohesion among Surrey's large South Asian immigrant population, appears to be an important reason why stronger governance arrangements have not emerged. In addition, because of divisions, the community has not been able to translate its numbers into collection action to pressure the city to respond more comprehensively to its concerns. Furthermore, whereas backlash against immigration is clearly a problem, – recall a community leader's comment that in Surrey long residents "proudly resent multiculturalism" – in the absence of intra-group solidarity, the South Asian community has been unable to fight its *racialization* in the community.

In Vancouver, the governance arrangements that have emerged to manage immigration and multiculturalism policy are much stronger than in the suburban biracial municipalities. There appear to be several reasons for this that are related to policy capacity and framing. As the urban core municipalities in Metro Vancouver, the City of Vancouver has a greater level of corporate capacity and a strong base of immigrant and ethno-cultural community organizations exists there. Moreover, local leaders in Vancouver, link immigration to the city's economic development objectives, which focus on its status as a Pacific Rim metropolis (Hutton 1998, 97). As Kris Olds (2001) observes, in Vancouver, both Pacific Rim specific institutions (such as the Asia-Pacific Foundation, the International Finance Centre of Vancouver, and the Hong Kong Business Association) as well as "mainstream" institutions such as (such the Greater Vancouver Real Estate Board and the Vancouver Board of Trade) are interlinked and "command considerable public and private resources that are used to *structure the nature of policies and processes* which influence Vancouver's future [emphasis added]" (Olds 2001, 92). According to Olds (2001), "the reach and influence of the Pacific rim contingent [in Vancouver] is long, sinuous, and hegemonic" (Olds 2001, 92). The city's institutionalized commitment to supporting multiculturalism, coupled with a strong, proactive group of private sector leaders contributes to its "power to" manage ethno-cultural relations.

The social diversity interpretation also leads one to expect a correlation between the ethnic configuration of a municipality and the way in which institutional goals are oriented (Hero 1998, 20). The governance arrangements in the three biracial municipalities that have developed such arrangements – Richmond, Markham and Vancouver – serve to broker interests and identities.

They serve as an intercultural bridge.⁶ Furthermore, in all three municipalities, and in Vancouver in particular, the business community supports the municipality in this goal.

Multiracial municipalities are at the polar opposite ends of the “responsiveness” spectrum. The City of Toronto has been “responsive” to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities, whereas, the *City of Mississauga* and the *City of Brampton* have both been “unresponsive” to these populations.

The City of Toronto’s response to immigration has been to develop a comprehensive range of multiculturalism policies and to institutionalize support for these policies at the apex of power in the municipal civil service – the City Manager’s Office. In Toronto, the “Diversity Management and Community Engagement Unit” in the City Manager’s office supports and monitors the implementation of the city’s multitude of formal (written) multiculturalism policies but is also a flexible unit that initiates action when unanticipated needs arise. It serves as a “catalyst” and “facilitator” of the entire corporation and as a “bridge” between council, the civil service and the community (Lee 2003, interview). For instance, the unit conducts “social audits” of its departments to assess whether they are incorporating multiculturalism policy frameworks into their corporate culture and service delivery (City of Toronto 2004). The city has also established an Access and Equity community grants program to build capacity in its diverse community. The city’s many multiculturalism policy initiatives are too numerous to mention here.

In sharp contrast, the only responses to social change in the suburban multiracial municipalities of Mississauga and Brampton are community festivals and annual “multicultural” (Mississauga) and “multi-faith (Brampton) community breakfasts with the respective mayors of the cities.

In Mississauga and Brampton, immigration and multiculturalism do not appear to have altered the cities’ community dynamics in an obvious way. In particular, one does not observe a general backlash against immigration. As Hazel McCallion, the long-standing Mayor of Mississauga observes, the city simply does not have the “racial confrontation” that exists in Markham (McCallion 2004, interview). One can observe some competition in the immigrant settlement sector in Mississauga due largely to the scarcity of settlement funding (Seepersaud 2004, interview). Similarly, a *Toronto Star* article describes a “turf war” between Brampton’s two most prominent ethno-cultural organizations over which organization would do what in the settlement field (White 1992b). However, this competition for resources does not reflect a more general debate about the impact of immigration and multiculturalism on the community.

Nevertheless, there is some evidence of intra-group competition in these locales. For instance, like in Surrey, there is reason to believe that there are some significant religion-based cleavages within their South Asian communities. For instance, McCallion used an example of a conflict between two Sikh “factions” within the South Asian community to illustrate her approach to managing race relations in the municipality which is to intervene personally (McCallion 2004, interview). A community leader also mentioned that if an Indian candidate were to run in a municipal election, Pakistanis would mobilize against the candidate (Seepersaud 2003, interview). Local municipal officials in Brampton also cited the tendency of the South Asian community to run many candidates in each ward in municipal elections as a reason for the community’s lack of

⁶ For instance, in Richmond, members of RIAC spent a great deal of time debating the philosophy that should guide ethnic relations in Richmond opting to reject *multiculturalism*, a term that had become synonymous with ethnic segregation in their view, and to adopt instead the concept of *interculturalism* to reflect the need for bridges between communities and, most importantly, integration (Schroeder 2004, interview).

electoral success. In other words, there is a great deal of intra-group competitiveness within the South Asian community in Brampton.

In Brampton, former Mayor Peter Robertson (1988-2000) was unable to sustain community interest in the Brampton Race Relations Action Committee due to its diversity. According to the former chair of the committee, there was more interest in the committee within Brampton's Hindu, Sikh, and black communities than there was in its French, German, Croatian, Greek and other communities (Biggs in White 1992a). Again, the diversity of Brampton's South Asian community is evident in Biggs' reference to separate Hindu and Sikh communities. More generally, Brampton's diversity was a barrier to developing a local multiculturalism policy agenda.

Thus, Mississauga and Brampton's pluralism appears to be somewhat competitive (rather than cooperative) but it is also *highly limited* insofar as the competition appears to occur within the two cities' South Asian "communities" and among immigrant settlement and other ethno-racial organizations.

In contrast, Toronto, the final *multiracial* municipality in the sample is characterized by a highly competitive or, perhaps more accurately, *dynamic* form of pluralism. The qualifier is in order as its political pluralism is conducive to both competition and high levels of cooperation. The extent to which Toronto's form of political pluralism is conducive to cooperation is evident in the strong governance arrangements that have developed there as well as in its broad-based urban autonomy movement.

The political strategies of local leaders in Toronto are more radical than in other municipalities in the sample. For instance, unlike immigrant settlement and organizations with ethno-cultural equity mandates in other locales, which prefer to influence the political process through informal communication channels and quiet negotiation, in Toronto these organizations meet both "in the boardroom" and "on the street" (Douglas 2003, interview). Toronto city councillor Shelley Carroll described the more general tendency of organizations – even small "c" conservative organizations like the Toronto Board of Trade – to engage in such strategies especially in their efforts to secure a "New Deal" for the city from upper levels of government (Carroll 2003, interview). This councillor gave the impression that there is a great deal of cooperation and solidarity among a multi-sector group of local leaders and organizations in Toronto (Carroll 2004, interview). Toronto's diversity does not appear to be a barrier to cooperation there.

In addition, evidence of "in-fighting" within immigrant communities is lacking in Toronto. Furthermore, in Toronto, there is strong evidence of ethno-specific social capital insofar as organizations that represent its major immigrant communities are so numerous that they are impossible to list (Good 2006). Leaders of these organizations know each other and cooperate to advocate collectively on behalf of immigrants (2003 and 2004, interviews).

Multiracial municipalities diverge in yet another respect. Urban governance arrangements to respond to multiculturalism did not emerge in Mississauga and Brampton. However, in Toronto, local leaders built strong and inclusive governance arrangements to create the capacity to respond to social change. In fact, in Toronto, immigrant settlement is one of several areas of priority identified by the city's business and social elite (Toronto City Summit Alliance 2003). These leaders co-lead the city in an urban regime arrangement and have developed new institutions such as the Toronto Regional Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) to increase the city's capacity to integrate immigrants into the economy (Good 2007). Immigration issues are also tied to a powerful urban autonomy movement in the city which would like to see a

decentralization of decision-making to the municipality and community. Like in Vancouver, in Toronto, powerful business leaders and city officials tie immigrant settlement goals to the city's economic development objectives.

V. Analysis: Interpreting the Findings

What lessons can one draw from the above analysis? First, the *collective action problem within immigrant populations is more easily overcome in biracial municipalities* since it is unnecessary to create bridges among a diversity of ethno-racial groups to bring the influence of their high numbers to bear on the municipal policy process. Second, one can observe the emergence of new community dynamics in all *biracial* municipalities. In the three biracial municipalities with a concentration of Chinese immigrants, a power struggle between the long-standing and the ethno-racial minority communities developed that centred on the symbolic and aesthetic face of the municipality. In Surrey, there was also backlash against immigration. However, a power struggle was absent as the South Asian community has not mobilized against its *racialization* to the same degree. Thus, a dynamic of community *backlash* and, *where the immigrant community possesses sufficient social capital to mobilize*, also a *counter-reaction* from the immigrant community, appears more likely to develop in municipalities where there is a large concentration of a single ethnic group. These new community dynamics in *biracial* municipalities increase the likelihood that the community will agree that there is an ethnic relations problem, which pushes the issue onto the municipal agenda. Rather unexpectedly, backlash is a central factor that leads to greater levels of responsiveness in biracial municipalities.

Third, when a single group settles in a municipality there is less of an immediate need to integrate since it is more likely that the group will develop an extensive array of ethno-specific institutions. This process has potential positive and negative implications. On the one hand, it appears to contribute to backlash on the part of long-standing residents who argue that the immigrant group is not integrating. On the other, it provides the immigrant community with resources – for instance, ethno-specific social capital - with which to organize to pressure the municipalities to respond to its concerns and to counter backlash should it occur. Finally, it is easier for local leaders to respond to a single immigrant group/ethno-racial minority than to a multiplicity of groups.

Nevertheless, whereas the ethnic configuration of the municipality matters, the *distribution of resources within the municipality and among ethnic groups* matters as well (Good 2005; 2006). At the local level, given municipalities' institutional limits, lack of resources, and perceived need to compete with other municipalities for residents and for business investment (Peterson 1981), they require the support of the business community to manage ethno-racial change. Municipalities in which the business community supports the development of multiculturalism policies are indeed more responsive. For instance, biracial municipalities in which the ethno-cultural "minority" is predominantly Chinese were more responsive than those in which the ethno-cultural minority was South Asian. This appears to be in part because in municipalities where Chinese immigrants predominate, there is also a powerful and cohesive Chinese business community including developers. In addition, the Chinese business community is willing to facilitate municipal responsiveness to the Chinese community by donating and/or "pooling" resources with the municipality (Good 2006). In Vancouver, local leaders tie the city's economic fortunes in a global economy to investment and immigration from Pacific Rim countries (Hutton 1998; Olds

2001). Multiculturalism policies are a by-product of a dominant even “hegemonic” (Olds 2001) economic development paradigm.

However, the *ethnic distribution of resources in civil society* also affects how the long-standing community will *perceive* large-scale immigration. In all biracial municipalities with a concentration of Chinese immigrants, one finds that the ability of the Chinese business community to alter the cultural face of the municipality led to backlash on the part of some members of the long-standing community. For instance, as was discussed above, in Richmond, Markham and Vancouver, it was Asian malls and “monster homes” that changed the cultural landscape of the city dramatically and in a highly visible way.

Furthermore, in all of the *biracial* municipalities with large Chinese immigrant populations, the immigrant community has developed an extensive network of Chinese-specific institutions. The Chinese community appears to possess a great deal of intra-group social capital or “Chinese social capital”. However, as Orr (1999) also observes in his work, social capital is not a substitute for economic capital. The Chinese community possesses high levels of both forms of capital in Vancouver, Richmond and Markham.

In contrast, in Surrey, the only biracial municipality in the sample with a predominantly “South Asian” immigrant community, the immigrant community appears to be more *divided* than Chinese immigrant communities are. The community lacks ethno-specific “South Asian social capital”. Furthermore, in Surrey, the business community does not appear to be pressuring the municipality to adapt its services despite the fact that many of the developers in Surrey are South Asians. At the local level, immigrant inclusion in local governance is a two-step collective action problem. First, the immigrant group must be able to mobilize for collective action at the level of civil society. Second, bridges must be created through the development of public-private governance coalitions – or “urban regimes”. The South Asian community in Surrey has failed to overcome the first level collective action problem. Even the *racialization* of the community has not triggered its mobilization.

This raises the question of why Chinese immigrant communities appear to have higher levels of social capital than South Asian immigrant communities. This finding is apparent in Surrey, but also in Mississauga and Brampton. Statistics Canada’s category “South Asian” is too imprecise. It is clear that future studies are needed to explore whether some immigrant communities have greater levels of social capital than others and why. Immigrant communities that fail to overcome the first order collective action problem (to organize as a community) will neither be able to pressure municipalities to respond to their concerns nor will they be able to participate in policy-productive “urban regimes”.

Similarly, the increased complexity of the first order collective action problem in multiracial municipalities means that it is less likely that immigrants will be included in municipal governance in these locales. One can observe the effects of this factor in Mississauga and Brampton, the two suburban multiracial municipalities in the sample.

One might be tempted to conclude that, due to the cleavages in its South Asian population, Surrey should be considered a multiracial municipality. However, although it shares the divisions within its immigrant community that are inherent to a multiracial context, we see that the way in which the overall community perceives immigration differs. More specifically, *backlash* against immigration appears to be less likely in highly heterogeneous, multiracial municipalities since there is not a perception that a single immigrant group is redefining the cultural norms of the municipality. Municipalities with a reactive policy style need something to react to in order to begin developing multiculturalism policies. In Surrey, despite cleavages within its immigrant

community, long-standing residents have reacted to the arrival of what is perceived to be a single group in large numbers by *racializing* the community. In other words, social context influences both relationships *between the long-standing community and the immigrant population* as well as the *nature of relations within the immigrant population itself*.

As *Appendix 1* indicates, between 2001 and 2006, Brampton shifted from a multiracial to a biracial ethnic configuration. Like Surrey, it now has a concentration of “South Asians” in its population. In this short five year period, its South Asian population has grown from 63,205 to 136,750 members (an increase of 73,745). On the basis of the findings here, one might expect to see a more overt *racialization* of Brampton’s South Asian community in the future. Furthermore, as in Surrey, it is also possible that divisions within a highly diverse South Asian community might continue to make an increase in municipal responsiveness less likely and more difficult. Further investigation is needed to ascertain whether and how this shift will affect Brampton’s community dynamics and policy processes, outputs and institutions in the multiculturalism policy field.

In sum, *biracial* municipalities are either “responsive” or “somewhat responsive” to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities, share similar community dynamics and types of political pluralism as well as have a tendency to develop governance arrangements to manage social change. In contrast, *multiracial* municipalities appear to fall into two groups. What is one to make of the divergence among multiracial municipalities?

The answer lies in Toronto’s exceptionality among multiracial municipalities (Good 2006). The city of Toronto overcame some of the features of ethnic configurations that structure their causal influence. Several differences between Toronto and the other multiracial municipalities on the one hand and similarities between Toronto and Vancouver illustrate this.

First, Toronto differs from its multiracial counterparts and shares more in common with Vancouver insofar as it is the central city in its city region (the GTA). This fact carries with it many implications that affect the city’s capacity to respond to social change effectively including that it has benefited from the investment of resources in civil society (including settlement resources) from upper levels of government for a longer period of time and that immigrant and ethno-racial minority communities have had the time to organize and to create bridges among groups.

Second, the city is the “face” of the city region nationally and globally. As the central city in the GTA, local leaders perceive Toronto and Vancouver as qualitatively different kinds of cities – “global” or “world” cities. Both Toronto and Vancouver connect the attraction, retention and settlement of immigrants to their ability to compete for investment in a global economy, efforts that are supported by stronger levels of leadership in their civil societies than in their suburban counterparts.

Third, Toronto is exceptional in relation to its multiracial suburban counterparts insofar as its population is much larger – approximately 2.5 million people - and its three largest visible minority groups as well as immigrant population are thus also very large (see Tables 2 and 3). In his work, Rodney Hero’s categories of ethnic configurations measure the proportion of ethnic groups in relation to the overall state population. However, he also acknowledges: “it may be the case that a group’s size might also be considered in terms of raw numbers” (Hero 1998, 152). In Toronto, there are very large Chinese, South Asian and Black communities. In each of these communities, if the community were to mobilize, they would be backed by very large numbers of members. Furthermore, unlike any other municipality in the sample, Toronto’s visible minority

and immigrant populations are over one million. As such, these populations are larger than the population of most cities in Canada.

Fourth, the City of Toronto has experienced an exceptional level of institutional upheaval in the last decade (Sancton 2000) – including that it was amalgamated - that led to new patterns of political mobilization in the community (Good 2007). For instance, leaders in the anti-amalgamation movement – called the Citizens For Local Democracy (C4LD) - created bridges among Toronto’s visible minority communities (Siemiatycki et al. 2003). Toronto also suffered disproportionately from budgetary decisions at the federal and provincial levels that led to “downloading” in the mid-1990s (MacMillan 2006; Good 2007). Together, the immediacy of the social impacts of decisions at the federal and provincial levels led to the development of a strong urban autonomy movement that is exceptional in Canada. Whereas municipal leaders in other major cities in Canada support municipal autonomy goals, in Toronto, the movement has the support of a broad-based group of elites in civil society as well (Good 2007). As we saw above, immigrant leaders are included in this alliance and have the support of some of the most powerful business leaders in the country.

Together these factors provide a strong case that Toronto might have “overcome” the difficulties associated with its highly diverse ethnic configuration. More specifically, these differences suggest that the Toronto case cannot be used to generalize the effects of an ethnic configuration on a municipal society and government.

In addition, the divergence between the central city and suburban multiracial municipalities and its significance for the overall value of a “social diversity perspective” of local politics must be considered in light of the very strong evidence of the causal effect of the ethnic configuration on local communities and their municipal governments in *biracial* municipalities. The way in which residents and leaders in Richmond and Markham - two biracial suburban municipalities in two different provinces - reacted to immigration, the debates that arose in the community as well as the way in which the immigrants perceived community reactions are *so strikingly similar* that it appears as though one could take such a municipality and transplant it into another province or even country and similar community dynamics and debates about multiculturalism would occur. As the social diversity interpretation implies, “the context within which individuals and/or groups are situated is as, if not more, important than the values or ideas that people “bring with them” or “have within”” (Hero 1998, 10). The context is “transsubjective” or “transindividual” (Hero 1998, 10). The strong similarities among biracial municipalities in the sample suggest that one could transplant almost any long-standing Canadian individual into a biracial social context and their opinion on the changes occurring in the community would be the same. Similarly, one could expect individual immigrants to react correspondingly to the type of *racialization* that occurs in these locales. The biracial cases provide very strong evidence that social context matters to the nature of political pluralism, institutional development and, ultimately, to policy outputs.

VI. Toward a Cross-national Framework of Urban Governance?

If the ethnic configuration of a municipal unit is significant in the ways described above, then one should to find patterns cross-nationally as well. Furthermore, the degree to which Canadian municipalities vary insofar as they adopt multiculturalism policies/frameworks suggests that national policy context is not completely decisive. Applying Hero (1998)’s pioneering perspective to Canada is, of course, based on this premise. The findings of his large N study contribute further weight to the above findings which were based on a limited seven case comparative research design. However, the categories employed in the analysis of Canadian cities

differ from Hero (1998)'s in ways that reflect the available data in Canada as well as the paper's focus on high-immigration centres. Furthermore, historical differences in race relations and patterns of immigration in Canada and the United States potentially complicate one's efforts to compare. However, since Hero (1998) suggests that one of the primary contributions of his social diversity perspective is that it offers a better explanation of change than the dominant theoretical approaches to the study of state politics in the United States, to the extent that immigration continues to change the face of the United States, we might see more convergence in race relations in the two countries. To what extent can we build upon Hero (1998) and the above findings in our attempt to develop a cross-national research agenda that examines the responsiveness of local governments to immigrants and ethno-cultural minorities?

One growing literature in geography provides evidence to support the value of a cross-national research agenda. The literature on "ethnoburbs" shows that *at least some 'bifurcated' localities in the United States are characterized by highly similar political dynamics as the 'biracial' Canadian municipalities with concentrations of Chinese residents* discussed above. For instance, the political dynamics that resulted from demographic change in Richmond⁷ and Markham are similar to those that characterize American "ethnoburbs," a concept that American geographer Wei Li theorized to characterize new suburban ethnic clusters of Chinese immigrants. Li distinguishes the "ethnoburb" from traditional ethnic ghettos or urban enclaves such as Chinatowns insofar as *actors with economic power* deliberately create "ethnoburbs" whereas, in ethnic ghettos and urban enclaves, "ethnic people do not have economic power" (Li n/d, 2). The first American "ethnoburb" emerged in Los Angeles' Monterey Park as the result of large-scale Chinese immigration. The suburban City of Monterey Park is 7.5 miles east of downtown LA. The political dynamics that developed in Monterey Park seem *very similar* to the dynamics that emerged in Richmond and Markham. For instance, "English only" movements developed and Chinese immigrant business owners were accused of using Chinese signage to deliberately exclude long-standing residents (Li 1999). Changes in the built environment – for instance, the construction of a Buddhist temple - became "racialized" in Monterey Park (Li 1999) just as Asian malls were controversial in Richmond and Markham. In response, the City of Monterey Park initiated a number of multicultural events including festivals and "community roundtables" that brought together community leaders to share their opinions on issues facing the city (Li 1999, 19). These "community roundtables" appear to serve the same function as "ethnic advisory committees" in biracial Canadian suburbs. More recent scholarship has also documented the emergence of "ethnoburbs" in other Pacific Rim countries as well (Ip 2006; Li 2007). According to Wei Li, transformation of suburbs in these countries results in "similar kinds of resistance from longtime local residents," produces "racialized incidents" and often leads to "similar solutions" (Li 2007, 14). For instance, as Wei Li (2007) observes, the "monster homes" controversy is "a well-known and well-publicized issue in Los Angeles, Silicon Valley, Vancouver, and Auckland" (Li 2007, 14). In essence, this literature suggests that the social diversity interpretation of local politics has the potential to serve as a comparative framework for the study of urban governance in high-immigration, multicultural environments.

Thus, the "ethnoburb" literature strengthens rather than undermines the social diversity interpretation. Rodney Hero (1998)'s framework would predict that "English only" movements

⁷ David Edginton, Michael Goldberg and Thomas Hutton (2003) also make this observation with respect to Richmond.

would be more common in ethnoburbs and that the *racialization* of the minority group would occur in these locales. However, in light of the above discussion, the question arises as to whether these dynamics occurred due to bifurcation (as Hero theorizes) or to concentration? In addition, to what extent does the fact that immigrants in ethnoburbs have power and deliberately create these communities matter? These questions speak to the differences between the way in which Hero (1998) and Good (2005; 2006) theorize ethnic configurations in the United States and Canada respectively.

According to Hero's conceptualization, all of Canada's high-immigration municipalities are "bifurcated" in the sense that they have high numbers of ethno-racial minorities in their population. We saw above that "multiracial" municipalities are characterized by a *limited pluralism with some competition* in suburban municipalities and a highly *dynamic form of pluralism* in Toronto. As such, multiracial municipalities share some features of Hero (1998)'s "heterogeneous" political sub-units, which have moderate levels of ethno-racial minorities, high levels of "white ethnics" and are characterized by a "competitive pluralism". Thus, although the biracial and multiracial categories focus on "visible minorities" to the exclusion of "white ethnics,"⁸ one still finds competition among groups (although in a highly limited form in suburban municipalities) and a dynamic form of competition in Toronto. To a certain extent, this finding calls into question Hero (1998)'s bifurcated category, which groups all ethno-racial minorities together. In other words, Hero's categories do not adequately capture the possibility of competition among ethno-racial minorities.⁹ In addition, from a theoretical perspective, it is unclear why a combination of what Hero calls "white ethnics" and ethno-racial minorities would lead to a greater level of competition than a mixture of ethno-racial minorities and what he considers "whites". However, on the other hand, together, the *largely limited pluralism in the multiracial suburban municipalities* and the *limited pluralism in biracial municipalities* suggest that his hypothesis of what type of pluralism one would expect in bifurcated municipalities is confirmed to a certain degree.

Nevertheless, according to Hero's conceptualization, a bifurcated context "leads to hierarchical or limited pluralism" due to the history of race relations in the United States. The form of pluralism that characterizes bifurcated locales is, in his words, "historically manifested in various legal and political constraints" and "[d]espite major social and political change during the last generation, this condition continues, albeit in modified form" (Hero 1998, 16). This inference seems to have been developed with the historical experience of African-Americans in mind and, as such, limits one's ability to apply this category to Canada. Furthermore, unless we are to assume that all immigrant racial minorities will experience the same discrimination and hierarchy as an arguably exceptional racial minority group it is unclear why one must necessarily expect limited pluralism to also exhibit hierarchy. Moreover, from a theoretical perspective, although it seems intuitively logical that one might expect a more "limited" form of political pluralism in less diverse locales, it is unclear why one should expect a "hierarchical" pluralism in many of the American locales that Hero would consider "bifurcated". Hero acknowledges that the historical experience of minority groups differs (Hero 1998, 8). However, he argues that "there is enough

⁸ Good (2005) does not include white ethnics in her categorization although, interestingly, what Hero refers to as "white ethnics" tend to be more numerous in multiracial municipalities.

⁹ Hero acknowledges: "[t]here is, of course, extensive inter- and intra-group complexity, and there also may be interminority political competition" (Hero 1998, 11).

similarity within groups and enough differences across groups as delineated to support the designations and arguments made” (Hero 1998, 8). Hero made the choice to oversimplify ethnic categories for the “sake of clarity and parsimony” (Hero 1998, 151).

Based on the findings discussed above, the extent to which hierarchy exists depends on the power and resources of the ethno-racial minorities in the community. In addition, the growing literature on “ethnoburbs” suggests that one must *incorporate a political economy perspective* to understand changing community dynamics as well as the way in which immigrants’ resources might structure community reactions and debates (Li 2007). The above findings as well as the “ethnoburb” literature suggest that the *concentrated settlement of highly powerful* immigrants that are capable of changing the cultural face of a locale appears to matter in many ways including to the reaction of the long-standing residents (it intensifies feeling of cultural threat) and to the immigrants themselves (they have more power and resources to mobilize and influence policy making). More generally, there is arguably a greater cultural distance between many immigrant groups – including language and religious differences – than between long-standing residents in the United States and African Americans. It is notable that in Hero’s work, the states with large Hispanic *immigrants* were the bifurcated states that adopted English only measures.

In the Canadian “ethnoburbs” discussed above – Markham and Richmond – we see that although reactionary debates about the place of English within the community emerged, these debates have ultimately led to a greater level of *responsiveness* on the part of the municipality. One might argue that this is consistent with Hero’s findings that although bifurcated and homogeneous states are both more likely to adopt official English measures, that, more generally, bifurcated states tend to produce better policy outcomes for ethno-racial minorities than both homogeneous and heterogeneous states. Since comparable data were not collected in Canada, exploring this possibility will have to await further study. However, it is notable that debates about English language signage did not emerge in multiracial municipalities in the sample. In addition, biracial municipalities were more responsive to ethno-cultural diversity than were multiracial municipalities (with the exception of Toronto). These findings suggest that ethnic concentration and possibly also economic power matter.

Furthermore, the findings discussed in this paper raise questions with respect to what one might expect of *institutions* in contexts with varying types of social diversity. Hero suggests that in heterogeneous environments “there is a need to arbitrate or broker social heterogeneity and complexity” and, in a bifurcated environment, “government is expected to interfere little with existing stratified conditions, themselves the product of institutions and social relations historically defined in racial/ethnic terms” (Hero 1998, 20). We saw above that, with the exception of the City of Toronto, local leaders in Canada’s heterogeneous *multiracial* municipalities were unresponsive to immigrants and ethno-racial minorities. They failed to develop informal governance institutions that bridge the public-private divide to broker social change. In addition, in Canada, it was the bifurcated locales that were more likely to intervene to “broker social heterogeneity”. Vancouver intervened proactively and Richmond and Markham were pressured to intervene in reaction to “race relations” crises and pressure from socially and economically powerful Chinese immigrant communities. Again, it is possible that Hero’s expectations regarding institutional and policy purposes hold for bifurcated municipalities in which the dominant minority is African American. In this case the hierarchical pluralism that Hero observes would indeed be structured by a historical legacy of stratified social conditions and

past institutions. However, these conditions do not appear to apply to either Canadian municipalities or to American “ethnoburbs”.

Moreover, in Canada, we see evidence of the importance of religious diversity in a number of cases. For instance, in Surrey religious diversity appears to be a barrier to collective action in its largely Sikh, South Asian community. Religious diversity might also contribute to backlash on the part of long-standing residents where a concentration of a particular immigrant group also exists since it could increase the majority’s sense of cultural threat. Cross-national comparisons of the impact of immigration on cities that take into account the intersection of these factors might lead to the development of a powerful framework within which to predict policy outcomes based on demographic change.

VII. Concluding Thoughts

To what extent can the social diversity interpretation shed light on the politics of multiculturalism policy development at the local level? There is indeed convincing evidence to suggest that the ethnic configuration of political societies matter.

Hero’s work has the benefit of providing a parsimonious explanation of variation in both aggregated and disaggregated measures of policy outcomes as well as institutions and processes across *all* American states. As such, his theory also has a high level of *generality*. However, in the process of theory-building, one must often sacrifice a greater degree of *parsimony* and *generality* for a lesser degree of *accuracy*. If urban scholars are to develop a cross-national research agenda that compares the responsiveness of cities to immigrants and ethno-cultural diversity they must explore whether or the extent to which it is possible to develop common categories of political sub-units and associated forms of “political pluralism”. In this process one might want to ask whether other forms of diversity must be taken into account such as socio-economic and religious diversity. In addition, this paper suggests that one must examine how patterns of resource distribution within civil society affect the local governance of immigration and ethno-racial diversity. As we move forward, the social diversity perspective might also incorporate a political economy perspective. Perhaps it is necessary to sacrifice a degree of *parsimony* in order to extend the theoretical framework cross-nationally. However, in return, urban scholars will be rewarded with a greater degree of *generality* and *accuracy*.

Furthermore, the social diversity perspective offers the potential to *predict* the development of new political dynamics on the basis of tracking demographic change that results from migration and immigration. As Hero (1998) stresses, a central contribution of the social diversity interpretation is its potential to offer a “clear” and “precise” way of theorizing change in a variety of areas of importance to political scientists. Its theoretical potential is even greater in high-immigration countries where ethnic configurations are particularly dynamic. Both “large N” and case studies of political sub-units would be valuable in this process. Case studies would have the benefit of describing the nature of political pluralism in a more accurate and convincing way. Case studies allow one to explore the causal mechanisms that establish the correlations in larger N studies such as Hero’s and to refine categories. Together, these two methods could lead to a powerful explanatory framework to understand one of the most significant policy challenges of our time – the politics of immigration and multiculturalism in urban places.

Appendix 1: Ethnic Configurations of Municipal Communities in the GTA and GV¹⁰

Table 2: Biracial Municipalities

City	Markham		Richmond		Surrey		Vancouver	
	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006
Census Year	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006
Total Pop	207,940	261,573	163,395	173,565	345,780	392,450	539,630	571,600
Foreign-Born Pop (%)	52.9	56.5	54	57.4	33.2	38.3	45.9	45.6
Visible Min Pop (%)	55.5	65.4	59	65	37	46.1	49	51.0
Visible Min Pop*	111,485 (100)	170,535 (100)	96,385 (100)	112,955 (100)	127,015 (100)	181,005 (100)	264,495 (100)	291,740 (100)
Chinese	62,355 (54.0)	89,300 (52.4)	64,270 (66.7)	75,725 (67.0)	16,480 (13.0)	20,210 (11.2)	161,110 (60.9)	168,215 (57.7)
South Asian	26,360 (22.8)	44,995 (26.4)	12,120 (12.6)	13,860 (12.3)	75,680 (59.6)	107,810 (59.6)	30,655 (11.6)	32,515 (11.1)
Black	7,860 (6.8)	8,005 (4.7)	1,470 (1.5)	1,390 (0.8)	3,810 (3.0)	5,015 (2.8)	4,780 (1.8)	5,290 (1.8)
Filipino	5,265 (4.6)	7,370 (4.3)	7,190 (7.5)	9,555 (8.5)	10,235 (8.1)	16,555 (9.1)	22,085 (8.3)	28,605 (9.8)
Latin American	1,055 (0.9)	1,385(0.8)	1,165 (1.2)	1,265 (1.1)	3,315 (2.6)	3,785 (2.1)	6,490 (4.0)	8,225 (2.8)
Southeast Asian	955 (0.8)	1,970(1.2)	1,255 (1.3)	1,480 (1.3)	6,205 (4.9)	9,240 (5.1)	14,670 (5.5)	14,850 (5.0)
Arab	1,660 (1.4)	2,540(1.5)	875 (0.9)	960 (8.5)	1,115 (0.9)	1,805 (1.0)	1,465 (0.6)	1,875 (0.6)
West Asian	2,305 (2.0)	4,975(2.9)	1,155 (1.2)	1,155 (1.0)	1,185 (0.9)	1,790 (1.0)	3,160 (1.2)	5,355 (1.8)
Korean	2,265 (2.0)	3,225 (1.9)	900 (0.9)	1,290 (1.1)	5,195 (4.1)	7,665 (4.2)	6,130 (2.3)	8,780 (3.0)
Japanese	670 (0.6)	850 (0.5)	3,615 (3.8)	3,230 (2.9)	1,925 (1.5)	2,090 (1.2)	8,280 (3.1)	9,730 (3.3)
Other VM	2,725 (2.4)	1,895 (1.1)	335 (0.3)	295 (0.3)	555 (0.4)	655 (0.4)	1,115 (0.4)	990 (0.3)
Multiple VM	2,005 (1.7)	4,025 (2.4)	2,045 (2.1)	2,745 (2.4)	1,325 (1)	4,395 (2.4)	4,550 (1.7)	7,320 (2.5)

*The figures represent raw numbers of visible minorities. Numbers in parentheses refer to percentages of the total visible minority population.

¹⁰ Data for these tables were collected from the Statistics Canada “community profiles” section of its website at: www.statscan.ca.

Table 3: Multiracial Municipalities

City	Toronto		Mississauga		Brampton	
	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006
Census year	2001	2006	2001	2006	2001	2006
Total pop	2,456,805	2,476,656	610,815	665,655	324,390	431,575
Foreign-born pop (%)	49.4	50.0	46.8	51.6	40	47.8
Visible Min Pop (%)	42.8	46.9	40.3	49.0	40.2	57.0
Visible Min Pop*	1,051,125 (100)	1,162,630 (100)	246,330 (100)	326,425 (100)	130,275 (100)	246,150 (100)
Chinese	259,710 (24.7)	283,075 (24.3)	35,955 (14.6)	46,120 (14.1)	5,445 (4.2)	7,805 (3.2)
South Asian	253,920 (24.2)	298,370 (25.7)	91,150 (37.0)	134,750 (41.3)	63,205 (48.5)	136,750 (55.6)
Black	204,075 (19.4)	208,555 (17.9)	37,850 (15.4)	41,365 (12.7)	32,070 (24.6)	53,340 (21.7)
Filipino	86,460 (8.2)	102,555 (8.8)	24,615 (10.0)	30,705 (9.4)	6,965 (5.3)	11,980 (4.9)
Latin American	54,350 (5.2)	64,855 (5.6)	9,265 (3.8)	12,410 (3.8)	5,225 (4.0)	8,545 (3.8)
Southeast Asian	33,870 (3.2)	37,495 (3.2)	10,015 (4.1)	14,160 (4.3)	3,005 (2.3)	6,130 (2.5)
Arab	22,355 (2.1)	22,485 (1.9)	11,415 (4.6)	16,785(5.1)	1,850 (1.4)	2,600 (1.1)
West Asian	37,205 (3.5)	42,755 (3.7)	4,200 (1.7)	6,015(1.8)	1,085 (0.8)	2,875 (1.2)
Korean	29,755 (2.8)	34,220 (2.9)	5,175 (2.1)	6,865(2.1)	615 (0.5)	580 (0.2)
Japanese	11,595 (1.1)	11,965(1.0)	1,980 (0.8)	2,425(0.7)	535 (0.4)	545 (0.2)
Other VM	37,987 (3.6)	25,195(2.2)	9,950 (4.0)	5,715(1.8)	8,180 (6.3)	8,900 (3.6)
Multiple VM	19,855 (1.9)	31,100 (2.7)	4,755 (1.9)	9,100(2.8)	2,110 (1.6)	6,095 (1.4)

*The figures represent raw numbers of visible minorities. Numbers in parentheses refer to percentages of the total visible minority population.

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