

*Membership in the Global City:  
The successes and failures of municipal multiculturalism in Toronto*

**Melissa Sharpe-Harrigan**

Paper Submitted to the Canadian Political Science Association  
2011 Conference

Since its induction into Canadian policy in 1971, multiculturalism has been promoted as a pillar of Canadian national identity. Increasingly, it has become a core feature of Canada's urban centres too. By entering into the area of multicultural policy, the City of Toronto has fused Canadian multiculturalism with its aims and ambitions as a diverse, global city. How might we understand, and evaluate, the results of such a fusion?

As numerous critical scholars have argued, Canada's Federal Multiculturalism policies are driven by dangerous assumptions about identity, unity, and citizenship, where a colonial understanding of Canadian citizenship and difference is reproduced by a neo-liberal problematization of diversity (see, for example; Bannerji 2000, Day 2000, Mackey 2000, Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002, and Kerneran 2005). The purpose of this research paper is to investigate how, and to what extent, Toronto – given its self-understanding as an extraordinarily diverse global city – is able to approach multiculturalism and concepts of citizenship in a manner that is less susceptible to such criticisms. It asks, *is the City of Toronto's approach to diversity-related policies able to provide a space for alternative, more organic, practices of multiculturalism? To what extent does the City of Toronto offer its residents an understanding of membership that is alternative to federal definitions of multicultural belonging?*

Toronto promotes itself as being a global city, largely due to what many Torontonians perceive as the extraordinary diversity of its population (City of Toronto 2008).<sup>1</sup> Should this hold true, the City of Toronto ought to be capable of providing its residents with an alternative to national citizenship via municipal membership. Indeed, as I will show, the City often understands membership to be more encompassing than national citizenship in its policies, providing evidence that such an understanding of urban citizenship is possible. The City's diversity-related policies aim to engage all its members in its civic life, implement a program of multiculturalism that turns away from colonialist understandings of citizenship, and promote urban citizenship as an alternative for its residents. Compared to those at the federal level, these policies are far more reflective of what Bannerji labels as “cultures of resistance” or “popular multiculturalism”, which grounds itself in antiracist and feminist class politics, and focuses on values of universal human rights (Bannerji 2000, 5). The diversity-related policies of the city only go so far along these lines, however. At times, such policies operate through a lens of ‘diversity management’ – as if Toronto’s diversity is an issue requiring management.

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<sup>1</sup> This has become a central part of the city's myth and narrative. Indeed, one of Toronto's long-standing ‘urban legends’ is that the city has been formally declared the world's most multicultural city by the United Nations (Doucet 2004, 2). Though no such formal declaration was ever in fact made, many Torontonians have “embraced, cherished, and above all, repeated [the myth] as an uncontested truth” (Siemiatycki et al 2003, 454). What matters, it seems, is that many Torontonians embrace this myth. Furthermore, Toronto's diverse character is referenced on numerous occasions in the city policies. The City of Toronto's official website references the legend, by noting that Toronto is "heralded as one of the most multicultural cities in the world" (City of Toronto, Diversity Facts).

I argue that, though there is evidence of diversity governance (Day 2000, Kerneran 2005) at the city level, the City of Toronto is able to offer an alternative, post-national form of urban citizenship in its diversity related policies, largely because of its self-understanding as being a global city. The forward thinking elements of policies such as the “Task Force for Community Access and Equity” and the “Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination” largely promote an understanding of post-national membership within the city. These policies, however, are hindered by the existence of others, such as the “Agenda for Prosperity” that mirror the multicultural framework of the federal policies, reminding us that while the city may offer itself as an alternative location of membership and belonging, it continues to be subject to the sovereignty of the Canadian State.

### **Global City Approached to Diversity: Policy Frameworks in the City of Toronto**

To provide an initial example of how these criticisms of Canadian multiculturalism tie into the discussion of urban multiculturalism and membership, I will use a speech given by the former Canadian Governor General. This speech was given at a recent “DiverseCity” panel discussion held in the city of Toronto, demonstrating how the federal government is directly connected to the City of Toronto. “DiverseCity” is a joint project between the Maytree Foundation and The Toronto City Summit alliance. The project aims to “support and develop solutions that will address the under-representation of ethnic and racial groups in leadership positions in the GTA” (DiverseCity). The comments of the Governor General demonstrate how the attitudes of federal multiculturalism are exhibited at the local level, attempting to unite the audience at both the local and the federal level under the umbrella of Canadian multiculturalism.

We are a society of pluralism, and diversity is one of our greatest strengths.  
Just look around the room for a moment. / We are of Indigenous descent. / We are of European descent. / We are of African descent. / We are of Arab descent. / We are of South Asian descent. / We are of East Asian descent. / We are of Caribbean descent. / We are of Latin American descent. / Dear friends: we are Canada. / And Canada contains the world. (Jean, 2010)

What is particularly relevant to this discussion is how the words of the governor general merge the nation with the city. By first inviting her audience to look around the room, the governor general draws attention to the local members of the city in her speech. Then, those around the room are called upon not just to affiliate themselves with their city, but with Canada as a whole. The “We” of Canada acts to interpellate (Althusser 1971) the many identities who live within the boundaries of Canada into the national narrative “from above” (Bannerji 2000, 8). The “We” further reinforces the multiple layers of citizenship and membership that an individual may partake in. The participants of the City panel are simultaneously called to participate in the diversity of the city and the nation.

In speeches such as this, the naming of different cultures or “descents” in Canada (or in this case, the discussion room) are used to promote the idea of a national “multicultural” identity. The non-white identities of individuals and groups who are not

part of the founding two nations are summoned in the speech to participate in the oral construction of the nation. By this act, the non-white population within the room become the qualifying characteristic for both the City of Toronto and the Canadian ‘nation’ to be multicultural. The Governor General’s speech is a prime example of how diversity governance takes place at the local level, and how the political utterances of Canadian multiculturalism attempt to create a nation united through difference.

Richard Day’s analysis of the history of Canadian diversity politics describes how the shift towards controlling and constructing multicultural differences in Canada took place after the world wars, and is applicable to what takes place in this example. “Rather than constraining the bodies of some of those who inhabited its territories, the Canadian government began to try to constrain the minds of all” (Day 2000, 166). This involves the promotion of Canadian-ness as being unquestionably multicultural. As Kernerman argues, “diversity is not simply allowed to thrive; it is encouraged to do so, *taught* to do so” (Kernerman 2005, 101 *emphasis in original*). In this speech, the governor general’s words encourage the local citizens of the room (and by proxy, the Canadian state) to associate with being a part of a multicultural community.

Such “selling” of multiculturalism is common in Canadian society. In this respect, multiculturalism is presented as way of life in Canada that is beneficial to all. Michaëlle Jean’s speech demonstrates this, for as she continues, she describes the many benefits of being a diverse nation:

To me, investing in diversity makes sense. / It makes business sense. / Let’s think about it for a moment. / Having people from diverse backgrounds in senior management positions can confer better access to lucrative local and international networks and markets. / Maintaining a plurality of perspectives and life experiences in an organization can boost creative and innovative output. / Employing a greater number of people from diverse backgrounds can help to raise the overall consumption power of a broader proportion of the Canadian population. / It is simple. (Jean, 2010)

This reveals another dimension of multiculturalism, brought forward by Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel in their book “Selling Diversity”. Here, Abu-Laban and Gabriel connect multiculturalism to neo-liberal politics, arguing that the motive behind constructing a multicultural nation is not one of justice, but one of profit. This theory aligns itself with Bannerji’s analysis of multiculturalism from above, for as Bannerji notes, this approach to multiculturalism benefits the capitalist state (Bannerji 2000, 2). Abu-Laban and Gabriel point to the promotion of globalization of the 1990s, and the benefits of having a diversified population in a world of global markets (Abu-Laban and Gabriel 2002, 117). Multicultural programs were released in schools, promoting the business slogan “Multiculturalism means business”, pointing to the particular agenda of promoting multiculturalism for its economic benefits (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002 117). Abu-Laban and Gabriel conclude their argument by questioning this shift in policy discourse, noting that the movement towards economic prosperity may coincide with a shift away from an anti-racist agenda. Michaëlle Jean’s speech reaffirms what Abu-Laban

and Gabriel label as selling diversity, as she points to the profit and networking benefits of diversifying the Canadian business networks. The speech takes place at an organizational meeting in Toronto, where the aim is to promote diversity in the city, merging the national and local levels of scale. Here, the jurisdictional boundaries between the state and the city become blurred, and the individuals in the room are simultaneously a part of the City's global population, and the country's multicultural mosaic. Here, the local acts as a host to the national, to promote Canadian diversity. Here, the reproduction of national multiculturalism takes place in the city in this speech.

Toronto's policies exemplify diversity governance in some areas by mirroring the federal government's approach to multiculturalism (what Bannerji labels as elite multiculturalism). What is equally important for this analysis, however, are the examples of multiculturalism from below that can be found in the City's policies. In these examples, the focus is less about trying to manage the problem of diversity, and more about an attempt to engage all members of society under principles of human rights and justice and universal citizenship. The diversity-related policies demonstrate that the City of Toronto (and its members) are subject to sort of diversity governance outlined by Day and Kerneran. Simultaneously however, the City of Toronto demonstrates its post-national position as a global city. In other words, Toronto's diversity is an aspect of the City that is both managed and celebrated (Graham and Philips, 2007 14).

Toronto's current diversity policies fall under the organization of the City's "Diversity Management and Community Engagement" Division. This is a part of the City's Strategic and Corporate Policy Division. The title of the Division is representative of the City of Toronto's two toned approach to diversity-related policies. The first part of the title, "Diversity Management" calls to mind the federal multiculturalism policies, and the critiques of Day, Abu-Laban and Gabriel. Paired with this part of the title however, is the label of "Community Engagement." This title demonstrates a willingness on the part of the City to encourage civic interaction and participation of all residents within the City. The title of the "Diversity Management and Community Engagement" represents a divided focus in the policies.

The City's "Diversity Management and Community Engagement" Division is very dynamic, composed of a Plan of Action, working groups, advisory committees, awards, grants, scholarships, promotional events, and select policies regarding human rights, employment equity, and settlement. In most policies, an introductory context section is given as a backgrounder to the policies, which explicitly describes how "diverse" Toronto is. Often times, these statements - while being statistically accurate - are fairly dramatic in their presentation of such data. An example of such statements is as follows:

- 3: percentage of Toronto's total population that was from a racial minority, in 1961.
- 30: percentage of Toronto's total population that was from a racial minority, in 1991.
- 53: expected percentage of Toronto's total population that will be from a racial minority, in 2001.

(City of Toronto, Task Force)

The tone of these statements carries an urgent connotation. They emphasize the shift in Toronto's demographic, from being a white city, to a city of "racial minorities". This invokes images of a city being bombarded with "otherness" and further promotes the idea, discussed by Day, that difference is a problem that requires a solution. The style choice in this particular policy emphasizes a dramatic change in demographics and the amount of "difference" within the community. This particular piece insinuates that Toronto is becoming a city inhabited by "Others". These "Others" are individuals who are not previously been part of the composition of Toronto. Because so many "Others" will be a part of the community, the City of Toronto uses these statistics in order to justify an organized approach to diversity management. The continuous promotion of Toronto's demographic in all of the diversity policies reinforces the notion that diversity is a problem that must be taken up by communities and managed accordingly.

In similar ways, the management of diversity plays out in the policies, attitudes, and even the approaches of the City's more influential public servants. In an interview, Rose Lee, a manager who works extensively in the diversity policies of Toronto, explains why it is beneficial to be proactive: "Being responsive has a positive connotation. But on the other hand, I feel that the word can mean being reactive...To me, the city should be proactive" (Lee, 2009 64). Lee points to research and data as a major initiative of the city, to measure indicators for immigrant success in the city. Lee also points to the need to be proactive in order to "respond" to the needs of a diverse population. These statements suggest the need to anticipate and fix the problem of diversity before they arise. The result is a City that 'proactively' creates appointments and initiatives to 'fix' the potential problems of diversity, demonstrating how liberal multicultural policies of tolerance and diversity management have penetrated the City of Toronto's government. In problematizing diversity this way, the City of Toronto subjects itself to the sort of criticisms made by Day and others through creating a hierarchy of citizenship between those who necessitate management policies and those who do not.

Though these policy excerpts demonstrate that the City of Toronto may simply be imitating federal policies, the municipal framework also includes the element of "Community Engagement". By focusing on community engagement, the City aligns its multiculturalism practices with the promotion of a just and equitable community, and engagement of those in the civic life of the city who might otherwise find themselves outside of Canada's 'multicultural' identity. This is found in many policies, and is also included in the introductory statements. For example, in the above discussion, the statistics used to show the change in Toronto's demographic over the past thirty years conclude with a reference towards the structural and systematic inequalities against those "Others" in Toronto society:

22: percentage increase, from 1997 to 1998, in reported hate crime offences, a hate crime being a criminal offence motivated by hate against a racial, religious, national, ethnic, sexual orientation, gender or disability group (City of Toronto, Task Force).

The written acknowledgment of increased hate crimes as part of diversity policy indicates that the City of Toronto is not merely interested in attaining the status of a diverse city, but that it understands that has an obligation to its transnational population as a global city. There is a fusion of two approaches to multiculturalism policies within the framework of diversity: the City of Toronto reinforces a hegemonic and Eurocentric understanding of diversity (similar to the federal level policies), while at the same time advocates for universal human rights (a less elitist form of multiculturalism).

### **Promoting Urban Citizenship through Policy**

The specific diversity policies of the municipality continue to demonstrate the position of the City of Toronto within and above the nation, and offer greater opportunities for the residents of the city to participate in a form of urban citizenship. Though each of the policies contains at least one element that reflects problematic elements of the national multicultural agenda, there are specific instances in these policies that show potential to reinterpret multiculturalism policy to incorporate all residents within the city of Toronto equally. This suggests the potential for offering alternative visions of membership within the city.

### ***The Task Force on Community Access and Equity***

The current City of Toronto diversity policies are relatively new, as most have been initiated in the later twentieth century, since the City of Toronto's amalgamation. The amalgamation took place on January 1, 1998, and involved the unification of six municipalities: Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, York, East York and Toronto (Siemiatycki et al 2003, 75). Though diversity-related policies were in existence throughout the GTA prior to the amalgamation, they were all different. The new policies provided an approach to diversity consistent across the city. The core diversity policies derive from two specific initiatives in city council's post-amalgamation history: the establishment of the 1998 "Task Force on Community Access and Equality" (hereinafter referred to as the Task Force), and the Ornstein report (2000). Though the Task Force is no longer active, the recommendations created by the Task Force are still in effect today (see for example, City of Toronto 2003). Its mandate was to "identify the necessary policies, structural functions, program priorities and evaluation process" for the city to use in order to achieve full community access and equity (City of Toronto, Task Force). This included strengthening its civic society, empowering those who faced barriers, enabling full participation by all in community life, and to address the barriers of individuals in the community.<sup>2</sup> The aims had a particular focus on encouraging "community involvement and public participation in the decision making process of the municipality; particularly in equity seeking groups" (City of Toronto, Task Force). Moreover, the Task Force encouraged partnerships in equity to ensure that the needs of

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<sup>2</sup> The barriers under discussion were those faced by "women, people of colour, Aboriginal peoples, people with disabilities, lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgendered, immigrants/refugees, different religious/faith communities.

Toronto's population were being met, while promoting the City of Toronto as being a leader in employment equity (City of Toronto, Task Force). In its beginning stages, the Task Force established that full participation for all "equity seeking groups" would be its primary goal (City of Toronto, Task Force).

The Task Force members were selected from approximately seventy applicants. It was chaired by Councillor Joe Mihevic. The membership list included two co-chairs; Sylvia Maracle from the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, and Gloria Fallick, a national member of the YMCA Canada Board. The eleven council members came from a diverse array of organizations, and represented consultants, service providers, managers, and coordinators of such organizations who work with members of the community on a regular basis. The membership of the Task Force demonstrates the City of Toronto's intent to understand its population from the ground up. The Task Force organized a series of consultations, and invited individual members of the public and other organizations to participate in these consultations in order to come up with their recommendations to city council.

The policy framework of the Task Force includes a Vision Statement on access, equity and diversity, guiding principles, and an action plan, all of which were adopted in 1999. The Vision Statement is similar in style to the Canada Multiculturalism Act. It is composed of three statements of recognition, followed by two specific vision statements for the city. First, the "dignity of all people" is acknowledged. This acknowledgement is followed by the commitment to involving everyone in the City's decision making. Second, the City explicitly recognizes the Aboriginal communities, and their rights to self-determination. Thirdly, the City recognizes "the barriers of discrimination and disadvantage faced by human rights protected groups" (City of Toronto 2000). Following these recognitions, the Vision Statement makes the commitment to "create an environment of equality in the government and in the community for all people regardless of their position in society" (City of Toronto 2000). The commitment to equality includes eliminating discrimination based on individual attributes, including race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, disability, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, same sex partnership, age, marital status, family status, immigrant status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, religious affiliation, level of literacy, language and/or socio-economic status. The final paragraph indicates that the City will "implement positive changes" in its workforce and community, with the goal of "creating a harmonious environment free from discrimination, harassment and hate" (City of Toronto, 2000).

The "recognition" in the Vision Statement differs from the recognition in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act. Recall that the Multiculturalism Act recognized only the existence of multiple cultures as part of the composition of Canada's multicultural status. The Vision Statement of the City of Toronto recognizes that these cultures and human rights groups exist within the city *and* face both systematic and material barriers to full participation in society. Moreover, while the Multiculturalism Act recognizes official identities of Canada (via the official languages), the City of Toronto's vision is to create an environment of equality for all in the community. Finally, there is no one overriding

official identity for Toronto that is recognized in the Vision Statement, offering the opportunity for the collapse of citizenship and identity hierarchies within the city.

In addition to the Vision Statement, the Task Force established guiding principles, which included four themes: strengthening civil society, civic leadership, accountability and equitable governance, and aboriginal self-determination. All four themes are still in effect today. The first principle, entitled “Strengthening the Civil Society”, promotes community based volunteer organizations as being integral to the municipal decision making process, and encourages its citizens to participate in these organizations. It also recommends that age and citizenship restrictions to participating in municipal committees be removed from current municipal policies (City of Toronto, Task force). This initiative demonstrates that the “urban citizen” of Toronto does not necessarily have to coincide with national citizenship. Thus, while the focus is still on strengthening the community as a whole, those who are outcasts of the national community may find voice in the local one.

The second principle calls for the City to be a leader in the field of diversity through “advocating to the private sector and other levels of government” (City of Toronto, Task Force). The principle is entitled “Civic Leadership”, and calls for the City of Toronto to take a leadership role in advocating on behalf of its citizens. Because of this principle, non-citizens who reside in the City are able to secure some form of voice in a political arena where they are traditionally excluded. The third principle of accountability and accessible, equitable governance states that as an employer, the City of Toronto is in a position to set an example in its employment equity and human rights policies. This principle recommends that the population of Toronto be reflected in the city’s workforce, and that suppliers of the City’s goods and services adhere to the equity policies. It also recommends that its planning and implementation processes across its policy fields be meaningful to all residents. The fourth principle promotes aboriginal self-determination. The promotion of Aboriginal self-determination is an example of historical awareness on the part of the City. By including the right to aboriginal self-determination, the City acknowledges that the original inhabitants of the city were neither English nor French, but aboriginal.

#### *The Recommendations of the Task Force*

Ninety-seven recommendations were approved by council from the Task Force in 1999. Eighty-nine were submitted, and Council added an additional seven recommendations, and made modifications to eleven of the recommendations. The first cluster of recommendations involves the creation of advisory committees to “address the priorities faced by human rights protected groups” (City of Toronto, Task Force, 1). The mandate of each advisory committee is to advise council on how to remove barriers that restrict human rights, and participating in public life. The interpretation of public life is more specifically defined in the recommendation, and includes “achieving social, cultural, economic and political well-being” (City of Toronto, Task Force recommendations 1-9).

The second set of recommendations regards Aboriginal self-determination, calling for the City to endorse the principle of it, and work with the Aboriginal communities to

achieve this goal. While the Task Force recommended the creation of an Office of Aboriginal Affairs, the City of Toronto amended the recommendation to something less committed: that the Chief Administrative officer work with the Aboriginal Affairs Advisory Committee “towards the establishment of an Aboriginal Affairs Office” (City of Toronto, Task Force 11). The final recommendation pertaining to Aboriginals in the city involves the overall support of Aboriginal communities.

The Task Force excels in creating an alternative vision of citizenship and urban membership in the recommendations. This is particularly noticeable in the recommendations surrounding civic appointments and participation. The specific recommendations demonstrate that the City of Toronto is open to reinterpreting citizenship in order for its community members to participate more fully in civic life. The Task Force recommends that the citizens of Toronto be defined as:

all persons who pay property taxes or who pay business taxes or who live within the boundaries of the City of Toronto, including permanent residents, refugees, refugee claimants and residents without homes. (City of Toronto, Task Force, recommendation 23).

The Task Force recommends that this definition be used when considering individuals for appointments related to the City, except in circumstances where Canadian law requires Canadian citizenship for participation in such a body (City of Toronto, Task Force 24). The City of Toronto therefore modifies the definition of a citizen in order to better include its residents in the decision making processes of its municipal politics. In addition to redefining citizenship within the city boundaries, the Task Force also recommends advocating “for changes to any law which creates barriers to civic appointments for persons who are residents or who pay property taxes or business taxes” (City of Toronto, Task Force 26). This recommendation demonstrates that the City of Toronto is willing to adapt federal definitions of citizenship to suit the needs of the urban community. This understanding of citizenship is created in order to encompass more individuals under the definition of an urban citizen, and to promote belonging and participation in the city.

This attempt to be universally inclusive on the part of the City is also demonstrated outside of these recommendations, and is reinforced in the City of Toronto’s language policies. Toronto works under a multilingual policy (City of Toronto 2002). The state of Canada, on the other hand, works under official bilingualism. Official bilingualism reaffirms the hegemonic relationship between the French and English speakers in society and those who speak different languages. Even if citizenship were granted to all individuals in Canadian society, the official bilingualism policy reinforces a language divide between those who include the official languages as part of their heritage and history, and those who do not. A multilingual policy discourages such a hierarchy by denying an ‘official language’ of the city. By offering around the clock translation services for its community members, the City of Toronto acknowledges that service in one’s language is something that members may require in order to fully participate in their community. It is no surprise that one of the recommendations (number 35) is to retain the multilingual services within the City of Toronto. The Task Force’s greatest

achievement is therefore the creation of a formal definition of urban citizenship to be implemented within the City government, and the encouragement of other policies and programs to support this definition.

### ***The Plan of Action for Elimination of Racism and Discrimination***

The second item that encouraged a greater interest in multicultural politics at the city level is a study done by Michael Ornstein (2000) of the ethno-racial inequalities of the city. The report provides detailed information regarding eighty-nine ethno-racial communities across the city (Ornstein 2000, 4). It concludes, among other major findings, that visible minorities are “prominently represented among the most prominently disadvantaged groups in the City of Toronto” (Ornstein 2000, 5). Ornstein’s report resulted in a greater awareness of racial inequality, prompting the City to take initiatives to combat racism at the local, national and international levels.<sup>3</sup> Ornstein’s report prompted Council to direct the CAO to prepare a “Plan of Action” to address racism and discrimination in the city (City of Toronto 2003, 2). This commenced with community consultations and the creation of the “City of Toronto Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination”.

The 2003 “City of Toronto Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination” (Plan of Action) merges human rights policy with multiculturalism policy at the municipal level. It is the culmination of all previous work done by the municipality in the area of diversity governance and multiculturalism. The Plan of Action includes reaffirming the City’s Vision Statement, implementing the 97 recommendation items of the Task Force on Community Access and Equity, and a set of action items and measurable goals that promote the elimination of racism and discrimination in the City. The Plan of Action describes the City’s current initiatives and policies as being “in place to remove barriers, promote equitable participation of all residents and build an inclusive society” (City of Toronto 2003, 8). The Plan of Action further recognizes the Ornstein report by noting in its preamble that “economic disparities impact disproportionately on diverse individuals and communities” (City of Toronto 2003, 8). Social inclusion is one aspect of the Plan of Action, but eliminating human rights violations and instances of racism within the city is also a major focus. The goal of the Plan of Action is “to enable all residents to participate fully in the civic, economic, social, cultural, political and recreational life of the city” (City of Toronto 2002, 35)<sup>4</sup>. What is important about this goal is the use of the term “all residents” alongside its affirmation of the 97 recommendations, which refuse to conflate urban with national citizenship. The term “all

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<sup>3</sup> For example, the City of Toronto played an active role in the United Nations World Conference Against Racism through its submissions to the Government of Canada and elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> This is expanded in the final published Plan of Action to state that its goal is “to create an environment of equality in Toronto for all people regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, disability, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, same sex partnership, age, marital status, family status, immigrant status, receipt of public assistance, political affiliation, level of literacy, language and/or socio-economic status, and to enable all residents to participate fully in the social, cultural, recreational, economic and political life of the city” (City of Toronto 2003, 25).

residents” therefore includes those who reside in and out of homes in the Toronto area, and extends beyond those who have citizenship status in Canada.

The City lists the Ornstein report, the United Nations World Conference against Racism, held in Durban Africa in 2001, and the desire to link the elimination of discrimination to other areas of city policy as reasons for needing to create a Plan of Action (City of Toronto 2002, 42). This justification bypasses federal ambitions, and focuses on the local and the international scales of government, demonstrating that the ambitions of the city are not simply to repeat the federal multiculturalism policies. The justifications also point to the City’s awareness of itself as a global city, using international, rather than federal, events to justify its actions.

What is unique about the Plan of Action is that it is largely based on a process of community consultations, which were presented to council in a report called “Just Do It” in November of 2002. The consultations found that racism and discrimination needed to be addressed urgently, and participants called “for the City to do more to create an inclusive society and to establish accountability mechanisms to monitor and assess the effectiveness of City policies and programs” (City of Toronto 2002, 3). The consultation process included a consultation kit, which asked questions about the City of Toronto.

The consultation kit is centred on five questions. The first question; “what would a city that has eliminated racism and discrimination look like?” is an open ended question that promoted discussions on a variety of topics, and encouraged participants to discuss their own experiences in the City (City of Toronto 2002, 42). The second question asks for a prioritization of issues by asking; “what is the first issue that you would address?” (City of Toronto 2002, 42). The third and fourth questions asks for participants to brainstorm of how the individual, community, and municipality can work together to “make the Plan of Action” work. And the final question asks for ideas regarding how such achievement can be measured or quantified. These questions are action oriented, in that they call upon the citizens of Toronto to engage in, and provide tangible recommendations for the City’s policy making process.

The consultation process for both the Task Force and Plan of Action take on a different approach to diversity-politics by recognizing that the residents of the City should have a large voice in designing policies that directly relate to their position and role within the city. This is reminiscent of Bannerji’s multiculturalism from below because of the focus on participation of non-governmental groups and individuals. Invitations to participate in the consultation process were sent to over 2000 residents and organizations in the city of Toronto. These invitations were produced in eleven other languages on top of English and French (City of Toronto, 2002). To promote as much participation as possible, residents were able to call, email, write, or attend a consultation process. In order to facilitate discussion, a consultation kit was created. The effort put into the consultation process demonstrates that, even in the initial stages of the process, the City of Toronto made great effort to listen to what individual residents had to say about the diversity policies of Toronto.

The authors of the summary are very frank when describing the emotions felt by the participants in the consultation process: “participants expressed anger, fear,

frustration, and pain" (City of Toronto 2002, 8). Moreover, the consultation process revealed that the diversity leadership the City had previously boasted to the world was very much lacking (City of Toronto 2002, 8). Participants in the consultation process described their living situations, some of which were surrounded by poverty. They described their day to day lives as being economically challenging, and argued that they had limited time and ability to participate in municipal activities because of their life circumstances. Participants also described hate crimes, situations of discrimination and harassment in the workplace (City of Toronto 2002, 8-9). To publish these statements in an official City of Toronto document shows great potential for approaching multiculturalism and diversity "from below" (Bannerji 2000). Rather than pick and choose the consultation responses that best support the City's current initiatives and agendas, the authors summarize *all* experiences in the City. It is because of the honesty in the consultation summaries that the Action Plan is able to deviate from the national multicultural aims, which are focused on unifying Canada's population. The consultation process demonstrates that the City of Toronto is moving towards an understanding of multiculturalism that merges human rights policy with diversity politics.

The resulting eight action items cover an array of topics that demonstrate the City's potential to approach diversity with an increased understanding of human rights and historical awareness. The most important of these is the first group of items, which reinforce the City's need to implement all 97 recommendations from the earlier Task Force. The reiteration of the recommendations first demonstrates that the City is committed to understanding citizenship outside of the state. Furthermore, it shows that the government officials creating the Plan of Action do value the consultation process and the recommendations of Toronto residents.

There are also a number of recommendations that promote inclusivity within the city. The fifth item, for example, encourages the establishment of partnerships and communities with other sectors in order to remove barriers to the participation in the city's processes, and facilitate the re-zoning of the city to address barriers faced by those currently restricted in their religious or spiritual practices. Furthermore, the seventh action is plans for the city to actively advocate to provincial or federal governments for funding and "co-operative strategies regarding affordable housing, public transit, childcare, employment programs, training in official languages, settlement services for immigrants and refugees; literacy programs; and accreditation and recognition of prior learning" and to advocate for Aboriginal self-determination and a more culturally sensitive education system (City of Toronto 2003, 7). The Plan of Action also looks towards making life in the community more equitable for all its members. Economically, the Plan of Action involves partnerships with Aboriginal organizations, and advocates for removing barriers from small business owners of diverse communities to participate in the business community of the City of Toronto. Both of these items demonstrate that the City of Toronto understands that material barriers to full participation in the community continue to take place, despite previous work to eradicate them. The City also commits to advocate to provincial and federal governments on issues such as housing, transit, child care, employment programs, language training, credential recognition, and increased

settlement services for new comers (City of Toronto 2003, 15). The commitment to act on behalf of its citizens in other levels of government demonstrates that the City of Toronto is open to working with individuals on multiculturalism issues from the bottom up.

Aside from this, the Plan of Action includes a number of items that demonstrate the City of Toronto's willingness to promote a multiculturalism that is just, equitable, and more importantly, universally accessible. The first of the is action items to do so is action 3a, which calls for the publishing of an annual diversity report card, based on measurable indicators of success. The measurable indicators allow for the City of Toronto to create a policy that is adaptable and accountable. Moreover, the City committed to conduct specific studies on the issues addressed in the community consultations. The City completed a follow up to this recommendation in 2006, and again in 2008, using these measurable indicators. This action item directly responds to a comment made in the consultation process, when a resident stated: "I think we all agree that vision statements and finely worded politics are not worth the paper they are written on unless they are clearly tied to an implementation process" and asked for a reporting mechanism to be built into the city's Plan of Action (City of Toronto 2002, 32). The measurable indicators and the publication of the City's progress demonstrate the City's eagerness to create a society of where all of its citizens are able to participate in civic life. While the Canadian Multiculturalism Act was created in part as a statement of national identity, grounded in mythical notions of multicultural unity, the Plan of Action incorporates a vision of universal access and participation, with tangible goals and outcomes.

The indicators are also a useful tool for encouraging continued effort from municipal politicians. The publication of the City's progress reminds the community of their commitments to promoting universal inclusivity within the city. An example of this is in 2006, when Councillor Joe Mihevc urged the City of Toronto Community Services department to consider a "don't ask don't tell" policy when creating its agencies, boards and commissions. Councillor Mihevc also asks in this report that the community services department also consider the human rights of undocumented migrants in the City (Mihevc 2006). Mihevc's requests to council were implemented within the city, and a number of resource guides for non-residents have since been created. The document is over twenty pages in length and lists organizations that have expressed commitment to working with non-status migrants (Davenport et al 2007). Most organizations on the list offer services for free of charge. They offer a wealth of information for individuals without status in the City, and openly indicate which services may ask for formal government identification (proof of citizenship, driver's license, health card, etc.) when providing service. The research for these resource booklets is part of a collaborative partnership between *No One is Illegal*, Toronto community centres, and the Community Social Planning Council of the City of Toronto. Along with this resource guide, the City of Toronto has a "Don't Ask Don't Tell" policy for its school children. Though the policy is criticized by human rights groups as having flaws, it is the only school board in Ontario to implement such a policy (CBC 2007). The resource guides and school board

policies demonstrate that the policy planning of the City of Toronto does have the potential to translate into practices that promote universal access to city services.

The City of Toronto's Task Force and Plan of Action demonstrate that the City understands and recognized the distinction between urban and federal citizenship, and is willing to take steps towards catering its policies to its own citizens, who may or may not have Canadian citizenship. The City itself does not use the term "urban citizen". It does, however, remove stipulations surrounding citizenship from its policies, allowing for all residents to participate in municipal politics, redefining citizenship within the city limits. Though there are examples within the policies of the replication of certain problematic aspects of the federal multicultural policies, the overall ambition of the City's diversity policies is to create an environment where all residents of Toronto - despite their status, culture, or lifestyle - are able to participate in civic life. Urban citizenship exists legally through these policies, but also socially, through the attempts by the City to create a policy framework that allows for all residents to participate in all aspects of city life (municipal services, politics, recreation etc.).

### **Limitations of Toronto's Diversity Policies**

Urban citizenship is written into the City of Toronto's diversity policies, creating the opportunity for individuals who are expelled from the Canadian State (by their status, culture, colour or lifestyle) to find membership at the local level. The diversity-related policies prioritize this under the claim that Toronto's citizens are, in essence, what allow for Toronto's status as a global city. The diversity-related policies therefore aim to build a city that is conducive to the global and transnational lifestyles of its residents. Despite these intentions, there are limitations within the policies themselves, which must be addressed.

A major example of such limitation can be found in the City's response to the recommendations of the Task Force. The initial recommendation of the Task Force was to have separate committees addressing aboriginal affairs, disability issues, racial minorities, ethnocultural and faith issues, immigrant and refugee issues, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered issues. The number of committees was reduced by council to five committees, merging the racial minority, ethnocultural and faith, and immigrant and refugee issues committee into one committee called the Race and Ethnic Relations committee. This demonstrates quite a shortcoming in the City's interpretation of the recommendations. Rather than accept the recommendation of separating immigrant and refugee issues from racial minorities and ethnocultural and faith issues, the City of Toronto collapses the categories into one. This reinforces the notion that the issues faced by immigrants and refugees can be handled by the same working group that handles ethnocultural and faith issues, making the assumption that the two are closely related, reaffirming Bannerji's claim that if you are not white, (here labelled 'ethnocultural') you are considered an immigrant (Bannerji 2005).

Another example of this shortcoming is the commitment to the promotion of the City of Toronto as a diverse, global city. Reaffirming the Task Force's definition of citizenship, the Plan of Action item 6 includes items that promote the City's identity as a global city. For example, item number 6c commits to "portray diverse populations in the

City's advertising, communications, cultural programs and special events through appropriate and inclusive language, pictures and images, including the creation of a Diversity Day as a part of the Celebrate Toronto Street Festival" (City of Toronto 2003, 14). Though this is one item among many in the Plan of Action, it is important to point out that the City of Toronto continues to see the necessity in the 'promotion' of this diversity through fairs and festivals as essential to the elimination of racism and discrimination. While this exists alongside other action items that work to promote universal involvement in city life, the creation of a Diversity Day in the Celebrate Toronto festival is reminiscent of Eva Mackey's research, where she found that "diversity" in festivals and fairs involved the display of non-white culture (Mackey 2002, 93). Thus, while creating advertising campaigns that is reflective of the City's demographic and advertising campaigns is a reasonable action plan, the initiation of a "Diversity Day" as part of the Street Festival is unnecessary.

Finally, while the City promotes the "Don't Ask Don't Tell Campaign" in its service sectors and school boards, the municipality has yet to fully embrace the campaign itself. Though some of Toronto's politicians have often supported the right to vote by all residents of Toronto - even those who do not possess Canadian citizenship - there has yet to be any formal policy that permits any resident of the city to vote (Hanes 2009). David Miller has been an avid supporter of extending the vote to permanent residents in the city (at the least), though this has yet to occur (Toronto Star 2009). Thus, while extending the vote to all residents of Toronto is something that is discussed and supported by politicians, it has never been formally inserted into Toronto's practice, limiting the political participation of some city residents. Therefore, while the diversity policies do offer an opportunity to redefine citizenship beyond the nation-state, these opportunities are limited in practice.

Outside of the Diversity Management and Community Engagement Division, there are other policies that discuss the City of Toronto's global city status. These policies offer a different perspective of the global city, and call into question the City of Toronto's ability to consistently promote local membership without the existence of a hierarchy of citizenship. Toronto's *Agenda for Prosperity* (2008), (hereinafter labelled The *Agenda*) summarizes the strategic directives for the future of the city of Toronto. The *Agenda* understands Toronto as a competitive, global city. It is a suitable document to analyse alongside the City's diversity policies because it demonstrates how the city envisions itself as a global city, and discusses how the diverse population of Toronto fits into that vision. Its main objective is to render Toronto as one of the "world's leading global cities" of the twenty-first century (City of Toronto 2008, 8). Rather than focus on the continued need to adhere to its access and equity principles to sustain its status as a global city however, the migrant and transnational population of Toronto is referred to merely as an element or characteristic of the city that provides value.

The *Agenda* is based on the "premise that the twenty-first century will be the century of cities and their role in shaping a global economy" (City of Toronto 2008, 12). It is introduced in 2008 by then Mayor David Miller as a "frank discussion" of Toronto's current economic position within the world, and further proposes what can be done to

“fuel necessary growth in Toronto’s economy, improve the health and vitality of our community, and position” (City of Toronto 2008, 5). These factors, for Miller, are the requirements for global city status. The *Agenda* is authored by the Toronto Mayor’s Economic Competitiveness Advisory Committee (ECAC). This committee was created in 2006 with the goal of forging a “culture of partnership that is essential to achieving sustainable growth” (City of Toronto 2008, 8). The committee consists of business leaders of the Toronto community, CEO’s and chairs of major businesses, entrepreneurs, councillors, general directors of companies, and national representatives from various labour organizations (City of Toronto 2008, 7). The composition of ECAC is indicative of its focus. Though previous policy encourages individuals in the community to participate in these committees by removing status barriers from its policies, the committee members are very much a part of Toronto’s elite business class.

The committee itself is straightforward about its aims and initiatives: “The focus of our initiative is prosperity” (City of Toronto 2008, 8). This focus demonstrates that the City understands its status as a global city to include being competitive and gaining economic prosperity in addition to promoting social inclusion and the prosperity of justice. As Abu-Laban and Gabriel note, to create policy based on economic benefits and prosperity shifts away from focusing on human rights and displaces principles of justice (Abu Laban et al 2002).

The *Agenda* begins by offering somewhat of a “snapshot” of the city of Toronto, similar to the introduction of most of the diversity policies, followed by the introduction of a framework for measuring the success of Toronto as a global city. The framework outlines the four pillars that structure the directives of the policy document. These pillars revolve around topics of business, internationalization, creativity, and economic opportunity and inclusion (City of Toronto 2008, 18). Guided by this framework, the *Agenda* offers eight strategic directions. The *Agenda* concludes with a reiteration of the importance of “economic competitiveness” and “investment” in forging an enviable global city in the twenty-first century (City of Toronto 2008, 33).

For world cities such as Toronto, embracing neo-liberal planning policies is a response to the increased competitiveness amongst metropolitan cities. Despite the City of Toronto’s commitment to promote an inclusive and equitable city through recommendation committees, “addressing socio-spatial inequalities [is] not a priority” for metropolitan planners (Jackson 2009, 402). As Gabriel and Abu Laban note, neo-liberalism often involves values of “competitiveness, efficiency, choice, and consumerism” (21). These values are integral to the *Agenda*, and are found throughout the policy. For example, in introducing the concept of a global city, the *Agenda* compares Toronto to other leading global cities, such as Singapore and London, noting that other cities are “aggressively seeking out international opportunities to secure their position as leading global cities” (City of Toronto 2008, 8), invoking competition between cities. Though its diversity policies aim to promote equality amongst its residents by offering alternative visions of multiculturalism and urban citizenship, the *Agenda* returns to a neo-liberalist framework whereby the diversity of the City’s population is used for the increased success of the city. The *Agenda* also attempts to ‘sell’ its diversity as part of its

global city status, pointing to the benefits of having a diverse management, or internationally connected workforce.

The *Agenda* is eager to promote the different populations within its city from a business perspective: “For Toronto to become a top-of-mind destination for global business, tourists and thought leaders, we need to *capitalize* on the ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious, economic diversity of our city” (City of Toronto 2008, 21 *emphasis added*). One of the strategic directives in the *Agenda* reaffirms this statement by arguing that the city “must *capitalize* on our greatest assets - our residents...” (City of Toronto 2008, 21 *emphasis added*). This is a very different tone than what is found in the diversity policies. Compare the above statements, for example, to The Plan of Action, which states that “The City owes its success to the diverse people and communities that have made their home in Toronto.” (Plan of Action, 2). The latter statement sees the residents of Toronto as members of a community, who work and reside and build communities in the city. The former views the residents as assets to the city worth capitalizing on. The internationalization of Toronto neglects to include its migrant and transnational populations, and understands internationalization as a pathway for business opportunities. How can a city policy provide directives for internationalizing without mentioning the needs of its globalizing population?

The model put forward by the planning committee takes on a business oriented approach to the global city, and turns away from the advancements made in the diversity-related policies that precede it. To be fair, the *Agenda* is up front about being a business plan, distinct from the City’s diversity policies. The *Agenda* does not claim to create policy to promote the culture or diversity within the city, but to promote the city to the world as a global city. Despite its particular policy aim, the *Agenda* demonstrates that the City of Toronto understands of itself as a global city modifies its approaches diversity *outside* of its diversity policies. The *Agenda* also demonstrates that while there is great potential in the City of Toronto’s diversity policies, there remains within the City policies a neo-liberal desire to promote the diversity for motives of profit and advancement, which has an indirect (and negative) effect on the population of Toronto, who are then viewed as city assets, rather than city residents.

Outside of the diversity policies themselves, there is limited opportunity for individuals who do not hold Canadian citizenship to participate as urban citizens, for their particular concerns are not addressed by the policies. The *Agenda* demonstrates this, with its focus on profit and prosperity, rather than equality and inclusiveness. The *Agenda* demonstrates that while the City of Toronto has an understanding of urban citizenship within its diversity policies, this understanding is neglected in other related policy areas.

### **Conclusion: The successes (and failures) of municipal multiculturalism in Toronto**

The City of Toronto’s policies demonstrate that, though the City is able to offer alternative memberships to its residents, it is never fully outside the influence of the nation-state. As a self-identified global city, Toronto often references its global and transnational population as the reason for its global status. Despite this, the City has still more to do in creating policies that promote urban citizenship to its residents. In

summary, the approach that the City takes to ‘managing diversity’ illustrates Richard Day’s notion of the ‘problem of the problem of diversity’, requiring a bureaucratic response from the “Diversity Management and Community Engagement” Division of the City. The specific policies within this Division include the Task Force on Community Access and Equity and the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination. These policies offer a new opportunity for membership that extends beyond the hierarchical approach to multiculturalism and citizenship at the federal level in Canada. The recommendations offer a reinterpretation of membership to include visible minorities and non-citizen migrants, as well as individuals with different lifestyles who are demoted or excluded from federal citizenship. The Plan of Action promotes the inclusion of all individuals in civic life, and commits to advocating to other levels of government on behalf of its residents, offering voice and opportunity to its members that is non-existent at other levels of government.

Embedded within the recommendations of the Task Force and Plan of Action however, are ideas that reflect the problematic thinking of liberal multiculturalism. The Task Force fails to take into account the diversity of diversity issues by collapsing the recommended three committees on diversity issues into one. The Plan of Action includes efforts to promote the City as a global one, and this includes the display of its global population during a designated ‘diversity day’ in one of Toronto’s largest street festivals. The *Agenda* further demonstrates that a neo-liberal approach to the City’s status of a global city exists, which neglects the needs of its citizens in lieu of ambitions of economic success and prosperity in the global world.

Despite the City of Toronto’s shortcomings in the field of multicultural policies, it is able to offer all its residents a membership that is unattainable at the federal level. The City level policies show potential to produce an antiracist, feminist, human rights policy framework that is ignored at the federal level of politics in favour of constructing national unity. The efforts being made by the City translate to the development of urban citizenship in Toronto. Though non-citizens in Toronto are unable to vote in municipal elections, they are still able to express their concerns in a political space within the city through the inclusive policies of the City. Though Toronto is subject to the Multiculturalism Act of Canada, it reinterprets multiculturalism in an attempt to abolish the hierarchies that are currently in existence at the federal level. Though the City limits the extent to which urban citizenship is understood and applied to its policies, the mere existence of such policies challenge traditional notions of state-based citizenship, and offer alternative memberships to the residents of Toronto.

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