



IV

Policy

Ethnocultural Diversity, Democracy, and Intergovernmental Relations in Canadian Cities

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Bien que la dimension multiculturelle de plusieurs villes canadiennes ne fasse aucun doute, le rôle joué par les municipalités en matière de politique dans ce domaine et les relations intergouvernementales qui font partie de ce processus demeurent néanmoins obscures. Comparant Montréal et Ottawa, ce chapitre analyse le développement historique de la question de l'immigration au niveau des politiques publiques municipales, la nature de la relation entre les autorités municipales et les gouvernements fédéral et provinciaux, et le degré d'autonomie locale en place. S'intéressant à la fois à l'aspect discursif et à l'aspect pratique, ce chapitre soutient que ces deux villes peuvent jouer un rôle important à différents niveaux. Les associations multiculturelles reconnaissent d'ailleurs de plus en plus qu'elles ont un rôle politique important à jouer. Elles ne sont toutefois pas entièrement perçues comme de vrais partenaires politiques par les autres niveaux de gouvernement.

INTRODUCTION

In the management of ethnic diversity, federalism and intergovernmental issues are extremely important. Immigration, according to the *Constitution Act, 1867*, is an area of shared jurisdiction (article 95). Many provinces, including Quebec, play an active role in this field and, through a series of agreements with the federal government, select the candidates and are responsible for their integration. However, since immigrants settle mainly in urban areas, municipal governments have been increasingly involved, especially those large cities that have received the majority of recent immigrants (Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver). The numbers are stunning: approximately 220,000 immigrants and refugees enter Canada each year, and 85 percent of them settle in urban centres (Canada 2001). In 1996, 85 percent of all

immigrants and 93 percent of those who had arrived in the country between 1991 and 1996 were living in a census metropolitan area, compared with 57 percent for people born in Canada (Canada 1996).

While there is no doubt about the multicultural dimension of many cities, the political and policy roles played by municipalities in this area – as well as the intergovernmental relations involved in the process – are more obscure. There is a growing Canadian literature on municipal public policy in this field (Abu-Laban 1997; Abu-Laban and Derwing 1997; Edgington and Hutton 2002; Germain and Dansereau 2003; Germain and Rose 2000; Milroy and Wallace 2002; Paré, Frohn, and Laurin 2002; Siemiatycki et al. 2001; Wallace and Frisken 2000). However, there has not been much comparative work, since most of the studies relate to one specific city (exceptions would be Edgington et al. 2001; Quesnel and Tate 1995).

This paper compares the policies dealing with the management of ethnocultural diversity in Montreal and Ottawa, two ethnically diverse cities. From 1997 to 2001, 78.3 percent of the immigrants that came to Quebec settled in Montreal (Quebec 2002); overall, 13 percent of new immigrants to Canada chose Montreal. In 2002 Montreal, with a total population of 1.8 million (the second largest in Canada), had an immigrant population of 26 percent; of the overall population, 35 percent had origins other than Canadian, Québécois, French, British, or Aboriginal, and 19 percent belonged to a visible minority. In Ottawa, in 2002, immigrants made up 21 percent of the population. Nearly 30 percent of the population had origins other than Canadian, Québécois, French, British, or Aboriginal, while 15 percent belonged to a visible minority. The total population of Ottawa was 791,300, making Ottawa-Gatineau the fourth largest metropolitan area in Canada.

Four elements will be examined in order to analyse the nature and dynamics of the intergovernmental factor regarding immigration and settlement. First, it is important to consider how migration issues became matters of local public policy. Specifically, we will consider how Canadian cities became involved in this field. Second, we need to assess how local policies are linked to policies developed or promoted at the provincial and federal levels. It is here that we will address the management of ethnic diversity, both its practical aspects (policies, programs, and administrative and political mechanisms) and discursive ones (the models for the management of ethnocultural heterogeneity that lie behind government actions). Each city has certain policy tools that it can use to influence the patterns of integration of ethnocultural groups. On the practical side, many activities can be created (for example, festivals) and many mechanisms can be put in place (for example, creating an advisory council on multicultural issues, or implementing an equal employment opportunity program for the municipal public service). The discursive aspect is linked to the three broad models used in Western countries to integrate immigrants: civic universalism, multiculturalism, and interculturalism.

Third, we will consider whether there are formal partnerships or agreements and consultations between the levels of governments. Both Montreal and Ottawa constantly position themselves in the complex set of interrelations – involving conflict as well as cooperation – that exist between them and the governments of Quebec, Ontario, and Canada. In Montreal, the relationship with the Quebec government has always been one of ambivalence, exhibiting both distance and connection. Various Montreal mayors, often feeling “abandoned” or misunderstood, have argued for a greater understanding of the importance of the social, cultural, and economic role of Montreal for the Province of Quebec as a whole. Indeed, the Quebec government did react favourably, at least to some extent, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs became, during the second half of the 1990s, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Metropolis. Also, a city contract signed in January 2003 between Montreal and the Quebec government gave the city some political autonomy. However, the imposition of the municipal amalgamations, even though this major restructuring was shared (or even suggested) by many of Montreal’s political elite, created considerable discontent at the municipal level.

Although relationships between Montreal and the federal government are somewhat more distant, the recent proposals formulated by the Canadian government have generally been well received by the Montreal political authorities, for they indicate a more active federal role in urban issues (for example, the infrastructure program; the agreement with the provinces on low-cost rental housing; the national Homelessness Initiative; the Prime Minister’s Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues; and the agreement regarding the gas tax).

Intergovernmental relations are very different in Ottawa. Since it is the national capital, it is the federal government that is very close and the province more distant. Relations with the federal government are, however, ambivalent. Specifically, the city has had some difficulty in developing an autonomous local identity. The strong role played by the National Capital Commission has certainly complicated the role for the city. As part of its mandate, this federal agency aims at building the image of the capital in order to strengthen the Canadian identity and its symbols. This leaves little room for Ottawa to create its own references, linked (or not) to ethnocultural diversity. However, as in Montreal, the recent federal statements about an interest in urban affairs have met with general approval.

Relations between Ottawa and the Ontario government are more distant. They were clearly antagonistic when the Conservatives were in power, since the latter saw Ottawa as a bastion of the opposition. This was partly on account of the mayor’s previous role as a Liberal MPP but also because of the city’s near defiance of the province on the implementation of the Ontario Works program. The downloading of such activities as social services, housing, and public transportation has certainly fuelled a feeling of frustration on the part of the municipal council. For instance, a conflict emerged when the province

blocked the municipal decision to restructure the ward boundaries, an action that was seen as having been motivated by partisan goals – those of protecting rural councillors more sympathetic to the neoliberal views of the provincial Conservatives. Obviously, relations are much more harmonious now that there is a Liberal government in Ontario.

Finally, we will consider more generally the role of the city as a political actor and a producer of identity, and we will analyse the extent of local autonomy on this issue. We think that what can be learned from Montreal and Ottawa could very well be extended to other cities. We will attempt to show that the management of diversity reveals a great deal about the state of local governance in Canada, the development of local identities, and the evolution of intergovernmental relations at the present time.

In sum, we will try to demonstrate in this paper that both cities, even if they are not involved with the same intensity in diversity matters, do play an important role in this field and are relatively autonomous from the upper levels of government. Unfortunately, the latter do not often recognize them as real and legitimate political actors.

ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY AS AN ISSUE FOR LOCAL PUBLIC POLICY

The policy on immigration has evolved substantially in Canada (Berthet and Poirier 2000). Immigration was first seen as a matter related to the workforce, and public policy was situated in terms of international relations and economic development. Without entirely losing this focus, immigration came to be seen, in the period after the 1960s and 1970s, as part of social and cultural policies. In addition to attracting immigrants that will contribute to Canada's economic growth, public policy must increasingly look at issues linked to ethnic cohabitation. It is only fairly recently that municipalities have entered the field of managing ethnocultural relations. Their initiatives were not the result of formal agreements about decentralization. It was more like opening a policy window, in the sense of John Kingdon's (1995) treatise – that local authorities take up an issue because they perceive that there are advantages to be gained and because other levels of government are not really involved.

Municipalities that have developed initiatives relating to the integration of immigrants all have a considerable number of ethnocultural associations, either consisting of people from the same ethnocultural group or bringing together a variety of people around issues such as anti-racism, human rights, and anti-discrimination. Many local governments (for example, Vancouver) have supported the work of these associations in order to facilitate service delivery that is more culturally sensitive and thus may prevent conflicts from arising. A number of local elected officials have been particularly sensitive to the

demands of these groups and have included the issue of cultural diversity in the construction of local identities as well as in the political legitimization of the municipal level of government. So it would seem that community-based groups, rather than incentives from other levels of government, have been extremely important in pushing Canadian cities to take more account of ethnocultural diversity.

The federal policy regarding multiculturalism has also had a significant impact on the mobilization of ethnocultural communities. Since the 1980s especially, the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism (now part of Canadian Heritage) has worked to build the capacity of the immigrant community to take collective responsibility for dealing with the causes of inequality and for developing mobilization strategies – including judicial recourse – so that its members can exercise their rights at all levels of government.

Provincial policies, too, have had an indirect impact. This is largely a result of the crisis of the welfare state and the downloading of many services linked to social issues (which have an impact on immigration issues) from federal to provincial governments and from provincial to municipal governments (Germain and Harel 1985). As well, many responsibilities have been privatized to civil society organizations. Recently, the Quebec Liberal government cut quite extensively the budget of the department responsible for immigration and the funds allocated to the programs aimed at facilitating the integration of immigrants. In that context, Montreal has no choice but to try to find some solutions.

In addition, some municipalities took initiatives in areas (such as culture, social services, and the environment) that had not been their traditional spheres of activity, and in this way they illustrated a desire to be more autonomous. In this context, the strength of municipal governments is their capacity to bring the full range of social actors to the table to act together. Public action at the local level therefore involves many organizations (civil, private, and public), and it is the convenor and networking capacity of local governments that determines their policy capacity.

Another factor that Kingdon stresses in explaining policy initiative is the importance of having solutions for identified problems. In this respect, the actions of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), the official spokesperson for Canadian municipalities at the federal level, can be seen as facilitating municipal action for the management of diversity. In 1986 the FCM adopted its first policy statement on interracial relations (FCM 1986). In order to facilitate municipal activity, this interest group published a series of pamphlets, starting in 1987. The first of these underlined the need for municipal action because, despite existing laws and policies (such as the federal policy on multiculturalism, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and provincial laws), discrimination on the basis of race and unequal access to institutions remained significant problems (FCM 1987).

The FCM put forward a program that has been taken up by a number of municipalities interested in the management of diversity. It includes the creation of festivals and multicultural celebrations; consultation with ethnocultural groups in order to adapt municipal services; and the adoption of programs and policies by municipal councils to promote increased participation of ethnocultural minorities in the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the community. The FCM's basic argument was that good interracial relations could translate into greater economic development and an enhanced quality of urban life. Cities should be leaders in this area, argued the national organization, because they are the first point of contact for citizens and ethnocultural communities and are major facilitators of community action. For the FCM, the improvement of interracial relations is clearly a municipal responsibility (FCM 1987, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992).

The FCM stated in 2002, "A major part of the impact of immigration is felt at the local level, and it is the local initiatives and programs that assure the success of our national immigration policies" (FCM 2002, 2). This led the federation to call for official recognition of the increased municipal responsibility in the area of immigration: "The municipal governments should be at the table with the federal and provincial governments when decisions are being made about immigration and refugee policies and programs" (*ibid.*). The FCM's discourse has gone from one of encouraging municipalities to become involved in this policy area (in the 1980s and 1990s) to insisting on intergovernmental recognition of the municipal role (in the 2000s).

Finally, the municipal responsibility for police and transit was an important element in the movement towards municipal activity in managing diversity. For instance, in Montreal, the actions taken by the Communauté urbaine de Montréal (CUM) were clearly motivated by the attempt to reduce tensions stemming from crisis situations between the police, the public transit commission, and some ethnocultural communities. Indeed, in many municipalities (including Ottawa), the first actions relating to the management of diversity were often linked to the police, in many cases arising from specific incidents.

In sum, Canadian cities involved in ethnocultural issues have been doing so because of a proactive attitude by city councils, pressure from ethnic interest groups, incentives from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the relative absence in (or retreat from) this field by the upper levels of government.

MANAGING DIVERSITY: POLICIES AND DISCOURSES

While immigration policies (the number of people allowed to enter the country each year, the types of immigrants wanted, the acquisition of citizenship, etc.) are mainly influenced and determined by the federal government and

some provinces, we must underline that large Canadian cities are increasingly involved in the business of attracting immigrants. In a globalized world, cities are in competition with one another, and they try to attract skilled immigrants (for example, in the multimedia and pharmaceutical sectors in Montreal and the computer and software sectors in Ottawa). Also, settlement policies are mainly left in the hands of provinces and, more and more, in the hands of municipalities, with the other levels of government providing financial help to specific programs or to multicultural and ethnic associations.

Montreal has been involved in settlement issues since the 1980s. In 1985 the CUM created the Advisory Committee on Intercultural and Interracial Relations, and in 1990 it issued a declaration on intercultural and interracial relations. The public transportation agency (*Société de transport de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal*) provided intercultural training to its drivers and established a program of employment equity in 1987. The CUM police did likewise. The City of Montreal created its own Advisory Committee on Interracial and Intercultural Relations in 1990 (in 1995 the name was changed to the Advisory Committee on Intercultural Relations), with a mandate to advise and make recommendations to City Council.

The new amalgamated (in 2002) City of Montreal intends to make the management of diversity and the elimination of barriers one of its priorities. In 2003 the city created the Intercultural Council (replacing the former Advisory Committee on Intercultural Relations). This council has the responsibility of advising City Council and the executive committee – either on its own initiative or by request from the city – on services and policies designed to facilitate the integration and participation of members of ethnocultural communities in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the city (Montreal 2001, 1). In addition, the Intercultural Council hears delegations, solicits opinions, and undertakes research studies. The City of Montreal also established the Office of Intercultural Relations, charged with implementing recommendations and ensuring follow-up; the office is also responsible for the relations between the city and its ethnocultural communities.

The main activities undertaken by the City of Montreal are the following: establishment of a program of employment equity for municipal employees; financial and technical support for ethnocultural associations; information and translation services; activities to raise awareness (workshops, intercultural days, debates, publicity campaigns, information in local newspapers, displays in libraries, visits to schools, work with the media); financing festivals and multicultural celebrations; consulting ethnocultural communities about ways of adapting municipal services; integrating multiculturalism into leisure and sports activities; adopting a declaration on intercultural and interracial relations, and a declaration against discrimination and racism.

Montreal's civic groups have also incorporated a concern for this issue, presenting candidates from ethnocultural communities. Selected elected

representatives were given responsibility for intercultural relations, particularly at the level of the executive committee. Both the public transportation agency and the police service established a program of employment equity many years ago. More recently, the Montreal Summit, held in June 2002 to define the main policy orientations of the new amalgamated city, discussed the issue of diversity (Montreal 2002).

The former City of Ottawa first set up an advisory committee on visible minorities in 1982 (Andrew and Rajiva 1996). In the early 1990s the city also had an administrative structure that dealt with human rights and employment equity, and in the late 1990s the Diversity and Community Access Project Team was created to tackle the issue of diversity (Ottawa 2000). The new City of Ottawa (which was amalgamated in 2001, one year earlier than Montreal) set up an enlarged network of advisory committees, including one on equity and diversity. The Equity and Diversity Advisory Committee (EDAC), which met for the first time in August 2001, covers a number of dimensions of diversity. Its terms of reference include working towards the elimination of discrimination within the City of Ottawa, advocating on behalf of racially and ethnically diverse groups, developing a strong lobbying network with other organizations, and promoting a better understanding of different cultures (Ottawa 2002c).

However, the functioning of EDAC has not been without problems (Poirier and Andrew 2003). Indeed, all of the advisory committees of the new city have questioned their roles and their relations with city staff and elected officials. The major problem seems to be access to the political agenda. As one of the members of EDAC said, "How can we advise if we don't know what the issues are?"¹

Ottawa is also extensively involved in the diversification of its workforce and has put in place various activities oriented towards dialogue between religions (as a result of 9/11). The Ottawa Police and OC Transpo are also very active on issues of diversity. However, Ottawa City Council is almost exclusively "white," unlike Montreal City Council, and the Ottawa 20/20 official plan (which will broadly guide City Council for twenty years) gives rather limited visibility to the issues of diversity (Ottawa 2002a).

It is now time to consider the ways in which Montreal and Ottawa describe their policy objectives and activities. In doing so, it will be possible to understand the fundamental approach that each takes in relation to the management of diversity. Broadly speaking, we can identify three models: civic universalism, multiculturalism, and interculturalism.²

In the model of civic universalism, the public sphere is seen as an area where all citizens should be on an equal footing in relation to the rules and values of collective life. Differences (in moral choice, religious belief, behaviour, and taste) are not denied but are confined to the private space. By contrast, multiculturalism is a political project which states that the common good and

the search for social justice must take into account the cultural conceptions of minorities living in the same territory. Differences are valorized in the political and public spheres, while collective rights or different privileges can be accorded to specific minorities.

The intercultural model emerged as a result of the criticisms that were levelled at both models. The central question it poses is the following: How can we remain different while sharing certain common reference points? Whereas universalist models were criticized for ignoring differences and for proposing the homogenization of ideas and lifestyles in the name of an abstract citizenship, multiculturalism was criticized for producing communities and groups isolated from one another. Interculturalism is a sort of multiculturalism but with the construction of common reference points (for instance, the necessity to learn French in Quebec); the immigrant as well as the host society should both adapt to each other.

Montreal's model is traditionally inspired by interculturalism. During the Montreal Summit, the description of the city's policy emphasized intercultural relations and links between the ethnocultural communities and the city as a whole. The interculturalist model is also present in the publicity campaign "Nous sommes tous Montréalais" ("We are all Montrealers"), created during the years of Pierre Bourque's administration. The image shows a variety of people representing different ethnocultural communities, with the idea that all of these groups share a common Montreal identity. The links between them are what forms their commonality; Montreal is the strong common reference point, and it provides the links between different groups.

At the same time (and more recently), Montreal's discourse also contains universalist references. The documents prepared for the Montreal Summit dealing with diversity refer to citizenship and universal rights. All sectors of the population must be able to exercise their citizenship fully. The policies for managing diversity are only one part of a broader policy aimed at creating a universal citizenship. In this sense, the conception of a person as being a member of a specific culture cohabits with the reference to citizens having the same rights and duties as other citizens. Multiculturalism references are also present, although less strongly.

The Government of Quebec surely had a strong influence on Montreal on the level of discourse. Traditionally, Quebec has articulated a very clear intercultural stance, most notably in 1990–91 with the establishment of a "moral contract" between Quebecers and immigrants (Quebec 1990). This contract recognizes diversity while emphasizing the importance of a common public culture (including French).

The intercultural reference moved towards a universalist approach during the latter part of the 1990s. In 1996 the Quebec government stopped using the term "cultural communities," which had been introduced in the 1970s, and the Ministry of Cultural Communities and Immigration became the Ministry for Relations with Citizens and Immigration, while Intercultural Week became

Quebec Citizenship Week. The Quebec government readopted Intercultural Week in 2003. According to the Ministry for Relations with Citizens and Immigration, the government policy is to promote an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of all citizens without discrimination (Quebec 2001, 20). The discourse is of civic participation and good civic relations, rather than intercultural relations. This evolution from interculturalism to universalism has clearly influenced the Montreal discourse. Also, the multi-ethnic orientation of associations is encouraged rather than the promotion of single ethnocultural groups, as is the case with the federal government's policy.

The influence of the Canadian government, with its policy of multiculturalism, is rather limited in Montreal, except for the financing of multicultural associations. Heritage Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Commission are occasionally mentioned as playing a role in local activities, but generally speaking, the federal government is relatively discreet in the management of diversity in Montreal. The federal government also moved, especially after the referendum on Quebec sovereignty in 1995, towards a universalist approach aiming at strengthening and unifying the Canadian nation and Canadian identity. This kind of discourse was not really well received in Montreal.

The City of Ottawa's discursive universe plays on two registers: one universalist (which is dominant) and one multicultural. Every policy and discourse put forward by the city stresses the equality of all citizens. At the same time, other policy orientations are influenced more by a multicultural approach (Ottawa 2002b, 10). Some papers from EDAC argue for financial and other support to specific ethnocultural groups and for the creation of a Multicultural Day. The Ottawa Police refers to a "cultural mosaic" – clearly a multicultural approach, with the idea of communities coexisting side by side. Ottawa's draft official plan (Ottawa 2002a) also builds on the idea of a city of distinct communities, each with its own identity and pride of place.

There are also a few intercultural references. One paper refers to the importance of links between the various ethnocultural communities: "The City must provide active support for diversity through strategies which build inclusion, create shared points of contact, and build a shared commitment to the City as a place in common – in other words, a home" (Ottawa 2002a, 11). EDAC also talks of encouraging formal and informal contacts between community groups in order to promote a better understanding of different cultures. But despite these references, the dominant approaches in Ottawa are those of universalism and multiculturalism.

The Ontario legislation on employment equity during the 1990s was a major influence on the activities of the former City of Ottawa. Given that Mike Harris's Conservative government had abolished the legislation on employment equity and gave little priority to the recognition of diversity, it is not surprising that there was little influence from the provincial level at that time.

However, the previous New Democratic government had used a multicultural approach, and certainly this did correspond to the municipal approach. It is too soon to assess the influence of the Liberal government of Dalton McGuinty. There may also be some influence from the federal government in terms of its multicultural approach and its universal approach focusing on the Canadian identity, which had been very well received in the City of Ottawa.

This section has demonstrated that both cities, in varying degrees, are involved in ethnocultural issues. Both have shown leadership in this field and are relatively autonomous from the provincial and federal governments, though they are sometimes influenced by the senior levels of government, most notably in terms of discourses. We have also seen that both cities use – often at the same time – a combination of different models. In fact, they constantly switch from one to another, according to the circumstances. However, the consequence of this “reframing” of ethnic issues is that variations can be observed between the discourses and the policies put in place. For instance, if Montreal officially puts forward an intercultural discourse, variations between districts can be evident, with some districts allowing specific swimming hours for Muslim women (a multicultural approach) while others do not (a universal one). But these variations clearly demonstrate, even in times of financial restraint, that cities possess a degree of autonomy in this field. Cooperation with other levels of government is also possible. This is what we shall consider in the following section.

FORMALIZED INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS?

In the case of Montreal, there are a number of joint activities that relate to ethnocultural diversity. There are agreements between the Quebec Ministry of Relations with Citizens and Immigration and the City of Montreal relating to the integration of new immigrants and the learning of French. There is also an intergovernmental agreement supporting interculturalism in the area of cultural activities. In addition, Montreal participates in coordinating activities organized by the Quebec government, most notably those bringing together agencies working with refugees and immigrants and those dealing with visible minority youth. The new city contract signed in January 2003 between the Quebec government and the City of Montreal recognizes that Montreal plays – and must play in the future – an important role in such areas as the management of ethnic diversity, housing, transit, community development, and tourism.

In Ottawa, there are no formal agreements between the city and the Government of Ontario. Through the Newcomer Settlement Program, Ontario’s Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration supports community-based delivery of settlement services. Funding is provided to community agencies that are working directly with newcomers and providing project support to the

settlement sector. The main impact of the provincial government on the City of Ottawa is perhaps the equal opportunity program of the 1990s, which promoted the elimination of barriers in the private as well as the public sector. It provided the municipality with access to information, resources, and role models that could help with the implementation of its own equal opportunity initiatives. In 2004, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration announced that they had signed a letter of intent that paves the way for municipalities to have a voice in immigration issues in negotiations towards a future Canada-Ontario immigration agreement.

The federal government is far less visible in both cities. Formal agreements (such as the Canada-Quebec Accord regarding immigration) are with the provinces, not the cities. They have, however, an important indirect impact on the cities. The Canada-Quebec Accord is the most comprehensive of the agreements signed between the federal government and the provinces. It gives Quebec selection powers and control of the settlement services, while Canada keeps responsibility for the definition of immigrant categories, the levels of immigration, and the refugee as well as family categories. There are also agreements with British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, and Yukon. The agreements with British Columbia and Manitoba give them responsibility and funds for settlement services and the power to attract business immigrants. The other agreements generally imply that the provinces will select immigrants to meet specific labour-market needs. Since immigrants settle mainly in large cities, these federal-provincial agreements undoubtedly have an impact on them. As we noted above, the governments of Canada and Ontario are currently negotiating such an agreement.

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration has some settlement and language programs, but there are no formal agreements between it and the city. The same applies to the multiculturalism programs of Canadian Heritage and the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism. The targets of all these programs are community-based groups or private organizations, not cities. There are, however, partnerships between Montreal, Ottawa, and the Department of Human Resources Development to operate Partners for Jobs, an employment program that helps immigrants find work. In addition, the Prime Minister's Caucus Task Force on Urban Issues has called for more active involvement by the federal government in the management of ethnic diversity at the local level; it reported that current programs are too often driven by a short-term perspective and that municipalities often must fill the gaps with their own support programs (Liberal Party 2002, 23).

The task force also proposes the enactment of formal trilevel relations in the field of immigration and settlement. It recommends a cohesive approach

in this field, involving coordination between all orders of government as well as non-governmental organizations. It also proposes to review, with the provincial and municipal levels, the formula for funding settlement, integration programs, and services, and to convene a biannual conference on immigration with all orders of government (Liberal Party 2002, 24).

It is also noteworthy that in 1996 the federal government created the Canadian Metropolis project and linked it to the international Metropolis, a forum for research on public policy relating to migration, cultural diversity, and the integration of immigrants in cities. Metropolis is thus supported by a consortium of federal departments and agencies (including Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Health Canada, Canadian Heritage, Status of Women Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Statistics Canada, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation). There are now five Metropolis-funded research centres in Canada (Atlantic, Montreal, Toronto, the Prairies, and Vancouver), and the Metropolis website (canada.metropolis.net) gives references to much of the research that has been generated from these five centres.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is currently calling for an intergovernmental approach to the management of ethnocultural diversity, including the involvement of the federal government. In June 2002 the federation encouraged its members, as well as the provincial and territorial associations and governments, to work with the federal government in order to support municipal committees on interracial relations, employment equity, training programs for intercultural sensitivity, and other initiatives in interracial relations (FCM 2002, 4). This would indeed be a change from current practice, involving a much stronger role for the federal government and therefore a shift in existing intergovernmental relations.

To summarize, the federal government is involved in the determination of the broad levels of immigration, in a few settlement programs, and in the development of a model to integrate immigrants (historically, a multiculturalism model but increasingly, one of universalism). Provincial governments are involved in settlement questions as well as in the models to manage diversity. Cities, too, are involved in settlement, and also in the implementation of specific models and various administrative and political mechanisms to deal concretely with various aspects of diversity. Clearly, because of their powers over matters closely linked to immigration issues (such as culture, housing, transit, police), cities and provinces have developed some relationships. The current fiscal imbalance, if not corrected, also means that the federal government will in future have to play a stronger role in many local areas, including ethnocultural diversity. In the following section we consider more closely some aspects linked to this intergovernmental context.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND THE CANADIAN INTERGOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM

If municipal interest in Montreal and Ottawa relates to demographic reality, this should lead to increasing municipal action relating to ethnic diversity and, indeed, to increasingly autonomous municipal action, because the large cities in Canada are considerably more ethnically diverse than the provincial populations. But since, as the preceding sections demonstrated, cities are already involved in this field, we must be cautious with such a statement and link the municipal activity in ethnic diversity to the general level of municipal capacity and organization. It is therefore necessary to look more broadly at the evolution of the place of municipal government in the Canadian intergovernmental system in order to understand the likely evolution of the capacity of municipalities, even those as large as Montreal and Ottawa, to create effective systems of governance of ethnocultural diversity.

First of all, playing this kind of governance role requires that municipalities have a stronger place in the Canadian intergovernmental context than that which currently exists (Cameron 2002). In fact, there is a contradiction between the discursive environment, which places the emphasis on the political role of municipalities, and the unchanged intergovernmental context of the actual Canadian political system. The provincial and federal governments have not yet symbolically or practically recognized the political and fiscal importance of cities.

Both Montreal and Ottawa, along with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Association of Municipal Managers, and other cities, are asking for formal and official recognition of the political role they play and a renewal of the fiscal and political relations between the three levels of government. Montreal is one of the five Canadian cities (along with Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto) that have been meeting as the C5 group of mayors to lobby for a stronger role for municipal government. They have argued for more federal support for urban issues, and these arguments have had some weight.

They have not been alone in making these arguments; the TD Bank, the Liberal caucus, through its Task Force on Urban Issues, and a variety of university-based researchers have also called for greater federal activity on urban issues. The City of Toronto has played a particularly active role, adopting the document *Towards a New Relationship with Ontario and Canada*, developing a charter for Toronto and a model framework for a city charter, establishing a website as part of a national campaign (with Vancouver, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Ottawa, and Halifax) entitled "Canada's Cities: Unleash Our Potential," and working with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, both directly and through the FCM's Big City Mayors' Caucus (Toronto 2001). These bodies ask that the local level be recognized as a legitimate order of government, that

it be autonomous, with broadly defined powers and larger fiscal resources, that it be consulted when affected by policies from other levels, and that decisions taken at the local level will not be unilaterally modified by other levels.

These changes are important if we want cities to become not only service providers but a truly political arena for their citizens (Tindal and Tindal 2000, 249). At present, it is not clear whether there will be any change, much less a major change, in intergovernmental relations or in the financial support given to municipal governments. There is a discursive will expressed by cities to take a more active role in diversity issues, but, concretely, things are moving more slowly. So there is a paradox: amalgamations and the downloading of various services give the impression that the local level is now extremely important and that citizens will at last be able to organize themselves and participate fully in the development of local public policies, but the financial resources to meet these challenges are inadequate (Fenn 2002; Kitchen 2002).

A reorganization of intergovernmental relations would accelerate the realization of these changes. It is as if cities are waiting for such a rearrangement before assuming their new political role completely. The image that citizens, elected representatives, and municipal employees have recently developed regarding the role of the local level must be translated by the other levels of government into political recognition as well as fiscal autonomy.

There are some encouraging signs, though. The last city contract signed between the Government of Quebec and the City of Montreal is particularly promising. It includes political recognition of the city, decentralization of some services, complete autonomy in some fields, formal dialogue between the two levels of government, future revision of the fiscal system, and the possibility of entering into agreements with the federal government. In British Columbia in 1996, a protocol of recognition was signed by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and the province's minister of municipal affairs, involving partnership, information sharing, consultation on future legislative changes, joint council for reviewing legislation, policies, and programs, and other matters). Also, Alberta's *Municipal Government Act* of 1994 defines broad spheres for municipalities and gives them natural persons powers.

However, even if we can say that urban affairs in Canada are back on the political agenda (Andrew, Graham, and Phillips 2002), there is still a lack of a real intergovernmental will. This can be linked to three features of current Canadian federalism: the tendency towards centralization; fiscal federalism; and symmetrical federalism.

First, we have in Canada, unlike the United States, what we can call a "blurred" or mixed federalism – one that is not clearly defined. While the *Constitution Act, 1867*, established a separate list of powers for the federal government and the provinces, it gave very broad spending powers to the federal government, which has used them extensively to involve itself in provincial spheres of jurisdiction, such as welfare, social programs, education, culture,

and health. Also, there has been a strong tendency, especially since 1982 and the new Canadian Constitution, towards centralizing of the political system into the hands of the federal government. So the provinces are not likely to accept without negotiations the involvement of the federal government in municipal affairs. Moreover, the federal government has a tendency to consider the other political levels as subnational ones rather than equal partners. This is very problematic if we want a trilateral political recognition of the local level.

This is linked to a financial element – the fiscal imbalance between the revenues of the federal government and the limited revenues of the provinces and cities, which are facing growing needs in public health, education, and such urban issues as transit, housing, the environment, and infrastructure. The provinces want to be able to levy more income taxes, with the federal government reducing its revenues, so that the former are not always in the position of having to ask Ottawa to spend in these areas. This is why a redefinition of the fiscal autonomy of the cities is closely linked to a redefinition of the fiscal relationship between the federal and provincial governments. The agreements signed in June 2005 between the Canadian government and the Ontario and Quebec governments regarding the sharing of the federal gas tax is promising, and it will be used to finance infrastructure and transit facilities in cities.

Canadian federalism evolved as a symmetrical political system rather than an asymmetrical one. Asymmetry means that various parts of a federation possess varying powers in relation to their different interests; it implies that federal policies may be different from one place to another. Quebec and also from time to time some western provinces and Newfoundland have asked for this kind of flexible federalism. But the federal government has a very different vision and sees Canada as a symmetrical federation, with each province having the same powers, and with federal policies and programs being similar from coast to coast (backup up with national objectives and means). This is very problematic with respect to urban and ethnic issues, since the needs and priorities of Montreal may be very different from those of Vancouver. Even if the government of Paul Martin repeatedly says that his approach is more flexible, a stronger involvement of the Canadian government in urban issues would necessitate a redefinition of its way of conceiving the federation. The agreement regarding the health-care system clearly demonstrates that this is possible.

So the challenge will be to keep a flexible approach that recognizes that all cities do not face the same problems and therefore do not need the same powers and the same level of political and fiscal autonomy. The greater empowerment of municipalities must be flexible. There must be a set of custom-built powers, responsibilities, and capacities that match a city's particular needs and aspirations – the policy must be sensitive to local variations: “The services which must logically belong under municipal jurisdiction are those which can vary in their provision and their standards from place to place” (Tindal and

Tindal 2000, 224). In the field of immigration and settlement, there must be national standards (especially regarding discrimination), but since immigration issues are closely linked to questions of identity and local matters, there are various ways to integrate immigrants, and the task of building models and defining mechanisms must be left to the different local communities.

CONCLUSION

This comparison between two of our cities shows that both are active in the management of ethnic diversity. Montreal is clearly more involved, while Ottawa has only very recently begun to take the matter into account. The dominant universalist discourse in Ottawa may help explain this difference. Now that Ottawa is using more multicultural references, major gaps appear between the discourse and the practical reality, which is far from what we observed in Montreal. We also saw that both cities use a combination of models. In this regard, some important variations may appear, even in Montreal, between the discourses and the politics put in place. As a result, the policies for the management of diversity that have been adopted by the different levels of government are sometimes complementary and sometimes contradictory. But these variations indeed demonstrate a level of autonomy for local action.

We need to recognize that municipalities are playing a role in the management of ethnocultural diversity and that their actions relate to models that differ in their objectives and their approaches. Municipal officials have to manage access to services, equipment, and facilities in order to ensure that they are inclusive of different ethnocultural minorities. They also must respond to the various needs expressed by ethnocultural communities and ethnic interest groups. In doing so, cities are not only service providers (which is their traditional role, and one defined in the nature of intergovernmental relations up to the present), but they are real political agents. Most importantly, we think that this field is a very good example of the changes currently transforming the distribution of federal-provincial-municipal responsibilities and the dynamics of intergovernmental relations in Canada.

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- 1 Interview with a member of EDAC, 15 October 2002.
- 2 For a more detailed analysis of these models, see Benhabib 2002, Fenton 2003, Kelly 2002, Parekh 2000, Semprini 1997, and Constant 2000.

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