

**“Suburban World:  
Comparing the governance of globalizing regions from  
the outside in”**

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## Introduction

Historically, regional governance was the necessary outcome of ever expanding processes of urbanization. In Lefebvrian terms, this goes with the emergence of an “urban society”, created by the extension-expansion of the urban at a global scale (Lefebvre, 2003 (1970): 216). From then on, the current understanding of the city – Lefebvre emphasizing its paradoxical character and the contradictory character of centrality (Ronneberger 2015)<sup>1</sup> – must be revised from its social potentialities that go beyond administrative and political frontiers.

As rings, layers and segments were added to the traditional commercial and/or industrial city, levels of regional government and instruments of regionalism followed. Sometimes, as it famously was the case in the Canadian city of Toronto, metropolitan institutions were created in anticipation of further growth from the centre out and it was countered by puncturing the urban region with high-density centres in the periphery and decentralized infrastructure. Since those early days of suburbanization from one centre outward, a different, a more polycentric and non-centric mode of sub/urbanization has taken hold, often associated with the Los Angeles experience but, as some have argued, present in many regions around the world. Even more recently, neither the classic Chicago, nor the reactive Los Angeles models have provided valid guidance in today’s urban world as yet more mixed and unpredictable forms of regional urbanization have emerged around the world in an age of what some have called “planetary urbanization” (Brenner and Schmid 2014).

Based on our previous work on suburban governance (Hamel and Keil 2015), and on a comparative analysis of the way public and private actors are involved in governing suburban expansion in the case of Toronto and Montreal, we are now asking specifically what the role of new suburban constellations is in the performance of governance for expanding regions. Our method is comparative<sup>2</sup> as we are building our conceptual, not just empirical, thinking on a broad set of experiences from (our own research in) Canada and Europe (Keil, Hamel, Boudreau and Kipfer, forthcoming). This is an occasion, as Jennifer Robinson suggests, “to put case studies work into wider conversation” (2014: 66). Bringing case studies in conversation with the urban studies literature – and with “more critical planetary reading practice” – can contribute to advocate “new lines of theorization” (Robinson, 2014: 65). It will also help to better understand how suburban governance takes place in city regions, and how it is shaped, on the one hand, by local context and, on the other, by global social, economic and urban trends. Bringing to the fore the diversity of urban recomposition (Guay and Hamel, 2013) we will look at suburban governance from four angles that also

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<sup>1</sup> “What does the city create? Nothing. It centralizes creation. Any yet it creates everything. Nothing exists without exchange, without union, without proximity, that is, without relationships. The city creates a situation, where *different* things occur one after another and do not exist separately but according to their differences” (Lefebvre, 2003 (1970): 117).

<sup>2</sup> Our intention is to rely on a comparative method open to bringing our case studies in conversation with the urban studies literature.

organize the event from a logistical point of view: 1) The conditions of cooperation and conflict between actors involved in suburban governance: We will present the case studies emphasizing the territorial articulation of levels of government in distribution of state services dealing with pressures from above and from below (Piattoni, 2010). 2) Evaluation of the institutional forms taken by suburban governance at different scales of governing: It is the nature of the national state itself that is undermined by multi-level governance. We will look more specifically at the territorialisation of social, economic and political relations, starting with the observation that suburban processes are “no longer focused predominantly upon any single, self-enclosed geographical scale” (Brenner, 2004: 47). 3) Appraisal of political outcomes of suburban governance: We will examine the strategies elaborated by social and political actors and their results regarding both vested interests and public concerns. How is it possible to distance oneself from the ideology of governance defined in reference to “ideals of efficiency and rationality of administration” (Harvey, 2009: 71)? 4) Assessment of the impact of suburban governance on civil society actors in relation to the planning of city regions: We will pay attention to the capacity of civil society actors to take part and influence decisions processes pertaining to the future of suburbs. For that matter, one can apply the criteria selected by Susan S. Fainstein (2010) for understanding the just city (redistribution, respect for diversity and greater democracy).

We will suggest a typology of extant modalities of suburban-based regional governance and name institutional arrangements that are emerging alongside. Consequently, we explore the way suburban governance is implemented and experienced in two Canadian city-regions: how are the relations between several tiers of the state involved in dealing with suburban ways of life? How do cooperation and conflicts emerge and evolve between actors and institutions with respect to suburban governance? Who is exercising leadership in these matters? What values and interests are at stake? To what extent and how can suburban development be regulated? And who should be responsible for it?

We are ultimately postulating, as is Ananya Roy (2015), that “the politics of the suburban periphery is the politics of political society” through which contradictions of centrality/peripherality, formality/informality, state/market are renegotiated. In this sense, at the outset, our intention is to contribute to a general “critique of stable categories of space, society, and state” (Ibid.) through comparative urban and regional research.

Our paper is subdivided into five parts. First, we recall the main theoretical tenets underlying our comparative approach, examining the interface between global suburbanism and suburban governance. Second, we introduce the geographical and political context – the Canadian situation – where our comparative approach had been carried out. Third, we discuss briefly the comparative problematic, and fourth and fifth we examine the way suburban governance has been implemented respectively in the cases of Toronto and Montreal regions.

## 1. Global suburbanism and suburban governance

*Suburbanism* can be equated with increasingly distinct ‘suburban ways of life’. Beyond hybrid networks and forms, suburban land use patterns are convergent with differing social and cultural norms of suburban life. Socioeconomic differences in connection with density and transportation (reliance on the automobile in some places, alternative forms of transportation – transit, walking, cycling, jitneys – elsewhere) are part of the experienced variety of suburbanisms around the globe. Patterns of suburban development in comparison to those of the central city vary a great deal according to national, regional and continental contexts (Hamel and Keil, 2015). Suburban form is not in all cases low density. Edge cities are one well-known form of high-density suburbanization. We find high density as well in European suburbs, at the outskirts of Canadian city-regions, East Asian new towns, Turkish peripheral settlements and in the fringes of North African cities from Cairo to Casablanca. Density can be a predictor of socio-economic situation and political preference in the suburbs (Touati-Morel, 2015).

Certainly, traditional differences between city and suburb persist but even there is differentiation. Traditionally, at least in the United States and in a lesser way in Canada, these divisions have been supporting opposing value systems (Dreier, Mollenkopf and Swanstrom, 2001). The implications for justice, democracy and how to combat social inequalities and economic segregation can be astonishing and confounding for political actors and policy makers. Social solidarity is not envisaged the same way if you live in the suburbs or in the city core, even though suburbs are less and less exempted from struggles around social injustice, environmental issues and citizenship.

Central city and suburbs have been characterized – at least through social and cultural representations – by stark contrasts around a number of factors like density, homeownership and access to public and/or private services. In fact those divisions are more and more evanescent, submitted to processes of reconstitution or restructuring. For instance, the hybrid and in-between forms, often deployed in suburbs since the 1970s onwards, are based upon a mix of land uses. It is no longer surprising to note that duality between urban areas such as centrality/peripherality also prevails in suburbs. The taxonomy of suburbanisms and suburban ways of life has recently been subject to new categorization and empirical study. Alan Walks, in his insightful Lefebvrian analysis on suburbanism as a way of life has defined the “inherent aspect of urbanism [as] both distinct yet inseparable from it—urbanism’s internal ever-present anti-thesis that, in dialectical fashion, stands in productive tension with it, producing interleaved dimensions of ‘urbanism–suburbanism’ (2012: 2). In a related paper from the same research project, Markus Moos and Pablo Mendez (2015) demonstrate the complex relationships of suburban and urban ways of life and the categories by which we recognize those.

Global suburbanity in that respect, although addressing the old divide between city and its periphery, also brings to the fore something unexpected, a renewed understanding of the city and/or the urban space in the making. This follows, first, from the fact that suburban living has been expanding everywhere, contributing to the growth of city-regions and mega regions all over the world (Lang and Knox, 2009), thereby transforming the social, economical and cultural reality of cities and regions. Second, the form of peripheral or suburban development worldwide comes with a series of “worldings” as socio-cultural experiences and representations between cities and inside regions of the same and/or different continents are mixed in new and productive terms (rather than colonial and derivative terms). Thus, if the traditional divide between the global North and the global South can sometimes be contested through the expansion of the periphery, as is the case, for example in both Montreal and Toronto where massive immigration has transformed the suburban region fundamentally. Even though, it is not in our project for the time being to address these questions – for example around the stranglehold of Western Civilisation upon the ideal image of city –, their presence in the discussion around global urbanism/suburbanism keeps resurfacing. Interconnection of cities worldwide – including their suburban periphery – situates issues of inequalities and domination into a novel urban theory perspective.

Despite the fact that through branding and centralized political power urban agglomerations continue to be represented through the iconography of central cities, the majority of inhabitants live in urban peripheries and live suburban ways of life (Walks 2012). Changing the perspective accordingly to incorporate global suburbanisms in our definition of the urban leads to paying attention to diverse and conflicting choices, priorities and models of city forms. But upstream, the structural factors, representing constraints and opportunities for the expression of actors' subjectivity, are always essential, in the sense that spatial materiality is binding. Nonetheless, structural factors are never completely or absolutely enforcing given choices. Actors always have choices. Suburban governance, regulating the new processes involved in planning and building contemporary city-regions as well as complex, intertwined processes of post-suburbanization, occurs through the three modalities of the state, capital accumulation and private authoritarianism. Each of these modalities come with their own structural constraints but also with their own productive actor constellations. Considering suburban governance can help better understanding why and how divisions between urban core and their peripheries are being managed and/or challenged by different categories of actors.

It is through governance – despite the limitations and ambiguities associated with the notion (Hamel and Jouve, 2006) – that processes of conflicts and cooperation involving state, market and civil society and decisions on the future of city-regions unfold. How and whether institutional hierarchies are being challenged through governance remains an open question (Pierre, 2014). The same can be said concerning the emergence of new actors and coalitions. In the current globalizing context, beyond the territory, discourse and technologies (material

and of power) occupied by traditional elites, the political field implies several categories of actors and refers to multiple scalar interactions between local, regional and global institutions (Addie and Keil 2015). The indetermination of the political is necessarily at stake more than ever.

A lot has been written about governance. Governance, in the first instance, marks a shift from a more institutional, statist perspective focusing on what government does and what politics does to support government, to a mix of activities of social and political regulation that includes state and non-state actors across various scales. This new mix is, of course, not a free-flowing event but leads to re-institutionalization and re-territorialization at any given point. It is also often a process that produces authoritarian discipline instead of democratic openings (Swyngedouw 2005). It is possible to consider governance from a strongly critical Gramscian perspective (Davies, 2011), a network approach (Bevir, 2011), or through comparative analytical thinking (Melo and Baiocchi, 2006; Hamel and Jouve, 2006). The latter conceptualization is certainly more inclusive. For the time being, we adopt this wider perspective. According to this viewpoint, suburban governance in post/metropolitan regions goes hand in hand with a renewed vision of how to achieve public action, putting emphasis on cognition –on cognitive frameworks and practices and their role in bringing social and political changes – and normative values (Muller, 2005). The increased role of city-regions in the global economy has been associated so far with new models of state regulation, challenging the past models of public action (Kazancigil, 2010). We have argued elsewhere that regional governance in the age of advanced globalization has to be seen as an exercise that has largely internalized the demands and constraints of the world market. This has consequences for both the dynamics of the political process and the substance of urban and regional policy (Keil 2011; Addie and Keil 2015).

The focus on suburban governance at a city regional scale is contributing to the understanding of the urban and the political, in that it goes with examining transformations in the making. Savini (2012a;b) has shown how suburban-inflected governance has often exploded common understandings of centre-periphery relations as cross-border coalitions have emerged in some European metropolises such as Paris and Milan leading often to open and protracted processes of development characterized by localism and territorial competition. In other words, if the usual obstacles to the transformation of the urban remain present in suburban settlements, on different occasions, suburban governance may be able to circumvent those but they will always be a negotiated outcome of emerging forms of governance and not the mere result of a given centre-periphery territorial logic. This is at least a working hypothesis that we would like to test by comparing the way civil society is taking part in suburban governance in our two case studies.

Such an assumption is based the modernization of state's role and legitimacy, introducing a revision of boundaries between state and civil society. As Mark Bevir (2011: 457) underlines, literatures on governance and governmentality

have manifested “a concern to open up the black box of the state”. This observation derives from several transforming processes inside and outside the state. These include dissatisfaction with standard models of representation, new access for citizens to modalities of participation and empowerment, redistribution of power among economic and political instances in a context of neoliberal globalization, emergence of spheres of regulation adapted to growing risks and uncertainties. In a nutshell, if political actors and researchers have adopted the notion of urban governance, it was because the idea of “urban government” was no longer satisfactory (Le Galès, 1995).

From then on, we cannot but acknowledge that “novel forms of decision-making in the management of cities, such as participatory mechanisms and governance by networks” (Melo and Baiocchi, 2006: 587) were experimented worldwide with more or less success (Bacqué, Rey and Sintomer, 2005). Changing of boundaries and functions between the state and civil society does not automatically mean strides on the road of democracy and democratization, not to mention struggles against social inequalities and dominant relations embedded in the capitalist system.

Thus, even if governance promotes network type or anti-hierarchical models of decision-making open to active contributions from members of civil society does not prevent processes and practices involved in it to reproduce class and other social/cultural divisions: “governance is performed, but that performance does not mean control: scripts are countered, storylines are read in other ways than expected, and governance processes meander” (Hajer and Versteeg, 2008: 29). As a consequence, it is becoming essential to include conflict within our understanding of governance. In addition, going back to the context of city-regions, it is also required to revisit the position taken by the ‘new’ city-regionalism defining city-region “as an autonomous political agent of the global space economy” (Jonas and Ward, 2007: 169). For us, there remains a need to put emphasis on the political construction of territorial space, including city-regions. It is that an extraordinary range of interests – and values, we should add – are prevailing in city-regions (Le Galès and Lorrain, 2003: 310) and those are most often expressed through political conflicts and compromises.

This paper, lastly, presents a departure from the framework of *urban* governance towards a more *regional* set of problematiques.<sup>3</sup> Such a shift can be discerned in five areas:

- 1) We start from the assumption that, as Addie (2013, 209) has argued, “the functional networks of contemporary global urbanization increasingly transcend the jurisdictional, territorially-defined boundaries of the metropolis.” Any process of spatialization related to regionalization is inevitably tied up in techno-social networks through which they are enabled and constrained as networks explode and bypass administrative containers (Addie 2013: 193; McFarlane and Rutherford 2008: 365).

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<sup>3</sup> This section borrows from Keil et al., forthcoming.

- Accordingly, Addie adds, “the metropolitical relations between city and suburb no longer harness the development trajectories of city-regions.” The governance of sub- and exurbanizing regions through three modalities – state, capital accumulation and private authoritarian governance, provides both the institutional framework and the substance of the metropolitan system of governance (Ekers, Hamel and Keil 2012; Hamel and Keil 2015). Appropriately, the question has been asked: “where is urban politics”? (Rodgers, Barnett and Cochrane 2014). The response has recently been more often than not: in the region, in the topological relationalities of urban places and in the in-between (Young and Keil 2014; Addie and Keil 2015).
- 2) A related departure points away from (just) territory towards a “relational metropolitics” (MacLeod and Jones 2011: 2460; Macleod 2011: 2631). Whereas the transition from Fordism-Keynesianism to Post-Fordism-Neoliberalism included a shift in scalar regulation from the national state to the urban region itself, and while difference among those regions in a global market place became more important than their equality in national urban systems (Brenner, 2004), we now encounter an even more dramatic move away from regionally bounded territoriality to more topologically constructed relationships of metropolitan spaces that are constituted regionally (Amin, 2004). New urban governance forms must be viewed as products of complex struggles in networked and hierarchical interrelations among often entirely antagonistic actors.
  - 3) Scale remains a critical concern of regional governance (Keil and Mahon 2009). This leads to the question as to whether it will be possible to apply literatures on urban power and politics, initiated and deployed for the analysis of *cities* in North America and Europe with variable success, to the scale of the metropolitan *region* and not just the urban core, for which much of this literature was meant to serve? (Young and Keil 2014). This upscaling of the urban to regional application originated perhaps in and was influenced in by Harvey’s notion of a “structured coherence” that spanned the urban region (defined as the commuter shed) began to think in earnest about regional political growth machines, regional regimes or to use a “regulationist” term, a *regional* mode of regulation. The new regionalist literature and its critics have pushed the boundaries of this debate further.
  - 4) This leads to the question of *regional collective agency*. City-regions don’t act ‘naturally’ as collective actors but “against a background of transformation of constraints and opportunities for cities, actors within them react by trying to organize a mode of governance that gives the city a status as actor” (Le Galès, 2002: 273). In this paper we are proposing to expand the traditional collective agency perspective in these approaches from the municipality to the urban region and the metropolitan scale. In this view, the collective actor – a generic term subsuming in fact multiple actors converging occasionally and able to build transitory compromises – is always redefining and repositioning itself at the regional scale through

new coalitions, territorial compromises (Schmid, 1996) and contestations (Leitner, Peck and Sheppard, 2007).

- 5) While most of the rhetoric and discussion on the “bargaining position” (Savitch and Kantor, 2002) of urban areas is linked to the imaginary of cities as places of centrality, the *focus* of paper, however, is not the urban *centre* but the *urban region*. While competitiveness and economic success is often associated with the creative economy of urban cores, the focus of this paper is the *urban region* with its growing web of metropolitan governance.

## 2. The Canadian situation

Canada is a densely urbanized country. This is in contrast with the image of wilderness that is often provided by official spokespersons to promote local tourism on a national basis. Almost half of the Canadian population – it was 46% in 2006 – is concentrated in the six more populated city-regions (Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, Ottawa-Gatineau, Calgary and Edmonton) (Hiller, 2014)<sup>4</sup>. This urban reality should be highlighted from a political standpoint, given that Canadian local governments lack the resources to face the urban and environmental challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Sgro, 2002). And this can be explained by the constitutional status of Canadian local governments. At the outset, when the British North America Act (BNA) of 1867 has been initialled to integrate the North American British Colonies under a federal dominion, municipalities were excluded from discussion. Their legitimacy was considered insufficient – given that their autonomy was fully within the mandate of provincial jurisdictions – for letting them taking part in the compromises built by provinces between them and with the promoters of the federal system.

Canadian local governments have less power, for example, than their American counterparts benefiting from “home rule” principle based on the idea of self-government. Under the authority of provinces, the local government’s capability to act is retrained by provincial regulation. In addition, local governments are receiving very few support or incentives from the federal government<sup>5</sup>. According to the Canadian constitution, local affairs are exclusively under the responsibility of provinces, except for bilateral agreements usually defined under the spending

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<sup>4</sup> This concentration of population urban Canada is even more striking if looking at the corridor (urban axis) between Windsor in Ontario and Quebec City. “By the 1970s, more than half of the population of Canada resided in this corridor, and 7 out of 10 manufacturing jobs in the country were located there, making the region a focus for both internal and international trade” (Hiller, 2014: 30).

<sup>5</sup> “It is important to realize that, in contrast to municipalities in American metropolitan areas, these in Canada receive virtually no federal regulations (other than those applicable to all employers and property owners). The Canadian federal government, for example, has never provided financial inducements for metropolitan areas to establish councils of governments. Instead, provincial governments have frequently intervened to create or amend various forms of metropolitan institutions. Rather than facing an intergovernmental regime in which both federal and state governments loom large, Canadian municipalities are, in fact, as well as legal theory, very much subject to provincial control” (Sancton, 2001: 544).

power prerogative of the federal government, but these are most of the time ad hoc interventions. For that matter, unlike the United States and European countries, there was no partnership with cities after the Second World War, except for a failed attempt in the 1970s under the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs to coordinate the intervention of the Federal government departments with municipalities (Turgeon, 2006).

Nonetheless, in Canada as everywhere cities and city-regions have been asked to play an extensive growing role in economic and urban development. Even though they have not been giving more political recognition within Canadian federalism, their economic, social and cultural functions had to be adjusted to face the new challenges brought in by the neoliberal globalizing tendencies. The new service and/or the knowledge-based economy cannot expand and drive economic growth without increased initiatives and responsibilities taken by cities, from social to environmental concerns going through renewed preoccupations towards urban living conditions (Hamel, 2014). Cities and city-regions are then necessarily involved in defining new spheres of regulation (Melo and Baiocchi, 2006: 594). This is particularly so in the face of processes of “regional integration”. This is where the context of Canadian federalism should be taken into account in a specific way, meaning in its relative capacity to adjust to changing external constraints.

But it is also within city-regions themselves that challenges were coming from, starting with the growing importance of suburbs and the pace of their transformation. The view that suburbs were different from the inner city has been contested increasingly over the years, in a practical way. If it is true that Canadian suburbanization has been traditionally influenced by the American and European models – favoring detached house in the periphery –, even the single-family home suburbs like Toronto’s Don Mills “included many townhouses and apartments” (Teaford, 2011: 27). Working class suburbanization has been another distinctive feature of suburbanization in Canada historically (Harris, 1996; Fiedler and Addie, 2008: 6). Although more recently eclipsed by the “creeping conformity” (Harris, 2004) of mass-produced middle class suburbanization, the self-built proletarian suburbs in Toronto were prototypical and changed the way suburbanization has been viewed in Canada.

As a result of the specific interaction of state, market and authoritarian governance (public and private) in Canada, we find both the single-family home subdivisions typical for the US and the highrise-dominated peripheral ensembles associated with suburbanization in Europe. Uniquely, though, suburban Canada has now become a remarkable new model of development that is largely defined by the immigrant experience and the diversity of new suburban populations. While Australian and American suburbs have also become havens of new immigration and increasing demographic diversification (including a tendency to see rising poverty levels in urban peripheries), the Canadian case seems to be most advanced in showing cracks in the classic Anglo-Saxon model of white middle class suburbanization. Three things have changed over recent years:

1. Suburbanization has become more diverse in every respect. For example, ethnic diversity in Toronto's periphery is now unmatched anywhere. The white middle class suburbs of the post-war years are largely gone. The 'old' or 'inner' suburbs have huge and very diverse non-white and immigrant populations (Hulchanski, 2010). Terms like the 'racialization of poverty' and 'vertical poverty' are now strongly associated with the extensive suburban tower neighbourhoods where the combination of immigration, renter status and visible minority membership as well as gender has become a predictor of structural poverty (United Way of Toronto, 2011). More significant perhaps are the concentrations of immigrant populations in some newer sub- and exurbs such as Brampton, Mississauga and Markham. The phenomenon of the diverse suburb needs to be understood in relation to the continued formation of the global city region and the emergence of postcolonial and postmetropolitan forms of urbanization (Keil, 2011a,b).

2. The neoliberalization (Peck, 2015) and 'splintering' (Graham and Marvin, 2001) of suburban development has led to a reorientation of metropolitan politics, and a redefinition of political imaginaries and institutional as well as geographic boundaries. It is impossible now to imagine the suburbs neatly sequestered spatially and socially from a categorically different 'inner city'. In fact, most suburban development now takes place in a newly defined in-between city that neither resembles the old inner city and the glamorous cookie cutter suburbs. Clearly, both these spaces still exist both in their gentrified and often gated reality and they attract much attention and investment particularly in an era that defines urban development as creative, young and driven by the knowledge economy. Yet, many Canadians now live, work and play in quite undefined and nondescript middle landscapes where everything seems to happen at once: large scale infrastructure like highways and airports are next to residential quarters; all manner of service infrastructures including universities and high tech corridors are adjacent to low rent apartments; parks and parking are side by side; high speed highways and transit deserts define the same space; religious mega-structures are across the street from ethnic mini-malls (Young et al., 2011).

3. The political equation of regionalization and redistribution has been severed as aggressive suburban regimes have come to power regionally or even federally in Canada to use their political base to fundamentally shift the meaning of metropolitan politics. At the same time, suburban regimes in communities around Toronto (as well as in Montreal and Vancouver) are developing a decidedly autonomous set of strategies to make their mark in an increasingly competitive global city environment. At first glance, this suburban resurgence in metropolitan politics seems to represent a throw-back to earlier periods of regional regulation but closer inspection reveals a new set of political circumstances that have to do with the maturing of a largely suburbanized Canadian urban region and new modes of multilevel governance. As suburban local administrations ostensibly gain more autonomy and influence at a metropolitan scale, some of them have become hotbeds of political and fiscal impropriety. This was expressed recently through conflicts of interests, graft and corruption in peripheral localities as Laval

(Quebec), Mississauga and Vaughan (Ontario) as well as Surrey (British Columbia). The causes are numerous, but it seems that impunity – at least for a while – for political leaders in power in those suburban localities is related to the fact that media coverage of these suburbs is lesser in comparison to inner cities<sup>7</sup>.

In the current Canadian situation, through a series of diverse internal and external pressures, suburban governance is thus experimenting novel forms of adaptation to change. This is what we now want to look at from our empirical case studies after specifying comparative regional governance.

### **3. Comparing regional governance<sup>6</sup>**

Comparative perspectives are now at the centre of urban and regional research. Colin McFarlane (2010, 725) has recently noted: “Urbanism has always been conceived comparatively” and goes on to explain the many ways this has been done. It can be stated at the outset that comparative urban research – especially in the context of urban and regional governance – explains socio-spatial relationships in a world of expanded globalized horizons; it has at its disposal sophisticated methods available to do comparative research across long distances over longer time frames. There is now a strong set of existing approaches to operationalize such comparisons (for a summary discussion see Keil et al., forthcoming). This paper takes up this comparative challenge in a number of ways.

For the purpose of this paper (and the empirical project from where it stems: Keil, Hamel, Boudreau and Kipfer forthcoming) we have sought to analyze the influence of a multitude of political scales on structures and processes of regional governance. For Toronto and Montreal this would be the federal, provincial (quasi-national for Quebec) and municipal scales. Canada is situated between the urban experiences of more market oriented urban development of the United States and the more state-led developments in European cities (for more elaboration on the Canadian “in-betweenness” see Young and Keil 2014 and Charmes and Keil 2015). This affords us excellent comparative perspectives. It is commonly assumed that municipalities in North America are weaker than their European counterparts. As actor and institution, city-regions do not necessarily succeed easily in coping with the challenge of urban governance at a metropolitan scale. To structure their interests and to plan ahead on the basis of shared values remains a real challenge for city-regions. Inequalities and conflicts of interests between the centre and the periphery – to take only one category of division between actors and institutions on the urban scene – are quite strong. On the other hand, the traditional focus on the classical city centre in Europe in contrast to a comparatively stronger political weight of suburban politics (Walks 2004a; 2004b; 2005) in Canadian urban regions has prioritized urban over metropolitan issues in Europe and increased the political urgency of regional solutions in Canadian urban regions. Both Canada and Europe have long histories of regional governance, especially structured around suburban

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<sup>6</sup> This section is adapted from Keil et al, forthcoming.

expansion in the second half of the twentieth century when variously interacting dynamics of state, capital and private authoritarian governance molded territorial governance units at metropolitan and city-regional levels (Ekers, Hamel and Keil 2015; Hamel and Keil 2015; Hirt and Kovachev 2015; Keil, Hamel, Chou and Williams 2015; Phelps and Vento 2015).

While clearly North American in geographic location and institutional history (especially regarding its history as a settler society), the Canadian experience has many similarities with the European case (Boudreau et al. 2007). Metropolitanization in Canada has, as Brenner found for after-Fordist Europe, created “(a) high value added socioeconomic capacities, advanced infrastructures, industrial growth, inward investment, and labor flows [that] are increasingly concentrated within major metropolitan regions, and (b) territorial disparities between core urban regions and peripheral towns and regions [that] are significantly intensifying across” the territory (2004, 180). In Canada urbanization and regionalization take shape in globalized, successful, growing, dynamic city regions (such as Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver) on one hand and a large number of declining towns (mostly in the old industrial and resource economy belts of the East and the North on the other (Bourne 2004; Simmons and Bourne 2003). Like their European counterparts, Canadian metropolitan regions are adjusting to new realities of heightened interurban competition (Conference Board 2006; External Advisory Committee 2006). Canada and Europe rank among the most urbanized areas in the world but this high degree of urbanization leads to very different urban systems on the ground, with Europe having territorially balanced city systems for the most part and Canada being somewhat densely settled really only along the border with the United States (with its strongly bicoastal regional economy) (Florida 2014). Due to the growing importance of city regions in Canada (as is the case in the US and in Europe), there are now increasing tensions between the demands of more complex urban regions and the political constitutions of the nation states in which they are embedded, which have historically relegated municipalities and regional governments to dependent status (with a particularly strong dependence of municipalities and regions on provincial fiat in Canada). As the rhetoric of a ‘regionalized’ global economy has taken hold in academic and policy discourse, there is a need for a concerted comparison to understand the new governance frameworks.

The two cities at the heart of this paper’s empirical discussion and comparison (Toronto and Montreal) are the financial centres of their respective provinces; they are dynamic, expanding, suburbanizing global cities, characterized by multicultural diversity and immigration and have seen periods of heightened conflict across their urban regions. The cities provide a focus for much regional and national economic, cultural and political development but perhaps more importantly, they are the hubs through which their regional economies are articulated within the wider international system. Assuming variation in the response to and endogenous production of globalization, these cities have resources that give them capacity to build strategies in this competitive global

era. At the same time: 1) Montreal and Toronto have followed different historical paths (due to their geographical location, but also to their economic and political role within their respective provinces; 2) they do not have access to the same resources (public and private); 3) these cities seem to opt for different (particular) alternatives in response to the constraints and opportunities of the globalized market; 4) urban regimes (and thus strategies elaborated by actors) in Toronto and Montreal are built on different foundations and with different actor-constellations.

Montreal and Toronto perform comparable functions as first and second tier global cities including; 1) their rapid integration into newly globalized urban networks; 2) their explosive demographic growth; 3) their strongly altered built environment; 4) their constantly shape-shifting flexible economies; 5) their increasing social polarization; 6) their stressed urban natural environments and; 7) their vanguard cultural function in their respective provinces (and even Canada as a whole). However, their place-specific path dependencies and contextual embedding within historical and geographically distinct political-economic and social networks has produced divergent and contested urban morphologies, administrative boundaries and governance regimes.

Furthermore, combined with these overall growth trends, and reflecting their role as ports of entry and diverse sites of multiculturalism, the metropolitan populations of the two cities contain significant proportions of first generation immigrants and visible minorities resulting from historically and geographically specific migration flows. This highlights the rapid, dynamic expansion of these city-regions beyond their spatial, political-administrative boundaries. In turn, this suggests the theoretical and methodological difficulties in treating metropolitan governance regimes as within spatially distinct, self-contained administrative units; thus reflecting the significance of conducting comparative urban governance research through analyzing the networks and processes engaged with by key actors beyond place-bounded conceptions of the contemporary city-region.

Toronto and Montreal have to be seen in a larger comparative context of additional Canadian cases – Vancouver, Winnipeg and Calgary in particular. With those, they share some characteristics, but those are also quite distinct in their path dependencies and current problem constellations. Vancouver and Calgary are among the economic success stories in Canada (Peck, Siemiatycki and Wyly 2014; Brunet-Jailly and Arcand, forthcoming; Miller forthcoming). Based on real estate and oil, they replicate some of the land development and resource industrial histories for which the Canadian political economy has been known since the beginning of colonization (Keil and Kipfer 2003). Winnipeg, on the other hand, is a typical slow growth city that has more in common with the shrinking regions of the industrial belts of the US and Europe (Leo forthcoming).

Most existing comparative urban research focuses on intracontinental (Europe, Latin America) case studies or bilateral case studies in closely similar environments (New York-London; Toronto-Montreal; Toronto-Los Angeles). Our

comparison, largely based on qualitative research methods, adds to this body of literature through a strong emphasis on variances and similarities inside one large territorial state, Canada (Brenner 2001; Mills et al. 2006).

Urban and regional research cannot simply transfer or extrapolate theories and concepts without considering the political, institutional and cultural context in which city-regions are embedded. However, international comparative research allows us to creatively test emerging theoretical ideas and concepts that will help us to rethink and reevaluate – and possibly modify – old theoretical certainties. What we have in mind here is the refinement of theoretical, methodological and empirical thinking that reveals the productive dialectic of general tendencies and specific conditions we find in today's thoroughly globalized policy environment (McCann and Ward 2010; on the benefits of comparative urban research and theory-building, see Häußermann et al. 2008). We particularly propose a new focus for comparative regional research. Building on the constructivist foundation of much of the scalar literature (Keil and Mahon, 2009; Brenner 2004), we do not invoke the comparison of self-contained places in this work. Although we recognize the spatial boundedness of certain policy and planning processes in all regional governance, we are not proposing to work with an areal representation of these city-regions. We are comparing processes, not areas. We are specifically examining the margin of maneuver that specific actors have in these processes. Terrains of resistance will reveal and help us identify the conflict lines of the governance system.

As discussed in the section on regional governance above, we hold a wider, not just territorial and institutional view on governance. We here follow DiGaetano and Strom (2003, 365) who argue that “political systems are not just the sum of their formal political structures, political institutions in each city are linked together by informal arrangements [i.e.] modes of governance ... Comparing urban modes of governance requires distinguishing those informal political relationships that determine how cities are governed.” This leads to an integrated approach to comparative urban governance combining structural, cultural and rational actor approaches to intra- and cross-national comparison the insight that “different combinations of intergovernmental and cultural settings ... furnish different environments for the development of local political institutions and modes of governance” (2003, 375). The emergence and characteristics of structures of regional governance are influenced by the inherited institutional milieu and dominant political culture. DiGaetano and Strom (2003, 363) define institutional milieus as “the complexes of formal and informal political and governmental arrangements that mediate the interactions among the structural context, political culture, and political actors.” We would add to this institutional view a spatial component, especially with regards to the governance of suburbanization at the core of the institutional arrangements (Hamel and Keil 2015).

#### 4. Toronto

Looking at governance in the Toronto region inevitably evokes a problem of scale. Most commentary acknowledges the region but thinks outward from the centre without problematizing what the region brings to governance (Joy and Vogel 2015). Others have begun to deliberately think through what it means to govern the city through the region (Keil and Addie, forthcoming; 2015). There is still the reflex of wanting to be small at least for some problems. A newspaper editorial in the conservative National Post newspaper considers the “city too big and too small to serve all our needs” (Selley 2015; based on a paper by Slack and Bird 2013; see also Spicer 2014). During the amalgamation fights in the late 1990s – and whenever anything goes wrong or not in the direction some (elite) factions in the city centre want things to go – the spectre of the “suburbanization of politics” will be conjured up. De-amalgamation raises its head and territorial logics take the front seat in the house of explanation. Interestingly, originally the suburbanization of politics referred to an attack of conservative social and political values and politics on the more progressive inner city traditions of social solidarities, environmental sensibilities and democratic process. These attributions are not as easily done in the current situation as core concerns and values have become associated with increasing white upper middle class issues of super-gentrified areas of high real estate values while the periphery has been associated with a more demographically and culturally mixed politics that has begun to show new political allegiances (Akin 2015).

Still, most commentators on Toronto ignore the region altogether and those who don't, tend to see the region from the (urban) centre. This contains two related problems. First, most commentary ignores that much policy is now made at the provincial level and the local level has been made a more or less compliant implementer of provincial policy priorities. That is certainly the case for transportation, the greenbelt and growth strategies [more on this below]. Second, usually, if the region is acknowledged by this kind of commentary, it will still always be viewed from the centre.

Granted, the centre holds. It always has in Toronto. In fact, one can argue that it does because of that strong centre, bursting with economic and demographic activity, that the region is so healthy and busting at the literal seams. The oscillating growth of city and suburbia makes for compact density in the centre and for sprawling density in the surrounding regions. Instead of Vienna surrounded by Phoenix, the region is now more like Los Angeles surrounded by Shanghai. This has two implications: First, Toronto is an American city with its existing socio-spatial issues of sharp density gradient, mature low density suburbs on treed streets that count as ‘urban,’ in the Jane Jacobs tradition of urbanity (and islands of higher density in the inner suburbs); general automobile orientation even in the core city, etc. This American city is surrounded by a fast growing, mostly immigrant belt where a majority of the newcomers originate in South and East Asia. A new type of ethnurban reality is emerging here which re-defines the notion of the suburban rather fundamentally.

The representation of shifts in governance regimes is problematic as it continues to privilege the centre (Addie and Keil 2015; Young and Keil 2014).

We can approach this dilemma by noting that, in the first instance, the governance of the region is a problem of scale.

The city centre grows in numbers and power and its amalgamated whole has a bigger weight (since 1998) than the two-tiered parts had before (since 1954).

It is also a problem of directionality and positionality, as the logic of thinking regionally, is still one dominated by the imperial view of the center and the parochial view of the suburbs in the “blubber belt”. Their combined power obscures the inbetween cities in the interstices of the region (Young and Keil 2014).

We now see a range of important shifts that signal a change in the way the suburbanization of the region will influence the discourse, technology and territory of regional governance and will cause adjustments in the mix of modalities that usually drives suburbanization and suburban life (Addie and Keil 2015; Ekers, Hamel and Keil 2015):

- The demographic transition of Toronto suburbia towards a majority minority situation fuelled by ongoing massive immigration from non-European countries, especially from south and east Asia leading to settlement directly in ethnoburban communities around the old core and inner suburban regions.
- The technological shifts in transportation from a paradigm built on automobility, some transit and air shifts to changing realities in automobility (autonomous cars, etc.), modal variety on tracks, active transportation campaigns and massive expansion of air transportation.
- The housing situation has changed dramatically. Where there was a mix of single family homes and high density apartments between the 1950s and the 1990s, there is now an (almost even) split of single family homes and multi-unit condominiums in the region, with a particular emphasis on high rise condominiums.
- Environmental regulation has entered the governance equation in very substantial ways. In the past, the serious regulation of regional environments was associated with the effects of Hurricane Hazel in 1954 which set in motion comprehensive flood control mechanisms. Over the past 20 years, a broad push for multi-sectoral environmental regulation has occurred – from water to waste, from ecological restoration to air pollution, etc. (Boudreau and Keil 2006). Ecological modernization has entered the planning and building process at the ground floor (rather than

a mere add-on or afterthought as it was the case). Greenbelt legislation (in concert with the stipulations of Places to Grow) has changed the overall tone of the environmental conversation in the region even beyond the original regional framework with which the Waterfront Regeneration Trust changed the discourse in the early 1990s (Macdonald and Keil 2012; Keil and Macdonald forthcoming).

- Cultural economies continue to be concentrated downtown, both in the city's creative enclaves and in institutional high culture such as theatre, opera, symphony, etc. Yet, even in this sector, gentrification refugees and the existing (multicultural) youth populations in the suburbs have begun to make cultural production and performance a more spatially peripheral affair. This notion of culture meshes with the classical "red-boot-multiculturalism" that has now largely migrated from the inner city migrant neighbourhoods to the ethnoburbs in the suburbs.
- Economic development is a problem file. As Joy and Vogel note, Toronto "has failed to adopt a comprehensive global city agenda that incorporates an inclusive economic strategy for the city-region and invests in the requisite social and physical infrastructure to meet the needs of its residents" (2015: 36). There is a shambolic economic development strategy with an emphasis on creative competitiveness and a half-hearted attempt at safeguarding what's left of the employment lands (i.e. industrial lands) downtown that are under development pressures from the condo boom.
- Social services and community development deals with the increasing socio-spatial polarities in the region. The reflex of policies here is "pick winners" as well as place-based strategy in so-called priority areas, most of them in the inner suburbs but also increasingly found in the outer suburbs as well. These policies follow largely the logic of Hulchanski's Three Cities and the United Way's Poverty By Postal Code. The latter organization has now become a central provider of social services in the suburban ring.
- Diversity policies. Perhaps the area with the biggest shift. In the old regime, the suburbs were considered self-regulating and non-complicated. Settlement was the task of the inner city migrant institutions. Now this is mostly different. After a short period of transition as suburbanites objected to being diversified (Markham in the 1990s), they now embrace their role, challenge and cost of their role as 'arrival cities'.
- Research and development policy/higher education. Yes, the downtown

has most of the universities, the research hospitals and MaRS. But the suburban sites of higher learning and R&D clusters in the region are significant. If one counts Hamilton and Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge, the innovation landscape tilts slightly towards the outer region in some areas of higher tech.

This adds up to a suburbanization of urban politics that is quite different from the old meaning of the word (the one conjured up by the left and liberals in the 1997 amalgamation fight, this author among them). In this current situation, a number of inversions have occurred that will need the attention of suburban and regional governance regimes. In the transportation field, the province has already largely wielded its power as regional government through the agency Metrolinx. The plans and planning bodies responsible for the Greenbelt and Places to Grow can be understood in a similar manner. At the same time, the individual cities around Toronto are beginning to develop their own identities and policies (Belina and Lehrer forthcoming [expand]). What's more, the larger suburban cities and regions are beginning to replicate the urban-suburban problematic in their own jurisdictions: the more urban Mississauga has to deal with the suburban behavior of their Brampton neighbours when it comes to planning for an LRT; a similar experience can be seen in Kitchener- Waterloo on one hand and Cambridge on the other. Markham plays up its metropolitan urbanity (connected locally through rapid transit, keen to be a player in the NHL, liaised in many intricate ways with the global economies of its wealthy and resourceful immigrant communities from South and East Asia).

A new model of governance takes shape in these shifts. Some of it will be institutional, some of it will be through new market devices, some of it will be technological (like in the introduction of BRT or LRT lines as well as HOV lanes that connect burbs to burgh and burbs among each other more efficiently).

This is no imminent utopia. Many of the old frictions and factions remain. There continue to be distinctly suburban ways of life and of doing things that will not change easily; and the centre will have a hard time giving up even a fraction of its power into a diffuse regional polity or, worse, competing municipal institutions (see the struggle of the TTC for maintenance of its regional supremacy in transit planning and delivery).

## **5. Montreal**

Montreal has been confronted with governance, including suburban governance, since a long time ago, even though cooperation among local governments was imposed by the provincial tier of the state. In that respect (hence?), the Metropolitan Commission of the Island of Montreal was created in 1921 for controlling the “suburbs’ level of borrowing” on the Island, leading up to even the management of a regional tax-base sharing program (Thibert, 2015: 150). If this experience – lasting, at least formally, until 1959 – was certainly useful in

designing the Montreal Urban Community (MUC) in 1969, a limited regional instance created for fiscal reasons on the basis of the following principle (sharing the costs of public services between suburbs and the central city on the Island of Montreal), it was of little help in constructing an integrated sense of the region, not to mention intensive regional governance including the suburban periphery beyond the Island.

For that matter, it is necessary to recall that it was not until the mid 1990s that a new urban regime in Montreal, open to govern the city through the region, at least with a potential perspective of cooperation among a diversity of actors and institutions, has emerged. The objective was not to promote international events for situating Montreal on the world stage – as it has been the case in previous decades – but instead to climb the ladder of hierarchy among major international cities: “The internationalization of Montreal would no longer be achieved solely through the organization of major international events. Instead, the objective was now to position Montreal within a network of ‘world-class’ cities through an aggressive marketing strategy especially in the sectors of the new economy” (Hamel and Jouve, 2008: 31).

This has been reinforced from above by the Quebec state when a municipal and metropolitan reform was introduced in 2000. In addition to creating the megacity of Montreal – merging for that matter the 28 municipalities on the Island of Montreal –, 27 lower-tier boroughs were also formed by this reform. And to complete it, a regional body (the Communauté métropolitaine de Montréal) (CMM) corresponding to the Montreal Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) and including the 82 municipalities of the city-region for urban and environmental planning purposes but also to provide services in the areas of economic, social, and transportation has been established. The issue of scale is inevitably at stake in this case as well.

In many respects, this reform was a failure (Hamel, 2006). Nonetheless, it brought to the fore that it was no longer possible to avoid a regional perspective when dealing with urban, environmental and socio-economic issues. Even though there was and there still is no consensus about how to promote an integrated regional perspective, the discussion was certainly triggered by the reform and still going on. With regards to the super-diversity of recent immigration, the old linguistic divide between East and West is blurring, even though in some boroughs of the West Island, English-speaking population is maintaining its hegemony on local affairs.

From the 1950s onwards, to use Marc Levine’s image (1990), even though Montreal was re-conquered by Francophones, paradoxically their economic well-

being – that this “reconquest” endeavour has certainly contributed to – gave them the opportunity to leave the central city for the periphery, jeopardizing in return the vitality of the centre. Montreal suburban periphery – the North Shore and the South Shore – did not stop to grow since then, more and more people choosing to live in suburban areas.

The vacuum left by the departure of the French-speaking households to the outskirts, however, was largely filled by the new immigrants, changing, at the same time the face of Montreal. Added to this, the fact is of course that suburbs were also being transformed due to several factors, including ‘global suburbanism’. Since the early 1990s, suburbs have aged. They have also diversified. It is no longer exclusively Francophone households that settled there. Families from recent immigration are also choosing suburban areas as their first location (it is the case of Brossard, south of downtown Montreal, from the 1990s, for example). Although for a time these families have settled on the island and especially in the central districts, for two decades – following the example of French households – for two decades they have started to migrate to the more peripheral suburbs, when they do not opt for it upon arrival.

The new socio-demographic and socio-cultural reality of Montreal starting with the growing presence of immigrants in the southern and northern crowns of Montreal – reinforcing the demographic imbalance between the center and the periphery – is not reflected fully in political representation. Going back to the reform of 2000, strong opposition was evident from the suburbs outside the island to the idea of establishing a metropolitan regulatory body. The population of suburbs in the Island of Montreal was against the project of municipal mergers. On the Island, it was exclusively elected officials from the old city of Montreal who was supporting the government municipal and metropolitan reform.

The suburbanization of the region has certainly transformed the social, cultural and political life in Montreal. The elements just mentioned are part of processes of another vision of territorial governance in the making. Suburbanization and suburban life are now facing new adjustments difficult to ignore if we take into account the following transformations:

- Transportation is confronted with major technological and cultural shifts at the regional scale. This comes with the improvement of facilities – subway extension, new train lines – for accommodating suburbanites. But it is also the active transportation modalities that have been implemented on the Island of Montreal that should be mentioned, starting with the extension of the cycle path network.

- The housing reality is diversified if we look at the increase of new real estate investments in several inner city neighborhoods, but also at numerous outer suburbs. In this case, some high rise condominiums have been built to respond to the needs of some specific groups like senior citizens. However, the issue of access to housing for poor households remains important.
- Environmental regulation is also on the agenda and one can expect its increase in the coming years. In 2011, with the support of all municipalities of the city-region – at least officially – the CMM has released an urban development plan orientated towards sustainable development. A choice was made for Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in order to protect wetlands, metropolitan forests and flood areas, but also to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions. With the intention of protecting agricultural land, the TOD approach is promoting urban density in some areas. We are still far from a convincing plan for ecological restoration of the Montreal archipelago. Nonetheless, the environmental conversation at the city-regional scale will certainly grow in the future.
- Downtown remains the heart of artistic and cultural practices. Montreal's 'Quartier des Spectacles', located downtown where the Red Light of the 1920s used to be, has been supported by the Quebec state since 2007, has become the flagship of Montreal's cultural life. But this concentration of high culture has not prevented artists and cultural operators to disseminate innovative and traditional cultural practices, both in the suburban periphery as well as in different inner city migrant neighborhoods.
- Economic development is certainly the major issue both the city and the city-region have been facing since the heyday of industrial era. Montreal remains unable to build an effective strategy for integrating in a dynamic way the new immigrants. Economic and political elites do not share and/or agree upon a unique image and strategy for Montreal's future (Bherer and Hamel, 2012). What are the priorities? Under investment in urban infrastructure and urban services is striking. Social and economic poverty were a concern for decades. If suburban periphery may have seem not concerned by those issues in the past, it is no longer the case (Lévesque, 2015).
- The socio-spatial polarities of the city-region are on the rise since the new

territorial logic no longer come in a directional predictable way from the historical centre. The municipal and metropolitan reform of 2000 – it was even one of its lesser objectives – reinforced the two already existing sub-regional poles of Laval and Longueuil. Even though social services and community development do not coalesce in an integrated and coherent manner at the regional scale, the fight against poverty and social exclusion is more decentralized.

- Regarding Eds and Meds, these continue to concentrate downtown, contributing to the transformation of the local economic basis as it has been the case elsewhere (Bartik and Erickcek, 2008). Especially during the last decades, important public investments were made in these sectors with socioeconomic impacts still remaining to be assessed. But one should note that the subregional poles of Laval and Longueuil were not completely inactive. They have also succeeded in attracting investments for higher education and/or the creation of medical research facilities.

Even if suburbanization of urban politics has been less intense in Montreal than what we have observed in Toronto – especially due to the fact that suburban expansion is occurring with less intensity –, it is following the same trend and pattern. A number of inversions have also occurred at the city-regional scale and within the region. Regarding transportation, the current provincial government want to reform the Governmental agency 'Metropolitan Transportation Agency' (AMT) – created in 1995 in order to improve the efficiency of commutes in the Montreal metropolitan region – in charge of planning and integrating public transportation services through including a direct regional representation in it (Lessard and Lavoie, 2015). This is converging with territorial planning as experienced by the CMM approach towards TOD. At the same time, those regional initiatives do not prevent individual cities around the island of Montreal to promote their identities. Laval and Longueuil used to do that since several decades. Even if the history of these regional poles is quite distinct, they have to face the same territorial and value laden divisions on their own territory between urban and suburban culture.

To what extent does a new model of governance is occurring through these shifts? Does what we are observing in Toronto quite the same in Montreal? The complexity of regional governance is evolving rapidly. Even though, on the Island of Montreal, "unlike the Toronto amalgamation, there was little redistribution following Montreal's merger (Spicer, 2014: 4), for the whole region similar uncertainties prevail while local and regional political actors are trying to adapt to the idea/reality of global periphery. From such a perspective, even if traditional divisions between urban and suburban ways of life may prevail, their reduction is increasing.

## Conclusion

In a careful first conclusion to this work in progress, we can note that by looking at regional governance in a comparative manner we are concerned about the work regions do. In the past, the assumption was that regional government was there to supply regional growth with services, infrastructures, institutions, as the region grew outward from the centre. This view is now obsolete as regions grow in all directions and the growth of the more diverse peripheries have previously unseen effects on the centre. This shift coincides with a transition from governmental to governance arrangements in the regulation of regional affairs. When, in the past, regions were considered the linear overflow of the city, they are now self-propelling territorial and topological, in many unbounded entities that ooze out in all directions, across multiple scales. In some ways, as old regional government was about steady *supply* of concentric growth services, the new regional governance is about the management of exploding *demand* from the periphery towards the centre. The urban periphery is constituted by the global periphery through immigration, economic integration with world markets and ecological imbrication of all sorts. In this transition, we finally return to Ananya Roy's note about political society that is rearranged at and through the governance of the periphery. Categories once believed stable are destabilized in the process of postsuburbanization which confronts the Toronto and Montreal regions with new problem constellations at the urban periphery as the region still grows at the margins while the existing suburbs urbanize rapidly.

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