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What is a city region?

At least one large city + Surrounding cities, towns, rural areas, open space
Regional Governance: several levels and units of governance make decisions that affect the city region. Decisions are often made with little or no regional awareness and without regional intent.

Regional Government: a politically-constituted body with legal authority to make and implement policies for a city region.
Policies considered

- Policies to provide basic infrastructure (e.g. transportation)
- Policies to control or manage spatial organization and/or outward expansion (e.g. regional and local planning)
- Policies that affect the ability of less affluent residents to participate in economic and community life (e.g. social services, immigration policy)
The situation in 1971:

Cleveland and other U.S. cities

- Inner city commercial areas not rebuilt after rioting in 1966
- Population declining
- City tax base declining
- Blighted inner city neighbourhoods
- Growing city-suburban income gap
- Large disparities in the quality of local services (particularly education)
The situation in 1971:

Toronto

- Downtown building boom
- Organized opposition to high rise, high density development in urban core
- Gentrification of inner city neighbourhoods (middle class moving in, not out)
- City population stable (and would increase)
- Vibrant downtown shopping and entertainment core
- Core city had strong tax base; well-funded schools
Research Question #1

Why is Toronto different from Cleveland and other U.S. cities?
Important developments in Toronto Region governance, 1969–1974

The Ontario government:

- surrounds Metropolitan Toronto with five regional governments (York, 1969; Durham, Halton, and Peel, 1974)
- adopts a land use strategy for the Toronto-Centred Region (1971)
- appoints a Royal Commission to review Metropolitan Toronto government (1974)
Research Question #2

To what extent can differences between Toronto and U.S. cities be attributed to actions of the Ontario government?
Evolution of regional governance

- Make the city larger (annexation, amalgamation, consolidation)
- Metropolitan or regional federation
- Special purpose authorities
- Reliance on the private sector (or public-private partnerships)
- Direct action by a central government
- Inter-local cooperation (Council of Governments)
- Intergovernmental and government-community consultation (regional councils)
Canadian-U.S. differences

- Ontario government had remained fully in charge of municipal institutions
- Federal government had never been an important presence in Toronto region governance
- Racial issues prominent in U.S. urban policy-making at all levels of government
Research Question #3

To what extent can differences between Toronto and U.S. cities be attributed to actions of the Ontario government and its interactions with other levels of government?
Rationale for regional government

In general, to reduce political fragmentation
Political fragmentation has increased, despite municipal consolidations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Region as defined in (year)</th>
<th># municipal gov’ts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Toronto (1953)</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Toronto (1953)</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Toronto Area: Metro Toronto, Durham, York, Peel, and Halton (1974)</td>
<td>36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Toronto Services Board: GTA + Hamilton (1998–2001)</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Ontario Zone (2001)</td>
<td>115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Golden Horseshoe (2004)</td>
<td>110</td>
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Rationales for regional government

- Provide infrastructure to support economic growth
- Keep public service costs as low as possible
- Control or manage growth and or outward expansion
- Distribute the costs and benefits of city-region growth or decline more equitably among municipalities
- Give a city-region’s residents and or local governments a strong and united voice in regional policy making
Incompatibilities and inconsistencies

Working through these = “The political dynamics of urban expansion”

- Supporting growth vs. managing growth vs. stopping growth
- Financing infrastructure vs. financing social services vs. keeping taxes low
- Equity vs. efficiency (or controlling government costs)
- Achieving equity vs. responding to greatest need vs. responding to loudest demands
- Achieving a unified regional voice vs. preserving local autonomy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924-1966</td>
<td>Debating and creating metropolitan institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966-1975</td>
<td>Three-tier regional governance under provincial stewardship</td>
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<td>1975-1985</td>
<td>Provincial retrenchment and local inaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985-1995</td>
<td>Regionalism revisited</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995-2003</td>
<td>Charting a new course for regional governance</td>
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Findings
Objective #1
To provide new infrastructure

• This (especially transportation congestion) was the most common catalyst for regional initiatives

• Metropolitan Toronto most successful at achieving this objective

• Other arrangements worked as long as they had authority and necessary funds

• Least effective approach: reliance on inter-local co-operation or intergovernmental consultation
Objective #2
To control service costs

• If new or more services are provided, costs do go up (is this a waste of money, or an investment in a stronger region?)

• Not spending on regional services is one way that governments try to keep their costs down

• Beginning in the 1970s, controlling government costs took priority over all regional objectives

• Beginning in the 1970s, spending on regional services lost out to spending on health care and education
Objective #3
To manage or contain growth

Frequently conflicts with a) economic goals, b) provincial financial interests, and c) municipal government priorities, with the result that regional planning often loses out → increasing “sprawl” and automobile dependency.

But there have been some achievements:

• a good regional park system
• a strong downtown core and viable inner city neighbourhoods

The downside: the decentralization of poverty
Objective #4
To reduce inter-municipal disparities

- Was an important objective of earlier changes to the region’s system of government (Metropolitan Toronto; regional municipalities)
- Importance attached to it has declined as the region has expanded
- This objective commands little political support.

Some recent examples:
- Reactions to Metropolitan Toronto’s amalgamation
- Reactions to the provincial governments takeover of education
- Opposition to GTA-wide cost-sharing
Objective #5
To give the region a unified political voice

This objective has become increasingly difficult to achieve because

- Municipal governments have very different aspirations
  - Lack of agreement about fundamental issues, for example
    - Roads vs. transit
    - Regional transit vs. local control
    - Regional cost-sharing
    - Distribution of “affordable” housing
  - Matter most likely to produce agreements:
    - Preservation of open space (as long as municipalities don’t have to pay)
- Municipal officials don’t want it (jobs are at stake)
- Provincial government doesn’t want it
Conclusion

The government of Ontario has always been, and will continue to be, the government that makes the policies that determine the character of the Toronto Region.