The town has ting’d the country; and the stain
Appears a spot upon a vestal’s robe,
The worse for what it soils. The fashion runs
Down into scenes still rural; but alas,
Scenes rarely grac’d with rural manners now!
(William Cowper’s “The Task” 553-7)
THE BOUNDARY BARGAIN:
Development is pushed towards the separated city, allowing rural areas to remain rural and urban areas to grow as they please.
THE BOUNDARY BARGAIN:
Development is pushed towards the separated city, allowing rural areas to remain rural and urban areas to grow as they please*

*Pursue density
Baldwin Act [1849]
Regional Government [1960s, 70s]
County Reform [1980s]
Consolidation [1990s]
[INSTITUTIONS THAT SEPARATE]
Baldwin Act [1849]
Regional Government [1960s, 70s]
County Reform [1980s]
Consolidation [1990s]
[INSTITUTIONS THAT LINK]
Barrie Belleville Brantford Brockville Galt Chatham Cornwall Eastview Gananoque Guelph Hamilton Ingersoll Kingston Kitchener London Niagara Falls Orillia Oshawa Ottawa Owen Sound Pelee Township Pembroke Peterborough Prescott Quinte West Riverside Sarnia Smiths Falls St. Catharines Stratford St. Mary’s St. Thomas Toronto Trenton Waterloo Welland Windsor Woodstock
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Barrie  Belleville  Brockville
   Cornwall  Gananoque
Guelph
   London  Kingston
Township  Pembroke  Orillia
Pembroke  Peterborough
Prescott  Quinte  West
Quinte  West
Smiths  Falls  Stratford
   St.  Thomas  St.  Mary’s
   St.  Thomas  St.
Windsor
1. Why do we still have separated cities?
2. What is the impact of the continued use of city-county separation?
3. What are the alternative governance arrangements?
4. Is urban/rural still a “pervasive binary” in political science and local government research?
London + Middlesex County
Guelph + Wellington County
Barrie + Simcoe County
London-Middlesex

- Growth around the city’s periphery has caused tension between city and county officials.
- County has sought to create an alternative to city living outside London’s borders.
- London officials have refused to cooperate on service extension.
- County officials no longer content to remain rural.
Guelph-Wellington

• City + County able to agree on urban expansion
• County officials want to remain rural, content to see Guelph grow within borders
• Unclear if situation would change with increased growth pressure
• County has demonstrated belief that City is not sufficiently committed to density
Barrie-Simcoe

- Subject to a great deal of provincial attention
- Tremendous growth, unevenly distributed
- Fast growing south, slow growing north
- New, development-focused politicians in southern Simcoe county have resisted Barrie’s growth plans
- Growth viewed much differently in rural areas
- Urbanization now a directed process
- Growth adopted on "rural terms"

Cultural shift in understanding of urban/rural
City-County Separation is an Enduring Institution

- Difficult to re-integrate cities back into counties

- Representation imbalance too great to overcome
City-County Separation as Stalemate

- Province has allowed rounds of urban annexation
- At the same time, amalgamation created larger (once rural) neighbours + stronger political actors
- Limited ability to expand
Rigid institutions, shift in rural/urban values, and perception of growth have established competition for growth in areas that were designed to have none.
An unenviable position....

- Hard to annex + preserve status quo
- Challenging to establish common institutions
- No growth consensus
Easiest — Informal/Inter-Local Cooperation
Middling — Special Districts/Transfer Functions
Hardest — Single-Tier/Two-Tier Restructuring
No “one size fits all” solution
- In some cases, city-county separation still works well
- Where it does not, reform can be achieved
Questions/Comments?

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