

2008 Expert Roundtable on Canada's Experience with Pluralism

## **Cities of and for Pluralism: The Role of Canadian Municipalities in Multiculturalism Initiatives**

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### **Summary**

This paper explores the municipal role in Canada's multiculturalism policy infrastructure, with a particular focus on the experiences of Toronto and Vancouver, the country's two most significant immigrant destinations within English-speaking Canada. The vast majority of new immigrants settle in Canada's largest cities. Because Canada's constitution does not recognize or grant specific powers to municipalities – this is done under provincial law – municipalities must deal with the day-to-day realities of diversity on their own terms, usually by designing and implementing policies in collaboration with minority groups, civil society, the private sector and other levels of government. The author analyzes how responsive or proactive municipalities in Toronto and Vancouver are to diversity issues. Examples of initiatives and governance models associated with municipalities are categorized as “responsive”, “somewhat responsive”, and “unresponsive.” The author concludes with a call for a greater level of coordination among the three levels of government and between government and civil society.