Building "Smart Cities"

Friday, December 6, 2002 – It's a modern irony.

Global economic integration and instantaneous communication have made transnational corporations more footloose than ever. Paradoxically, the attractions of *place* are more important than ever to the location of economic activity in the new knowledge-based economy.

The renewed interest in cities as the drivers of the new economy stems from this realization.

This turn of events is especially important to social policy advocates. Why? Because the quality of life in Canada's cities, their very appeal to the skilled workers on which the new economy feeds, and their ability to foster creativity and innovation, depends on their inclusiveness. The successful cities of the future will be those that succeed in embracing and promoting their diversity, and those that open up pathways to participation by all their communities.

In a recent presentation to "Thinking Smart Cities", a conference organized by Carleton University's Institute of Political Economy, Family Network Research Associate, Neil Bradford, explores the need for a new place-based politics to tackle the challenge of building socially inclusive, "smart cities".

In ***Smart Cities? Multi-Level Governance and Local Partnerships*** Bradford shows how past paradigms – Keynesianism and Neo-Liberalism – suffered from aspatial assumptions. He advocates a more "space-sensitive" paradigm for today. A paradigm that balances equity and diversity, integrates economic innovation with social inclusion, recognizes the importance of bringing all players to the table, both governmental and non-governmental, and builds the capacity of municipalities and community groups to perform their roles in the new Smart City.

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