



PUBLIC POLICY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOODS: CHALLENGING GOVERNMENTS AND COMMUNITIES

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Background

- This presentation was made at a forum held at the Scarborough Civic Centre in Toronto, Ontario, on June 23, 2005. The forum “Governments and Neighbourhoods: Finding New Ways to Work Together” was organized by the Intergovernmental Committee for Economic and Labour Force Development (ICE) and the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force Forum.



The “New Localism”: Why Now?

- Paradoxes of Globalization
- Place Matters
- Rediscovering Community



The New Localism: Three Narratives

- Optimists: Romanticizing the Community
- Pessimists: Hollowing Out the State
- Pragmatists: Rebuilding the Neighbourhood

Marilyn Taylor, *Public Policy in the Community*
(2003).



“We are all pragmatists now”: Rebuilding the Neighbourhoods

Public Policy Principles

- Inclusion: Place Based *But* Not Place Bound
- Diversity: Communities of Place *Engage* Communities of Interest
- Collaboration: Bonding *and* Bridging Social Capital



Challenges for Governments

- Crossing the Silos
- Ending the Turf Wars
- Sharing Power
- Taking Risks



Challenges for Community Organizations

- Representing Diversity
- Tapping Local Knowledge
- Building Organizational Capacity
- Balancing Roles



How Is Canada Doing?

The 1990s: "A Lost Decade"

- Governments: Federal-provincial conflict; non-recognition and under-resourcing of local partners, both municipalities and the voluntary sector
- Community Organizations: Passion and Commitment Under Stress (CPRN, 2003); Funding Matters (CCSD, 2004)



How Is Canada Doing?

The 2000s: “The Beginnings of a Turnaround?”

- Governments: The New Deal for Cities and Communities
- Community Organizations: Many promising neighbourhood-based initiatives (SNTF, Vibrant Communities, Inclusive Cities Canada)



But the Overall Message

- Canada's cities and communities are falling behind the competition
- OECD describes Canada's urban policy approach as "disjointed" and "lagging"
- What can we learn from those places that have moved ahead?



Learning from Elsewhere: United Kingdom and the United States

Two cases for “good practice” comparative learning, each with particular lessons for Canada

- United Kingdom: Rebuilding Neighbourhoods “from above”
- United States: Rebuilding Neighbourhoods “from below”



UK: National Policy Framework

The Components

- Prime Ministerial Public Commitment: “Within 10 to 20 years, no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live”
- Social Exclusion Unit/Office of Deputy Prime Minister
- 18 Collaborative Policy Action Teams (PATs)
- Targeting Phase: New Deal for Communities (NDCs)
- Mainstreaming Phase: National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal



UK: National Policy Framework

The Components

- Local Strategic Partnerships and NDC Partnerships
- Accountability: Public Service Agreements and Service Delivery Agreements
- Regional Development Agencies



United Kingdom: What Works?

- Joined-up government: Incentives and Tools
- Neighbourhood Programs and Universal Policies: Pilots and Mainstreaming
- Capacity-Building: In the Bureaucracy and in the Community



United Kingdom: A Key Lesson

UK neighbourhood initiatives are supported by strong *flanking* national policies. However, the framework is top-down and concerns arise about an intolerance of failure based on a rigid adherence to New Public Management doctrine.

"We found many examples of managers in pilot projects being firmly told that the projects had too high a political profile to be allowed to fail. The effect of this is that managers become unwilling to innovate or undertake risky initiatives. A system that cannot allow for failure cannot learn." (Perri 6 et al., Towards Holistic Governance, 2002.)



United States: Local Civic Networks

The Components

- Community Development Corporations (CDCs) and Institutional Intermediaries (LISC, Annie E. Casey, National Community Building Network)
- History of Localism: Progressive Era settlement houses, Alinsky-style community organizing, Great Society model cities, 1990s Comprehensive Community Initiatives
- Targeted Federal Policies: Community Reinvestment Act, Community Development Grants, Urban Development Action Grants, Empowerment Zones, HOPE V1



United States: Local Civic Networks

The Components

“A patchwork of local innovations”

Some leading examples

- Neighbourhood Renewal: Dudley Street Neighbourhood Initiative, South Bronx
Comprehensive Community Revitalization Program, Baltimore
Community Building in Partnership
- Employment and Training: Chicago Jobs Council, Joint Venture Silicon Valley, Pittsburgh
Manufacturing and Community and Community Development Network

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United States: What Works?

- Funding, technical assistance, and learning for CDCs through robust institutional intermediaries
- CDCs as the neighbourhood policy and program “hub”
- Active role of business leaders in local networks



United States: A Key Lesson

US neighbourhood initiatives reflect a diversity of local networks. However, they are compromised by weak *flanking* national policies, meaning that community projects constantly “swim against the tide” and rarely “scale up” to form a coherent national urban strategy.



United States: A Key Lesson

"It is inevitable that discreet problem-solving strategies will become caught up in large social dilemmas. In the American context, though, they have been particularly susceptible to these dilemmas. The context in which neighbourhood initiative has been forced to operate, especially in the past thirty years, has made it difficult for them to do even the things for which they were suited." (Robert Halpern, Rebuilding the Inner City, 1996.)



Canada: Towards a New Policy Synthesis for Rebuilding Neighbourhoods (1)

A policy synthesis informed by ...

- The British experience with a national framework
- The American experience with local networking
- And the many neighbourhood-based initiatives emerging in our cities



Canada's New Policy Synthesis

The Policy Architecture

- The Urban Lens
- Multi-Level Governance
- Strong Local Partners
- The Menu Approach
- Shared Accountability

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Canada's New Policy Synthesis

"It is a process rather than an administrative structure which is required: something more messy, a continuous process of relationships constantly being renegotiated, where risk and failure are accepted as inevitable, and where success is rewarded, especially when it arises from the addressing of social needs."

Iain Tuckett (UK Community Development Trust)

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Canada's New Policy Synthesis

- **Targeted Programs: “Constructive Entanglement in Action”**
- Urban Development Agreements
- Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative/
Action for Neighbourhood Change
- Urban Aboriginal Strategy
- Gas Tax Sharing
- Social Economy Initiative



Canada's New Policy Synthesis

- **Universal Policies: The Foundation**
- Health Care
- Child Care
- Education
- Labour Market
- Housing
- Immigrant Settlement



New Ways of Working Together: Government Priorities

- Federal Government: Enhancing the Regional Development Agencies
- Federal and Provincial Governments: Empowering the Local Partners
- Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Governments: Investing in the Physical *and* Social Urban Infrastructures



New Ways of Working Together: Community Organization Priorities

- Developing the community-building function: convening, representing, partnering
- Developing policy knowledge: asset mapping, story telling, policy shaping
- Reframing the accountability debate: beyond the new public management



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