



# **Cities and Communities: Continuity and Change in the Federal Policy Agenda**

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**F A M I L Y N E T W O R K**



# Presentation Outline

## Three Themes

1. Context: The “New Localism”
2. National Urban Frameworks: Explicit Urban Policy *or* Implicit Urban Presence?
3. Canada’s Shifting Urban Agenda: Cities in Deep Federalism, Cities in Open Federalism

## The overarching issue ...

*“We see that the Conservative government has not abandoned the cities file, but we also sense that its approach is quite different from that of the former Liberal government.”*



# Context: The New Localism (1)

## *Political Economy Drivers*

- Spatial concentrations of exclusion
- Geographical clusters of innovation
- Issues of *national consequence* playing out at the urban scale

*Canada well represented in this literature ...*

*(T. Courchene, D. Wolfe, M. Gertler, Conference Board of Canada, Greater Toronto United Way)*



# Context: The New Localism (2)

## *Public Policy Implications*

- Spatially sensitive interventions
- Local knowledge, networks, and assets
- Devolution to municipalities and community-based organizations

*Canada well represented in this literature ...*

*(W. Magnusson, C. Leo, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, CPRN, Caledon Institute)*



# National Policy Responses to the New Localism

European Institute for Comparative Urban Research (EURICUR) studying major trends:

- Tracking changes in national responses to the New Localism between 1998 and 2004
- Comparing urban policy frameworks in 15 EU member states
- Distinguishing between those countries with an *explicit* national urban policy and those with an *implicit* sectoral approach

Berg, L. van den, E. Braun and J. van der Meer (2004), *National Urban Policies in the European Union*, Euricur, Rotterdam.



# National Responses (1): Explicit Urban Policy

- ***“Explicit National Urban Policy”***
- Cities seen as the engine of the national economy
- The motor can be stalled by social inequality or environmental degradation
- Comprehensive policies required to integrate sectors and join-up actors at different scales (national/regional/local)



# National Responses (2): Implicit Urban Presence

## *“Implicit National Urban Presence”*

- Awareness that policies in sectors such as housing, transportation, immigration and environment have a substantial impact in cities
- Consideration should be given to the urban consequences of upper level government policies
- Consult with local representatives to bring an urban perspective to sectoral policies



# Frameworks Envision Different Roles for Municipalities and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)

## National Urban Policy: Shared Governance

- National/federal government engages with municipalities and CBOs in policy design, implementation, and evaluation
- Multi-level governance recognizes shared mandates and resource dependencies of different partners
- Horizontal collaboration in government departments
- Inter-scalar policy learning via joint dialogue, pilot projects, and community demonstrations





# Different Roles (2)

## National Urban Presence: Project Implementation and Service Delivery

- National/federal government consults or contracts with municipalities and CBOs in service delivery
- Public-private partnerships for physical infrastructure and “urban flagship projects” (Expos or Olympics)
- Community development is a local responsibility
- Federal constitutions viewed as “hard barriers” to explicit national urban policy



# Examples of the Frameworks in Action (1)

Urban Policy and Shared Governance:

- UK: National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal
- Netherlands: Big Cities Policy
- France: Contrats de Ville
- Belgium: Large City Policy

*Political leadership and central agency driver for sustained, intensive national-local engagement.*



# Examples of the Frameworks in Action (2)

Urban Presence and Project  
Implementation/Service Delivery:

- Spain
- Austria
- Ireland
- Portugal

*National/federal urban engagement is sector  
specific and mostly top-down.*



# The European Trend: From Presence to Policy

EURICUR in its recent update finds more European countries seeking an explicit urban policy (unitary and federal states alike)

- Describes innovations in Germany, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, and Portugal.
- Notes EU spatial programming as catalyst for more explicit national urban policy.



# Where Does Canada Fit?

The European trends and EURICUR research offer perspective on Canada's urban agenda.

Questions arising ...

- *Are there two urban visions that correspond to the EURICUR categories?*
- *Are we presently moving from a period of experimentation with federal urban policy to the more familiar ground of a federal urban presence?*



# The (Old) New Deal for Cities and Communities

## Vision:

- “Integrated approaches to policy-making are unavoidable when serious policy outcomes are to be met.” (External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities, 2006)
- Place-based Policy, Multi-level governance, and the Four Pillars of Urban Sustainability

## Main Instruments:

- **Federal Investments:** Physical and Social Infrastructure
- **Fiscal Transfers:** Gas Tax and ICSPs
- **Multi-level governance:** Urban Development Agreements, SCPI, Urban Aboriginal Strategy
- **Community Development:** Social Economy, Action for Neighbourhood Change, Inclusive Cities Canada

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# Cities in “Deep Federalism”

- Social, economic, environmental policies must reconcile national standards and community differences
- One size does not fit all, tailor general policies to the “conditions on the ground”, no one government can go it alone
- Join up four actors (three levels of government and civil society) in “a nexus of negotiation and compromise unencumbered by the rigidity of constitutional provisions” (Christopher Leo, “Deep Federalism”, 2006)



# The (Old) New Deal and Deep Federalism: Ottawa's Explicit Urban Policy

## *Commentary ...*

*"To shape better cities and strong communities, federal capacities are needed to make connections, provincial and territorial powers are needed for strategic integration and municipal abilities are needed to engage with citizens and deliver change locally. Cooperative relationships are essential ... working with [municipalities] and civil society in new governance partnerships tailored to city-regions and neighbourhoods."*

- External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities, 2006

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# The New Conservative Urban Approach

## Vision:

Prime Minister Harper says ...

**“We know our nation’s future depends on enlightened urban statecraft” ( Prime Minister Harper, World Urban Forum, June 19 2006).**

*But ...*

**“Ottawa has stuck its nose into provincial and local matters into areas where they didn’t Have much expertise” (Prime Minister Harper, Federation of Canadian Municipalities, June 2, 2006).**



# The New Conservative Urban Approach

## Main Instruments:

- **Federal Investment:** Major Urban (physical) Infrastructure Projects-- The Asia-Pacific Gateway and Corridor
- **Federal Regulation:** Safe Cities – Sentencing Reforms
- **Fiscal Transfers:** Address Federal-Provincial Fiscal Imbalance – Provinces meet their local responsibilities
- **Consultation:** Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Big City Mayors Caucus -- Local perspective in relevant areas of federal policy jurisdiction including budget making



# Cities in “Open Federalism”

- Levels of government “policy bound” by their constitutional competencies
- Section 92 (8): Provincial responsibility for “Municipal Institutions”
- Inter-governmental relations transparent, consistent, and orderly – avoid side deals, boutique programs, ad hoc tri-level agreements
- Fiscal balance – strong provinces
- The “Quebec Model” for urban policy (Prime Minister Harper, FCM Address, June 2, 2006)



# The New Conservative Approach and Open Federalism: Ottawa's Implicit Urban Presence

## *Commentary ...*

*"Such steps won't advance a federal urban agenda quickly, and advocates of an increased federal role in urban matters are likely to be dissatisfied. And these steps will do little to advance the Conservative Party's appeal in the large cities, or to demonstrate the party's awareness of the challenges facing urban Canada. Yet, it would be unfair to characterize such steps as a retreat from a federal urban presence."*

- Loleen Berdahl, Canada West Foundation.



# Each National Urban Approach (Policy *or* Presence) Has Implementation Challenges

## Explicit **Urban Policy**

- Complex collaborations require cultural shifts from governments and community-based actors to “let go of power” and “join up resources”
- Building new trust relations involve significant “transaction costs” that can reduce policy effectiveness



# Implementation Challenges (2)

## Implicit Urban Presence

- Confining each actor's participation to "core competencies" may miss the cross-sectoral synergies necessary for robust solutions to complex problems
- The federal government may become isolated from from local knowledge and community-based innovations



# Concluding Observations (1)

- **The appropriate roles and responsibilities of national/federal governments in urban policy continue to be debated in countries across the OECD**
  
- **Canadian policy communities are contributing conceptual and practical knowledge to this discussion in three key areas:**
  1. Inter-governmental arrangement that include municipalities
  2. Delivery of place-based policies
  3. Focusing the “urban policy lens”



# Concluding Observations (2)

- Canadian governments at all levels are experimenting with different approaches and new relationships
- The Conservative government's urban agenda exhibits both *continuity with and change from* the New Deal for Cities and Communities launched by the Liberals in 2004
- There are new opportunities for further cross-national learning about design and implementation of urban frameworks







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