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Municipal Restructuring and Reform in Canada

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Abstract: There has been much municipal restructuring in Canada since the early 1990s, but it is difficult indeed to connect legislated municipal, amalgamations to New Public Management (NPM). In many respects the deliberate creation of larger municipal governments, with their ever-larger bureaucratic hierarchies and powerful unions, goes directly against the basic ideas of NPM, which focus on nimbleness, adaptability, and competition.

One of the main arguments of this paper is that NPM has had very little influence on Canada's municipal restructuring conflicts and controversies. Indeed, much of the recent political discourse about municipal restructuring in Canada seems to relate more to the nineteenth century than to the 1990s. The paper's discussion of restructuring and reform in Canadian municipalities is divided into four sections: changes in municipal functions, amalgamations and de-amalgamations, regional organizations, and structural changes that are internal to municipalities.

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