

Are There Lessons for Greater Vancouver from the Experience of World Cities in other Federations?

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Outline

- Problem/Context
- 3 Research Questions
- Method and Evidence
- Expectations/Hypotheses
- Findings (in response to our 3 research questions)
- Implications for Vancouver

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The Research Problem: Why we undertook this study

- SSHRC MCRI on Public Policy in Municipalities (Dr. Robert Young, Director)
- Draw on other parts of the world to establish a basis against which the governance of Canadian cities can be compared

3 Research Questions

- In respect of important issues affecting major urban areas, is there, *as a matter of fact*, a global trend for policy making and implementation to involve a growing number of governments and non-government actors?
- To the extent that such a trend may exist, how effective is it in helping to deal with key urban challenges? Are some formulations of this trend more effective than others?
- Again, to the extent that this trend exists, how compatible is it with democratic values and processes?

Method: The Empirical Basis for Answering our Research Questions

- 8 countries on 4 continents
- 5 federations (Australia, Germany, Mexico, Switzerland, USA)
- 2 quasi-federations (South Africa and Spain)
- 1 unitary state (France)
- Representative sample (developed vs. developing/transitional; Presidential vs. Westminster; unilingual vs. multilingual, dual vs. administrative federalism etc.)
- Country experts

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Comparative Method: The Research Template

1. Mapping the Constitutional Landscape
2. Range of Municipalities Responsibilities and Functions
3. The Fiscal Position of Municipalities
4. How Municipalities Organize Amongst Themselves to deal with the federal government
5. The Scope and Nature of Municipal-Federal Interaction
6. How and the extent to which Fed-Mun relations are mediated by regional governments
7. The extent to which municipalities are engaging in international relations
8. The Political Dimension of the Mun-Fed Relationship
9. 2 policy studies per country (n=16); choice of 6
10. Major Trends
11. Is the MLG system adequate in relation to municipal policy?

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Expectations/Hypotheses

Functional motivations:

- The complexity of policy making
- The scale of policy making

Hypotheses:

- MLG as an empirical trend
- MLG as a normative preference

Multi-order/level/sphere

Findings Q1: Is There a Trend to Multisphere Governance in Our Sample for Major Urban Issues?

- Yes:
 - > Recognition
 - > Institutional arrangements
 - > Integrative role of political parties
 - > Accumulation of mandates
 - > Delivery of (national) programs
- But: Lack of mun programmatic influence
 - > Nominal recognition
 - > Political parties do not privilege municipalities
 - > Financial allocation
 - > Top-down system
- Question: Were some MLG systems less top-down and, if so, what were the effects?

Findings Q2: Effectiveness of Multi-Sphere Governance (Decomposed into three sub-questions)

1. How effective are systems of multi-sphere governance in fashioning national policy that meet the urban policy challenges?
2. Are municipal governments doing an effective job in delivering national and regional programs assigned to them?
3. Are municipal governments doing an effective job of designing and delivering policies and programs within their sphere of competence, whether constitutionally based or otherwise?

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Findings Q2.1: How Effective are Systems of Multi-Sphere Governance in Fashioning National Policy that Meets Urban Policy Challenges?

- 16 policy studies
- Comparative challenges: Dissimilarities between and within the 8 countries
- Nonetheless, overall results **mediocre**
- France and Switzerland fared best
- Large urban areas generally were more effective than small urban areas and rural municipalities

Question: How might one explain these outcomes?

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Findings Q2.2: Are Municipal Governments Doing an Effective Job in Delivering National and Regional Programs Assigned to Them?

- Strong performance in European countries and especially in large urban centres within them
- Weakest in Mexico and South Africa
- Specific issues:
 - Emergency response
 - (Un)funded mandates
 - Matching responsibilities with capacities

Question: Are national and regional governments allocating **adequate funds** for this purpose?

Key observation: No more profligate spending by municipalities in countries that rely relatively more heavily on intergovernmental transfers

Findings Q2.3: Are Municipal Governments Doing an Effective Job of Designing and Delivering Policies and Programs within their Sphere of Competence, whether Constitutionally Based or Otherwise?

- Mun government constrained by mandates from above: Drain on resource to respond to policy challenges in their area of competence
- Top-down mandates with inadequate funding risk turning local government into appendages higher orders of government?
- What happens when the federal government withdraws: Mixed evidence
 - > More fiscal and administrative autonomy
 - > Less focus on social justice and racial equality
 - > Greater focus on economic development and urban rehabilitation
- Matching policy scope with appropriate funding
- Approaches to exercising mun influence over decision-making: Unilateral vs. networked

Finding 3: How Compatible is Multisphere Governance with Democratic Values and Processes?

- Macro level: Mixed results
 - Developing counties
 - Countries with a long tradition of local autonomy
- Micro level: MLG may actually be exacerbating a lack of transparency and accountability

Conclusion: Is MLG functional or normative?

- Both
- Top-down: Minor role in policy making but often crucial in delivery/administration
- Lack of sufficient own-source funds
- Is there a link between a less top-down approach and better empirical outcomes?
- Less evidence of large role for non-state actors than academic literature had suggested

Questions for Vancouver

- Is there a MSG trend?
 - › What is the nature and trajectory of this trend? Top-down?
- Effectiveness of the MSG system?
 - › National Policy that has a bearing on Vancouver?
 - › Delivery of national and regional programs?
 - › Design and delivery of programs in their area of competence?
 - Adequacy of Funding? Is downloading making it difficult for the city to realize its own capacity?
- Compatibility of MSG with democratic values and processes?