

# The Rise and Fall of The Ministry of State For Urban Affairs: A Re-Evaluation

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**Abstract.** From 1971 to 1979, the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs operated in Canada. Utilizing a policy networks and communities framework, this study identifies five governmental and non-governmental actors who contributed to the rise and fall of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. Through episodic content analysis of newspaper coverage of Canadian urban issues and government publications, this study revisits previous accounts of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs lifespan, creating a more holistic analysis of its inception and downfall. It is concluded that urban advocacy groups played a large role in placing urban affairs on the public agenda, compelling politicians to respond and that the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs ultimately crossed into provincial jurisdiction, causing the provinces to object to its existence.

**Keywords.** Ministry of State for Urban Affairs; federalism; urban studies; urban engagement.

**Résumé.** De 1971 à 1979, le Ministère d'État chargé des Affaires Urbaines a fonctionné au Canada. En utilisant un cadre d'analyse fondé sur les réseaux et communautés politiques, cette étude identifie cinq acteurs gouvernementaux et non-gouvernementaux qui ont contribué à l'émergence et à la chute du Ministère d'État chargé des Affaires Urbaines. À travers une analyse épisodique du contenu de la presse quotidienne sur les questions urbaines canadiennes et les publications gouvernementales, cette étude analyse de manière critique les précédents compte-rendus portant sur la durée de vie du Ministère d'État chargé des Affaires Urbaines, en construisant une analyse plus globale de ses débuts et de sa chute. Elle conclut que les groupes de défense de la ville ont joué un rôle important en plaçant les questions urbaines sur l'agenda public, en forçant les hommes politiques à y répondre, et en poussant le Ministère d'État chargé des Affaires Urbaines de s'immiscer dans les compétences provinciales, ce qui a conduit les provinces à s'élever contre son existence.

**Mots clefs.** Ministère d'État chargé des Affaires Urbaines; fédéralisme; études urbaines; mobilisation urbaine.

## Introduction

In 1971, the government of Pierre Trudeau created the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs (MSUA). Not soon after, MSUA was shut down. Using a policy communities and networks framework, this study examines the rise and fall of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, attempting to account for this unique experiment in cross-governmental and cross-departmental collaboration.

A very detailed history of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs has already been written. Entitled, *The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs: A Courageous Experiment in Public Administration*, editors H. Peter Oberlander and Arthur Fallick evaluate the successes and weaknesses of MSUA. Originally printed in 1987, *A Courageous Experiment* is a collection of essays by contributors to the 1985 Canadian Urban Studies Conference hosted by the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg (Oberlander and Fallick 1987: 1). The book's contributors are of diverse backgrounds, including geographers, urban planners, public

servants, and business leaders, which present an interesting mix of analysis and opinion. Oberlander himself is the former deputy minister of MSUA. With such a comprehensive analysis conducted on the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, why revisit the ministry? Oberlander and Fallick's work is important, but two aspects require more attention: the origins of MSUA and the role of the provinces. Each aspect is crucial to understanding MSUA's rise and fall.

The role of the provinces are addressed within the book. In his conclusion, Oberlander states that the provinces "undercut" MSUA in order to reassert their "explicit and exclusive" jurisdiction in municipal affairs (1987: 132). This is a relatively minor section of Oberlander's conclusion though. He argues in greater detail that MSUA's undoing was the result of other government ministries, who feared that MSUA was encroaching on their policy areas (1987: 131). Victor Goldbloom, Quebec's Minister of the Environment and Municipal Affairs during MSUA's existence, contributes a short article on how the province's viewed the federal government's urban policy efforts. He acknowledges that the

provinces and MSUA reached disagreement on several occasions but he opens his work with a overly optimistic retelling of tri-level bargaining: “we were, to each other, a stimulating and even an enjoyable intellectual challenge” (1987: 50).

The origins of MSUA are also of great importance. *A Courageous Experiment* contains one section on the origins of MSUA, but each of the three articles within it focus largely on the legislative origins of the ministry. Fallick focuses on the need for an urban ministry and presents a legislative chronology of MSUA (1987: 7), Oberlander relates the challenges experienced when attempting to establish the ministry (1987: 18), and Michael Pitfield evaluates the logic behind creating various ministries of state (1987: 27). All three accounts provide insights into government decision-making during the creation of MSUA, but none addresses the role of the public. How did urban affairs arrive on the legislative agenda of the government? What prompted the government to address this policy area?

A policy networks and communities framework can help answer these questions. By bringing the public and the provinces back into the equation, the policy network and communities framework can provide a more holistic approach to understanding the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs and properly situate it within Canada’s experiences with multi-level governance. Through an episodic content analysis of published newspaper coverage and the ministry’s annual reports, this paper asks two essential research questions: 1) what led to the creation of MSUA? and; 2) what factors led to MSUA being dismantled?

Using a policy community and networks framework, this paper will attempt to explain the interdependence of different groups that were advancing the urban agenda. Five categories of actors that contributed to the creation of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs can be identified:

1. Urban activists
2. City councils
3. Municipal associations
4. Provincial governments
5. Federal government

Each group can be seen as either advancing the urban agenda or responding to it during the 1960s. While Oberlander and Fallick account for the legislative origins of MSUA, it is important to understand why the government became interested in urban affairs during the late 1960s and early 1970s. By analyzing the role of urban activists, city councils and municipal associations – three groups hypothesized to have been urban policy advocates – a deeper understanding of the origins of MSUA can be reached. Similarly, analyzing the role of the provinces in the urban policy realm and their relations to the federal government’s efforts in a policy area entirely under provincial jurisdiction can help explain the ministry’s downfall. The policy networks and communities framework is well suited to clarify both research areas. Such a framework allows for a more holistic analysis, whereby different actors can be examined in relation to each other and differentiated power levels and roles can be assigned.

## The Policy Networks and Communities Framework

The literature on policy networks and communities is quite rich. The policy communities and policy networks framework evolved from an acknowledgement that policy creation existed at the sub-state level and that certain non-state actors, such as urban activists, city councils and municipal associations, can influence, shape and craft policy (Skogstad 2008: 205).

When policy interests align with the interests of many like-minded groups they represent a policy network. The balance of power within these networks determines the effectiveness of the network. Some actors within these networks hold veto powers and, as such, exercise more power within the network. Veto powers can control the health of the network and can dissolve the network if chosen. This concept is central to this paper, as the federal and provincial governments can be seen as holding veto power and with it, the power to end the network.

Previously, policy networks and policy communities were viewed as separate phenomenon. Policy communities generally referred to a set of actors – public or private – that shared an interest in a certain policy area and coalesced around a desire to bring change to that policy area (Skogstad 2008: 208). These policy communities were interested in influencing policy through informal means, while policy networks involved the formal mechanisms of power and the power relationships between sub-government and government policy actors (Skogstad 2008: 208). Over time, these concepts were drawn together and eventually seen as interdependent. On policy communities and policy networks, Coleman and Atkinson state that “the community refers to the actors; the network refers to the relationships among actors” (1992: 156). As such, the two are connected.

Policy networks and communities rely on actor constellations, the basic composition of policy groupings. Actor constellations make a distinction between two types of actors: those who directly participate in policy formulation and those who act as policy advocates (Montpetit 2003: 41). The composition of these groups affects their efficiency and policy output. If the non-state actors in the network are strong, they can lead the group into one policy direction (Schrapf 1997: 71). For groups to be successful however, two conditions must be satisfied. First, there must be an equilibrium between the goals each actor brings to the group, as Skogstad states that policy networks are constructed on common world-views (Skogstad 1998: 469). There must be a basis for cohesion and communication between actors, regardless of whether the links between the actors are formal or informal. Second, there must be diversity between the resources that each actor brings to the constellation (Skogstad 1998: 469).

The patterns of interaction within networks establish expectations between policy actors, responsibilities form and power relations begin to take shape (Schrapf 1997: 136). One such power is veto power, which exists within networks and is held by some actors, but not all (Tsebelis 1995: 291). Primarily state-level actors hold veto positions, but the dis-

tribution of veto powers depends on the type of network. Éric Montpetit describes six different types of policy networks, all of which have different implications for veto powers. According to Montpetit, these typologies are differentiated along two dimensions: 1) whether civil society actors are included in the actor constellations; and 2) whether power is distributed evenly between state and non-state actors (Montpetit 2003: 44). Montpetit makes a distinction between policy participants and policy advocates, presented within six typologies below:

POLICY NETWORKS		
Policy Participant	Policy Advocate	Balance of Power
Corporatism	Pressure Pluralism	Balanced
State Corporatism	State-Directed	Favours State Actors
Clientelism	Issue Network	Favours Civil Society Actors

The main drivers within these typologies are the policy participants. The policy participants affect the behaviour of policy advocates. Corporatist networks exist when civil society actors participate in policy formation and clientelist networks exist when there is an uneven distribution of powers between civil society actors and state actors (Montpetit 2003: 44). A state corporatist network is one where policy advocates are active, but the process is state directed. While policy advocacy can create the network, as will be demonstrated through the example of MSUA, state actors control the direction of the network and its policy creation functions. In corporatist networks, the state acts as a broker between stakeholders and coalitions (Montpetit 2003: 44). Instead of negotiating within this network, brokers tend to consult and manage debates between coalition participants (Montpetit 2003: 44). In such a system, civil society groups can expect decisions to be made that are relatively consistent with their demands (Montpetit 2003: 44). In contrast with corporatist networks, state-directed networks permit state officials to make authoritative decisions that may go against the wishes of civil society groups (Montpetit 2003: 44). Corporatist networks distribute veto powers more widely, however in state corporatist and clientelist networks, veto powers are bestowed upon either state actors or civil society actors, but not both (Montpetit 2003: 44).

This study identifies five key governmental and non-governmental actors involved in the life cycle of MSUA: urban activists, city councils, municipal associations, provincial governments, and the federal government. When these groups are placed into the policy network and communities framework as proposed by Montpetit, urban activists, city councils and municipal associations can be seen as policy advocates, while provincial governments and the federal government can be seen as policy participants. Because of the nature of Canadian federalism, whereby the federal and provincial governments hold the bulk of the legislative power, the state corporatist network provides the most accurate framework for this study.

## The Creation of the Ministry of State For Urban Affairs

The Ministry of State for Urban Affairs was created in 1971 but its history stretches beyond its official inception. Years before the legislation was put forward to create MSUA, the deteriorating condition of Canada's urban centres was placed upon the public agenda, forcing political decision-makers to respond.

Urban activists played a prominent role in placing urban issues on the public agenda in the early 1960s. Local government experts Richard and Susan Tindal state that Canada experienced, what they refer to as, the "politicization of urban life" during the 1960s (2004: 307). This is the environment in which urban activists began to operate. The 1960s was a period of revolution; with the student and Black Power movements active in the United States, there was a re-adjustment and re-examination of the methods employed to change public policy. Many of these new radicalized movements coalesced with urban advocates to create urban movements. New urban residents began to partner with groups such as environmentalists, gays and lesbians, feminists, and peace advocates to oppose local "urban renewal" projects that Canada's big cities were pursuing. Such development was seen as creating spheres of spatial inequality and reducing urban livability (Tindal and Tindal 2004: 307).

In Vancouver, the Strathcona Property Owners' and Tenants' Association (SPOTA) was created to oppose the City of Vancouver's renewal efforts. The Strathcona area was slated for re-development by the City of Vancouver. The city's plans included a substantial demolition of the existing city centre to make way for a freeway (Gutstein 1983: 200). SPOTA's members protested, blocked development and lobbied both the City of Vancouver and the federal government to end the project, successfully managing to persuade the federal government to halt the project's funding until the local residents approved of the re-development (Gutstein 1983: 201).

In Montreal, residents associations and protest groups formed to oppose the renewal projects of Mayor Jean Drapeau, decrying him for not providing enough affordable housing and for not halting construction on high-rise developments. The Montreal Citizens Movement (MCM) became the electoral face of the anti-Drapeau movement and ran candidates against Drapeau's Civic Party (McAllister 2004: 53). The MCM claimed that Drapeau and the Civic Party were inattentive to urban housing issues, leaving marginalized groups with inadequate or substandard housing alternatives (McAllister 2004: 53).

Toronto's activists benefitted from the presence of noted urbanist Jane Jacobs. Jacobs moved to Toronto during the late 1960s after writing her seminal book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Jacobs joined various groups in halting and curtailing urban development, but was most active in stopping the construction of Toronto's proposed Spadina Expressway. Jacobs referred to the expressway, which was supposed to run through the city and connect to other municipal highways, as an effort to "Los Angelize Toronto," where, "exhausts have turned the air into a crisis,

where expressways, interchanges and parking lots occupy some two-thirds of the drained and vacuous downtown” (Jacobs 1969: 7). Jacobs cautioned the city to avoid the same mistakes that American cities, such as Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Buffalo, Detroit and Washington, endured, where inner city highways displaced residents and large sections of the city were separated along social and class lines (Jacobs 1969: 7). Engineers, journalists, academics, residents and activists joined Jacobs in opposing the expressway, demonstrating, protesting and lobbying until they successfully had the project halted (Came 1969: 5).

The amount of urban activism in Toronto led to the creation of the Confederation of Residents and Ratepayers Associations (CORRA) in 1968 to help coordinate the large number of groups in the city agitating for change (Magnusson 1983: 115). Magnusson argues that CORRA was able to link middle-class oriented groups with lower income groups who shared similar goals and opposed similar projects (1983: 115). Many of these groups formed the base of the Civic Action Party, referred to as CIVAC, which contested municipal elections, running urban reformers under the party’s banner. CIVAC eventually elected five city council members in the 1969 Toronto municipal election, including David Crombie, who would later become the city’s mayor (Enright 1969: 1).

City councils acted as prime receivers of many of the concerns raised by urban advocates. City councilors and mayors became sympathetic to the concerns of urban activists (Purdy 2004: 526). In many cases, city councils incorporated urban activists into the municipal decision-making process, inviting them onto urban task forces and maintaining open dialogues with their leadership (Whitzman and Slater 2006: 687).

Municipal governments not only took the concerns of urban activists seriously or incorporated them into their decision-making processes, they also addressed their concerns with senior levels of government. For example, the mayor of Ottawa requested help with road construction and housing, while the mayor of Toronto was requesting assistance for public transportation (Globe and Mail 1961: 5). In Vancouver, city council sparred with the National Harbours Board over the crossings over the Burrard Inlet, a plan that was eventually dismissed by the federal government (Gutstein 1983: 213). Later the municipal government fought for approval for a number of port and waterfront expansion projects that fell within federal jurisdiction (Gutstein 1983: 213). Vancouver would go on to request financial assistance from the federal government and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation in transforming Granville Island and False Creek from industrial to residential and commercial areas (Gutstein 1983: 213).

Municipal-federal diplomacy took one of two forms during the 1960s: cities either requested direct assistance for project funding and fiscal relief or they spared with the federal government over project approval. In the 1960s, the requests from Canada’s municipalities became more specific and addressed unique projects that cities could not complete alone. This change in mentality can be partly explained as the result of the demands made by urban activists. As the

demands of reformers within cities became more specific, such as increased social housing and sustainable development, so too did the demands of city councils and mayors on the federal government.

Municipal associations aggregated many of these broader concerns on behalf of Canada’s cities. As municipalities addressed specific project funding initiatives, municipal associations brought those concerns together and directed them towards the federal government. Specific, local funding requests were transformed into broad, national demands for increased funding and assistance.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), in a series of association meetings held throughout the 1950s, routinely criticized the government on municipal financing reform (Globe and Mail 1956: 7). By the 1960s, the FCM began to make demands beyond simple fiscal relief. The 1960 annual meeting of the FCM, held in conjunction with the U.S. Congress of Mayors in Chicago, addressed specific funding provisions, such as relieving municipalities of all capital costs of hospital operation and demanding Ottawa amend municipal bond legislation (Globe and Mail 1960: 11). “Municipal governments are faced with an acute financial situation,” stated Robert Simpson, the president of the FCM, “some would call it a crisis” (Globe and Mail 1960: 11). The same concerns were echoed only three years later at the 1963 FCM conference, where the assembled delegates called upon the federal government to help relieve municipal debt. The FCM stated that in only six years, municipal debt had ballooned by over \$2 billion dollars and municipalities were stuck spending three dollars for every dollar they had (Baker 1963: B2). By 1965, the link between healthy finances and urban sustainability was made by the FCM. At the 1965 FCM conference in Vancouver, delegates stressed that municipalities needed the tools necessary to conduct widespread urban renewal, such as investing in public transportation and city beautification (MacFarlane 1966: 4). As such, the FCM called for an increase in unconditional grants.

At the provincial level, a number of provincial municipal associations were active, with the largest being the Ontario Association of Mayors and Reeves (OAMR), later renamed the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). In the 1960s, the OAMR made a series of requests to both levels of governments, including the removal of the provincial gas and diesel tax on municipal vehicles, federal and provincial grants in lieu of taxes on toll bridges, the province absorbing the cost of welfare payments, the right for municipalities to license gasoline stations, and a provincial environmental assessment of Ontario’s lakes and rivers so that an improved fish stocking program could be created (Baker 1960: 5).

Municipal associations aggregated the broader interests of Canadian cities, while city councils and mayors lobbied for specific project funding. While city councils and mayors alone were insufficient to bring large-scale federal engagement in urban areas, municipal associations were able to speak with a larger voice, garnering more attention from the media and government.

During the late 1960s, pressure from urban activists, city councils and municipal associations was mounting, forcing the federal government to respond. One of the government’s

loudest critics came from within the Liberal party itself. Philip Givens, the Liberal Member of Parliament for York West, and former Mayor of Toronto, stated at a 1970 trade conference in Toronto that the Trudeau government was neglecting cities, arguing that the federal government needed to make a sustained commitment to improving Canada's urban centres (*Globe and Mail* 1970: 1). The problem, said Givens, was that cities were not recognized by the government and noted that provincial premiers, such as Alex Campbell of Prince Edward Island who represented 100,000 people, were given more respect in Ottawa than the Chairman of Metro Toronto, Ab Campbell, who represented over 2 million people (*Globe and Mail* 1970a: 1).

Givens' attacks were equally as pointed in the House of Commons, where he derided the Trudeau government for spending an inordinate amount of time discussing rural issues. "We seem to spend 90 per cent of our time discussing wet wheat, fish and the Newfie Bullet," said Givens to applause from his fellow parliamentarians (Newman 1970a: 3). While Givens may have launched the first attack within government, his concerns were articulated later by Lloyd Axworthy, the former assistant to Transport Minister Paul Hellyer, and then director of urban affairs studies at the University of Winnipeg. Axworthy commented to the *Globe and Mail* that Prime Minister Trudeau should create a national urban policy, stating that, "urban issues are much too vital to the national well being of the country not to have the government involved" (Crane 1970: 15).

Despite the protestations of his caucus, Trudeau was defiant, claiming that federal engagement with urban issues would amount to an intrusion in provincial jurisdiction. Axworthy countered this argument by stating that, "there is no barrier...the federal government already has the authority, but just does not use it very wisely" (Crane 1970a: 15). Ontario Liberal Party leader Robert Nixon added to Axworthy's argument. "The federal government has definitely not shown enough initiative in urban affairs," said Nixon, "its attitude toward the constitution does not keep up with the times" (Carriere 1970: 5). Nixon reiterated his claim later that year, stating that the federal government should "bypass" the provinces and help cities directly (Newman 1970b: 1).

The concerns of Canada's urban pressure groups were not solely directed at the Liberals though. The Progressive Conservatives were beginning to address urban issues in the Liberal's absence. Opposition leader Robert Stanfield began by dining with big city mayors from across the country to get their support and listen to their concerns (*Globe and Mail* 1970b: 1). Stanfield even flew to Toronto to speak at a rally called, "The City is for People Day", where he called for the creation of a federal urban affairs department and the establishment of a parliamentary committee to specifically address urban issues (Crane 1970b: 5). Stanfield re-iterated his argument during the Summer of 1970 in a speech to the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, arguing that simple federal spending would not reverse urban problems, but a coordinating agency could, signalling his interest again in a federal urban affairs ministry (MacKenzie 1970:

5). In July of 1970, Stanfield launched an attack against the government's record on urban issues during a speech in Ottawa, stating that, "urban problems are one area where the federal government has been consistent only in being ineffective" (Stanfield 1970: 7). Progressive Conservative MP Alvin Hamilton continued Stanfield's advances and began a caucus task force on urban affairs in July of 1970 (Seale 1970: 3).

Stanfield's intentions were clear. He was signalling to Canada's urban pressure groups that if the Trudeau Liberals were not going to act on urban issues, the Stanfield Progressive Conservatives were prepared to do so. The media even began detecting the shift in public opinion towards Stanfield on urban issues. In 1970, *Globe and Mail* journalist Geoffrey Stevens argued that, "urban affairs poses a problem for the Liberals who must make political inroads in Ontario's cities before the next election" (Stevens 1970: 27). Pierre Trudeau began to respond by appointing Housing Minister Robert Andras as the "spokesman on urban affairs" and tasked him with finding a political solution to the growing chorus of discontent at the municipal level (Cullingworth 1987: 34). Andras established a commission led by Carleton University professor N.H. Lithwick to address the situation. Lithwick later issued a report that recommended the creation of MSUA (Cullingworth 1987: 34).

Activists, city councils, mayors and municipal associations were finding a sympathetic ear for their concerns with the opposition and members of the Liberal back benches. The issues raised by urban activists, city councils and municipal associations forced both the Liberal party and the Progressive Conservative's to realize the deteriorating condition of urban centres in Canada. Societal pressure forced the creation of the urban policy network, whereby urban activists, civic administrations and municipal associations entered as policy advocates – actors powerful in their agenda-setting ability, but powerless in their ability to direct network activities. The direction of the network's objectives then fell upon the policy participants – the federal and provincial governments – of which, attention will now be directed.

### **The Ministry of State For Urban Affairs in Action**

The creation of MSUA was announced on June 30, 1971 with the stated goal of "the development and application of policies to influence the urbanization process" (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1972: 1). The resources for the ministry's first year were slim. It operated with 92 staff members and 53 consultants, one secretary and two assistant secretaries as bureaucratic leadership, and had only two divisions: coordination and research (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1972: 3).

The 1972-73 annual report showed the ministry still being quite small. It had 186 employees and 37 contract staff members, which was a significant growth in operational support from the previous year (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1973: 13). The role of the ministry was still planted

solidly in the planning, coordination and research functions as was intended and its activities were limited mostly to enhancing cooperation between different levels of government, as evidenced by the tri-level meeting that MSUA organized in Toronto in 1972 (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1973: i).

Within its first year of operations, problems began for MSUA. At one of the first tri-level urban affairs meetings, the assembled provincial representatives made it clear that they would not tolerate any interference in their jurisdiction. Saskatchewan Premier Alan Blakeny spoke on behalf of the provinces by stating that, "we want our constitutional rights respected" (Watkins 1972: 3). The federal government was on notice: tread carefully when addressing urban issues.

By 1973-74, the ministry had grown marginally in operational support, now numbering 223 full-time employees and an additional 49 contract employees (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1974: i). During 1973-74, the ministry undertook a number of significant research projects, such as examining urban waterfronts, rail links in city centres, municipal financing, and urban management training studies (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1974: 9). There was also a renewed focus on interdepartmental and intergovernmental cooperation within this period. While in the previous year, the ministry was responsible for a tri-level meeting to discuss the state of Canada's cities, the scope of the ministry's intergovernmental meetings increased. The President of the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities was established as a co-chair of the next tri-level meeting (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1974: 9). Tri-level meetings eventually became policy specific to each province, focusing on issues such as housing and environmental sustainability (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1974: 9). MSUA held metropolitan tri-level meetings in Halifax-Dartmouth, Quebec City, Vancouver and Winnipeg, each meant to address issues specific to each city, such as regional growth in Halifax-Dartmouth and Quebec City, the development of transportation hubs, such as airports and waterways in Vancouver, and organizational development for municipal administrators in Winnipeg (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1974: 4). Each tri-level meeting held different focuses. National tri-level meetings focused on the role of the federal government in providing assistance to provinces and municipalities. Provincial tri-level conferences brought all levels of government together but focused on provincial cooperation while municipal conferences were initiated to address issues specific to the host city.

During 1973-74, MSUA also had an increased focus on inter-departmental cooperation. For example, early in 1973, MSUA initiated a committee with the Ministry of Finance to compile a database of municipal property tax rates across the country (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1974: 5). In July 1973, as another example, the Senior Interdepartmental Committee on Urban Affairs was established, which brought together 15 administrators from different departments, such as the Treasury Board, Finance, and Public Works, and was chaired by the Secretary of MSUA (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1974: 2). Such coordination was a cornerstone of MSUA's early operations. Then minister Stanley Bassford

was clear about how he viewed MSUA. To Basford, the ministry's main role was coordination, not funding. "We cannot deal with urban problems merely by transferring more and more money from one pocket to another" said Basford (Barker 1973: 9).

Basford was replaced as minister by Barney Danson in 1974 and MSUA, once again, began to grow. The number of ministry employees increased to 301 full-time and 52 contract (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1975: 6). The ministry maintained its focus on intergovernmental and interdepartmental cooperation, but such efforts remained relatively stagnant. The national, provincial and municipal tri-level meetings remained as well as the inter-departmental working groups and the Senior Interdepartmental Committee on Urban Affairs, but the ministry was less activist in these areas. Its focus began to shift towards specific project funding, a departure from Basford's view that MSUA should be a coordinating and not a funding ministry.

Project funding began to increase in 1974-75. MSUA got heavily involved with land-use planning and helped in the construction of various urban projects, either in a financial or advisory role. In 1974-75, MSUA helped Toronto develop its waterfront, in Calgary the ministry assisted in the design and development of 400 acres of publicly held land and, in Vancouver, MSUA assisted in the expansion of the city's airport (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1975: 4).

In 1975-76, the amount of full-time employees decreased slightly to 296, but contract staff increased to 126 (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1976: 7). The focus on specific project funding that the ministry created during the previous year did not change. The Greater Vancouver Regional District received an additional \$184,000 towards their regional growth plan, the City of Toronto received \$40,600 for studies directed towards improving the official City Plan, and Halifax-Dartmouth received \$170,000 for a solid-waste management system (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1976: 2).

In 1976, Andre Ouellet replaced Danson and quickly began reducing the size of the ministry. The ministry's staff declined to 210 and the department was reorganized (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 13). Instead of having a number of separate departments, two were created: Urban Analysis and Urban Coordination (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 4). The Urban Analysis division handled interdepartmental urban-related policy and research and the Urban Coordination branch communicated with municipalities and other governments (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 4). In every province, this coordination increased. For example, in Newfoundland, the ministry assisted with regional growth and development and, in Ontario, MSUA helped force the arbitration on unused public land, assisted Toronto in the planning of a new waterfront, coordinated activities in railway redevelopment, and arranged the relocation of several army bases (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 5).

In 1977-78, the ministry's staff declined to 185 full-time employees but the focus of the ministry was providing funding for various domestic projects, such as the Old Port of Montreal Redevelopment initiative (Ministry of State for

Urban Affairs 1978: 55). In Nova Scotia, MSUA assisted with technical and financial advice to the Halifax-Dartmouth Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 5). In New Brunswick, the ministry assisted with the planning of the Market Square civic-commercial complex in Saint John, as well as providing coordination for the Saint John Human Development Project, the Fredericton Central Area Urban Design Study and the Bathurst Growth Impact Study (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 10). In Prince Edward Island, MSUA coordinated the planning and implementation of the inner city and waterfront re-development projects (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 11). In Quebec, the development of the Lachine Canal and Mirabel Airport were top priorities for MSUA (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 11). In Manitoba, the ministry assisted with the development of Winnipeg's airport and helped secure lands for the Red River Canal (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 11). In Saskatchewan, MSUA helped appropriate lands for railway relocations (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 11). In Alberta, studies on the development of the Edmonton-Calgary highway corridor were coordinated by MSUA and in British Columbia several municipal research and information-sharing programs were initiated (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 12).

Over its lifetime, the context of MSUA changed. The 1973-74 report states that the primary role of the ministry was "urban policy planning", which would be accomplished through policy development, urban research and coordination with different levels of government (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1974: i). In 1975-76, MSUA began describing itself as an agency designed for "formulating a set of national objectives for Canada's future urban development" (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1975: 1). In 1975-76, the ministry's focus turned to the "development of urban-sensitive federal public-policy" (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1976: 1). In MSUA's 1977-78 annual report, the tone and mission changed once again, noting that the ministry was primarily a, "coordinating agency of the federal government concerned with ensuring, as far as is possible, that federal policies, programs and projects are undertaken with an awareness of their implications for the social, cultural and economic well-being of urban areas in Canada" (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1978: 3). In 1976-77, the government began to recognize its place in the urban sphere, stating plainly in its 1976-77 report, in a preface entitled "The Federal Role in Urban Affairs," that:

Constitutionally, responsibility for Canada's municipalities and matters of local concern rests solely with the provincial and municipal governments. The federal government recognizes and supports this arrangement. The federal government also recognizes that it has constitutional responsibilities to carry out, and in doing so, federal policies, programs and projects affect the pattern, economic base and quality of life in Canadian settlements. This situation means that the federal government, given its concern with how it affects all Canadians, has a responsibility to ensure that its activities are beneficial to urban areas and that federal initi-

atives take into account provincial and local objectives and plans (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1977: 3).

This attempt to situate the ministry within a federal-urban context was intended to counter the growing criticisms of the provinces during this period. The 1977-78 report also took a more cautious tone towards the provinces, stating that, "the ministry cooperates with other federal departments and agencies, the provinces and, through them, their municipalities" (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1978: 3). The 1977-78 annual report repeated this point: "the purpose of such cooperation is to seek provincial and municipal views and policy positions on urban issues" (Ministry of State for Urban Affairs 1978: 4). While such description was useful, the ministry's actions spoke louder than its words.

In November 1978 it was announced that MSUA would close the following year. Through its lifetime, the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs passed through three distinct phases: 1) a coordinating ministry; 2) a funding partner; and, finally; 3) a direct project partner. MSUA began by simply coordinating existing federal policy across departments and governments. MSUA then moved into its second stage where it began to fund specific projects identified by Canada's communities. Finally, in its third stage, MSUA entered into these projects as a full partner, providing not only funds, but also project leadership. By the time the ministry had reached the third stage, where they began bypassing the provincial governments to enter into direct relationships with municipalities, the provinces exercised their veto over the policy network and ended the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs.

## The Provincial Veto

In the MSUA policy network, the veto power, and with it the power to dissolve the network, rested with state level actors. Municipal affairs are, constitutionally, the jurisdiction of the provinces and, as such, a jurisdiction that was cautiously guarded. With the inception of MSUA, the provinces were wary, as evidenced through Saskatchewan Premier Alan Blakeny's warnings to the federal government at the first tri-level meeting that provincial jurisdiction must be respected as the ministry progressed (Watkins 1972: 3). When MSUA operated solely as a coordinating ministry, provincial apprehension was low. The ministry was seen as assisting in the process of urban policy development and operating mostly at the federal level. By coordinating existing federal policy, MSUA was not seen as a threat to provincial jurisdiction. When the ministry began to enter the second stage – the funding stage – provincial apprehension was raised, but when the ministry entered its third stage, the project partner stage, the provincial governments decided to utilize their veto power and end the policy network.

Caroline Andrew addresses provincial concerns with the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, stating that MSUA, "irritated the provinces, and they became increasingly vocal in their opposition" (1994: 431). This opposition began while the ministry entered into the second and third stages of its development, as the provinces began to recognize that the

federal government was interested in getting more formally engaged in cities, as opposed to simply coordinating existing policy and arranging meetings with different partners (Berdahl 2004: 29).

Much of this formal resistance began in 1976 – a year that coincided with both the ministry entering its second stage and the election of the Parti Québécois in Quebec. The Parti Québécois moved immediately to limit federal intrusion into provincial jurisdiction by opposing various federal programs, including the efforts of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs (Cameron 2002: 305). The resistance put forth by Quebec spurred on other provinces. As Ken Cameron states, the provinces began to feel that, “they should be seen to be handling their responsibilities for urban affairs” (2002: 305).

In 1976, provincial municipal affairs ministers cancelled the third tri-level meeting, stating that they were not interested in meeting with their federal counterparts (Sancton 2008: 321). The theme of the year’s meeting was taxation powers and municipalities were expected to push for new taxation measures – an initiative the federal government was in favour of (Sancton 2008: 321). The provincial governments, opposed to new municipal taxation measures, refused to confront the federal government over the matter and simply cancelled the meeting (Sancton 2008: 321).

In 1976, MSUA attempted to impose national housing warranty standards on the provinces, despite Alberta having an individual housing plan and Ontario and Quebec intending to create their own in the near future (Globe and Mail 1976: B3). Demonstrating their inability to comprehend provincial apprehension to the housing policy, MSUA threatened the provinces. Documented in the *Globe and Mail*, the newspaper noted that, “if the provincial programs do not meet special criteria, the federal Government intends to establish its own scheme” (1976: B3). Eventually, walls were placed around provincial urban policy and MSUA was blocked from entering. Once the ministry entered the third stage, the ministry was dissolved because of provincial resistance. The Parti Québécois government in Quebec began a process of provincial opposition to federal initiatives, with MSUA being a prime target. Other provincial governments soon came to re-evaluate their relationship with MSUA, once the ministry entered its third stage as project partner.

## Conclusion

The policy networks and communities framework can provide some clarity to the evolution of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. Three policy advocates – urban activists, civic leadership and municipal associations – and two policy participants have been identified as key actors in the creation and subsequent decline of the ministry. The three policy advocates placed the condition of urban Canada on the public agenda, prompting state-level policy participants to respond. These policy participants were powerful in their agenda-setting capabilities, but once the network was created, they were powerless in directing it. The federal and provincial governments, as state-level actors, entered as policy

participants and controlled the health of the network. Once created, MSUA passed through three distinct phases, each bringing the municipal-federal relationship closer together, to the exclusion of the provinces. Having constitutional responsibility for municipal affairs, the provincial governments selected to end the policy network, and with it the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, when they believed their jurisdiction was being infringed upon.

Oberlander and Fallick have presented an operational description of MSUA, but a more holistic view of the ministry requires accounting for the role of the non-state actors in placing urban affairs on the public agenda, the politicians who addressed the concerns raised by urban advocates and the exclusion of provincial governments that eventually led to the ministry’s closure. The policy networks and communities framework allows for such analysis. Providing a deeper examination of the rise and fall of the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs is not the only benefit of revisiting the ministry. MSUA’s lifecycle provides insights for future policy makers on the dangers of excluding the provinces in multi-level policy arrangements. The province’s reaction to MSUA was not unexpected. Jurisdiction is guarded in Canadian federalism and, by eventually excluding provincial governments from project creation, MSUA appeared as an attempt to erode such jurisdiction. By studying this reaction and learning from past policy failures, future urban policy participants can ensure that more beneficial outcomes are produced from federal-urban engagement.

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