

Leadership, Coordination, and Power in Three Public Administrations Halifax, Edmonton, and Vancouver

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Summary	3
Part 1: Introduction	5
Background: Previous Findings and Literature Review	5
Leadership and Coordination	6
Leadership and Power	8
Leadership in Public Administration.....	11
Research Question	13
Approach	13
Limitations	14
Study Areas	14
Methods and Process	21
Analysis Methods.....	22
Analysis Process.....	23
Part 2: Findings	24
Part 2.1: Leaders of Coordination.....	24
Planners	24
Politicians	27
City Managers	29
The Community and Developers.....	30
Groups	32
The Place of Power: In the Person or the Position?	34
Part 2.2: Organizational Context and Leadership.....	37
Regional Context.....	37
Administrative Context	39
Cultural Context	43
Part 3: Implications	48
Implications for Theory: The Place of Power.....	48
In the Leaders or the Context?	48
Concentrated or Dispersed?.....	51
Implications for Practice.....	52
Avenues of Future Research.....	53
References.....	54
Appendix: Using the Analysis Framework.....	59

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Visit Dr. Grant's website to find more information about the Coordinating Multiple Plans project, including the research proposal and research completed to date: <http://theoryandpractice.planning.dal.ca/>.



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Summary

Coordinating transportation and land use planning is a growing challenge, especially as planning documents proliferate. Good leadership could effectively address the problem; however, the context can disempower leaders and their ability to coordinate. I study the complex relationship between leaders' role in coordination and organizational context, contributing to studies of leaders in public administration. I investigate where power lies in the relationship: with the organizational context or with individual leaders? The concepts of traditional leadership (power concentrated with leaders) and non-traditional leadership (power dispersed among leaders) help locate the place of power in the relationship. I use interpretive discourse analysis and comparative analysis to study interviews done in 2014 with planning professionals from Halifax, NS; Edmonton, AB; and Vancouver, BC.

The interview respondents' perceptions suggest that context can affect leadership in several ways that influence coordination while leadership can also change the context. Respondents saw high level leaders, especially city managers and council, as having the greatest power to influence plan coordination. Respondents saw planners as good leaders of coordination yet the lower positions in which planners tend to operate within administrations can hinder their abilities to lead. I divide context into three categories to present findings: 1) the **regional context** may affect high level leaders' approach which led respondents to feel more or less empowered, 2) the **administrative context** affects leaders and in turn is altered by high level leaders, and 3) the **cultural context** affects leaders and leaders affect the cultural context, particularly through their perceptions of leadership and coordination.

Respondents perceived that the organizational context controls and distributes most of the power; however, power ultimately comes from the leaders and other actors within the organization because their perceptions of (or belief in) the organizational context create and perpetuate power relations. Leadership, power, and organizations are all socially-constructed. Traditional and non-traditional leadership theories explain various aspects of leadership practices in the study areas.

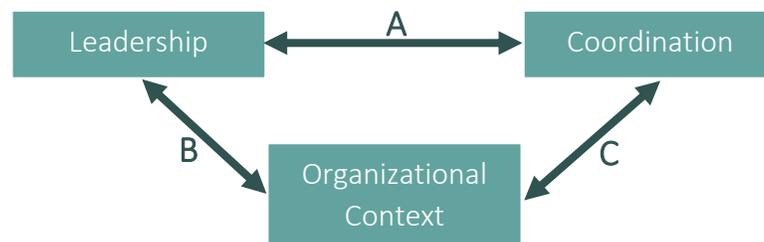
Part 1: Introduction

Coordinating plans becomes more challenging as the number of plans multiplies. Leaders in public agencies have the opportunity to make planning more efficient and impactful in communities by leading the charge to improve coordination; however, the context within which leaders work can often hamper effective coordination and planning. I build on the work of a larger team researching the coordination of transportation and land use planning in Canada by investigating how the organizational context of public administrations affects leaders' coordination efforts.

Background: Previous Findings and Literature Review

Leadership, coordination, and organizational context are interconnected concepts, as shown in Figure 1. I investigate the connection between leadership and coordination (connection A in Figure 1) and the connection between leadership and organizational context (connection B). The relationship between coordination and organizational context (connection C) will be a valuable avenue of future research but is not the focus of my study. I only consider the connection between coordination and organizational context by looking at how the two relate to leadership.

Figure 1: Key concepts of research project



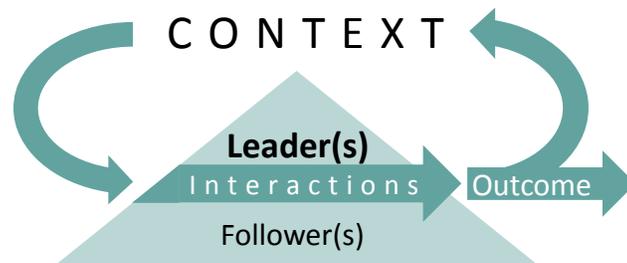
What is leadership? Leadership is understood based on Vogel and Masal's (2014) definition: "a social construct that emerges from the interaction between members and the

organizational context” (p.1183). The Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford University Press, 2015) defines leadership:

The dignity, office, or position of a leader, esp. of a political party; ability to lead; the position of a group of people leading or influencing others within a given context; the group itself; the action or influence necessary for the direction or organization of effort in a group undertaking.

Although the Oxford Dictionary definition helpfully demonstrates the complexity of leadership, a definition that emphasizes the socially-constructed nature of the concept is more useful to my research. **Leadership is a complex social construction that emphasizes the top portion of a two-tiered power hierarchy created through the interactions of actors in a certain context that result in an outcome.** Figure 2 is a visual representation of the definition. One could define “followership” in the same way by emphasising the bottom portion of the power hierarchy.

Figure 2: Leadership Conceptualized



Leadership and Coordination

Leadership has been a recurring theme in the Coordinating Multiple Plans project. Amanda Taylor (2014a), a research assistant on the team, found that leadership is a key informal mechanism for successful coordination in her analysis of interviews from Edmonton and Vancouver (see also Taylor & Grant, 2015). Planners who responded to the team’s national online survey conducted in 2014 said that continuous communication among the leaders of different departments is one of the most effective ways to coordinate departments (Taylor, 2014b). Nathan Hall (2014), another team research assistant, identified three types of leaders as key to coordination in land use planning when he found that “[politicians], managers, and planners may be most likely to initiate

efforts to promote coordination, and may have the most direct control over coordination outcomes” (p. 60). Leadership is additionally important to the team’s research because every person interviewed is a leader in coordination, as indicated by Hall’s (2014) explanation of the research and referral process used to recruit respondents (pp. 2-3): respondents directed our team to individuals particularly involved in coordination. My research offers deeper understanding of leadership’s role in coordinating transportation and land use planning.

We must answer one question before moving on: what is “coordination”? Is it a means or an end? A strategy or an outcome? Bihari Axelsson and Axelsson (2009) saw it as a strategy. Peters (1998) defined coordination “as an end-state in which the policies and programmes of government are characterized by minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae” (p.296). I combine the two meanings, employing Peters’ definition of coordination as an end and adding the idea from Bihari Axelsson and Axelsson that it can also be a means. The interview respondents interpret and discuss coordination several ways, often using the term interchangeably with words like integration, collaboration, and cooperation.

Calvert (1992) argued coordination issues are inevitable in social groups. Leadership may provide a solution to social dilemmas of coordination, under the right circumstances (Calvert, 1992; Wilson & Rhodes, 1997). Researchers see leadership and coordination as closely intertwined and key to getting good results. Several scholars define leadership based on its connection to coordination. Foss (2001) said leadership is “the ability to resolve coordination problems by influencing beliefs” (p. 358). Calvert (1992) argued “that leaders are needed because of, and derive their powers and capabilities from, their ability to solve problems of coordination” (p. 7). Speaking specifically to the land use planning coordination challenge, Porter (2006) found that leadership is critical to the success of transport and land use integration in the USA.

Most writing about the relationship between leadership and coordination come from the business world, particularly from management literature (e.g., Bryman et al., 2014; Foss, 1999; 2001; Kiron, Kruschwitz, Haanaes, & Reeves, 2015); however, leadership’s importance to coordination is not lost on scholars of public administration. Public administration is relevant to my research because most planning professionals

interviewed work for the government. Wiig (2002) identified the importance of leadership and coordination in public administration when he said, “[Public administrators] must provide initiatives, leadership, and coordination to implement the most effective approaches and to ascertain that society as a whole is served appropriately” (p. 228). Authors in education (Leonard & Leonard, 1999), emergency management (Waugh & Streib, 2006), and health and social care (Bihari Axelsson & Axelsson, 2009) have written about leadership as essential to coordinate in public administrations.

Do leaders play a formal or informal role in coordination? Scholars have traditionally studied leaders who occupy formal positions within hierarchies but, as scholars have begun to address “the socially constructed and relational nature of leadership”, informal leadership has received more attention (Bryman et al., 2014, p. ix). Wilson and Rhodes (1997) viewed “leadership as an institutional solution to a challenging social dilemma” (p. 789), indicating that leaders play a formal coordination role within an institution. In contrast, Leonard and Leonard (1999) found informal collaboration more effective than formal in their study of leadership and collaboration among teachers. Taylor (2014a) identified leadership as an informal coordination strategy. Closer study of respondents’ perceptions of leadership will help understand its formality. The level of formality can offer clues as to the importance of organizational context; if leaders tend to be more formal then that means they occupy a formal position within an organization which may then be the source of their influence, while informal leaders’ influence may not be connected to the position they occupy in an organization.

Leadership and Power

Discussing effective coordination implicitly points toward a leader’s power to make coordination happen effectively. We will briefly review theories of power, leadership, and planning. Forester (1989) studied planners’ power to create democratic planning by empowering citizens with information to influence a system that may disempower democracy and the community. Instead of focusing on how planners exert power within a system like Forester, I study the power relations between actors (mainly planners, administrative staff, and politicians) and the system (organizational context).

Forester (1989) said organizations that deny community members the option of voicing their perspectives and changing the organization reinforce the importance of the disempowering organization and lead the community to rely more heavily on formally recognized traits, such as expertise or title (p. 77).

What is power? Scholars understand power in various ways but Foucault and Flyvbjerg's ideas are particularly useful to my research. Mills' (2004) outlined three of Foucault's ideas that are particularly useful in her overview of Foucault as a key critical thinker: first, power exists through interactions between people and institutions and is not necessarily negative. Calvert (1992) agreed with Foucault when he said leaders get power because of the inevitable need for coordination in social groups. Like leadership, power is socially constructed. Power as productive is a second useful Foucauldian idea. Third, discourse is closely linked with power relations, which makes analyzing interviews an especially appropriate method. My concept of power differs somewhat from Foucault's because he sees power as an action or strategy, not an object that a person can possess (Mills, 2004); I see power as an object, though a highly abstract object, that a person can possess. Flyvbjerg (1998) studied rationality and power in politics, administration, and planning. Like Foucault, he saw power as practical, taking a strategies-and-tactics view to find what *is* happening in a case study rather than an idealistic view to find what *should* happen. Like Foucault, Flyvbjerg (1998) saw "power as productive and positive and not only as restrictive and negative" (p. 5).

Researchers and theorists discuss power, institutions, and individuals interacting in a complex relationship. Foucault (Felluga, 2011) said disciplines, such as institutions, "disindividualize" power which leads individuals to believe power comes from institutions rather than from individuals. Forester (1989) said, "organizations are structures of practical communicative action, and thus they not only produce instrumental results but also reproduce social and political relations" (pp. 70-71). His understanding of organizations as productive is useful to my analysis of how organizations affect, and perhaps produce, leaders by giving them power. Calvert (1992) said leaders have power because of the inevitable need for coordination in social groups. One of Flyvbjerg's (1998) propositions shows my research is relevant: "Stable power relations are more typical of politics, administration, and planning than antagonistic confrontations"

(Flyvbjerg, 1998, p. 230). Confrontations, however, tend to attract more research attention because they are more visible than everyday, stable power relations; the result is an unbalanced research field that knows more about a small aspect of power relations (confrontations) and less about more common stable power relations. I study power relations within stable organizational contexts which contributes the latter side of the field.

Gordon (2002; 2014) examined the link between leadership, power, and context. He argued that the relationship between leadership and power has received insufficient analytical attention because researchers assume power is concentrated with the leader (Gordon, 2014). I investigate power and leadership by considering how organizational contexts empower or disempower leaders and how leaders use power to influence their organizational context. Does the power to coordinate come from the organizational context or from the leader?

Gordon's (2002; 2014) research on power and leadership offers a useful investigative lens. He studied the assumed place of power within the most prominent leadership theories, dividing them into traditional and non-traditional. Traditional theories (including trait, style, contingency, and new leadership theories) assume that power is concentrated with the leader. Non-traditional theories, chiefly dispersed leadership theories, see power as shared among leaders and followers and understand leadership as a process (Gordon, 2002). My leadership definition and its associated diagram shown in Figure 2 reflect the idea of leadership being a process in how context has some form of influence on the interactions between leaders and followers which has some form of outcome. My definition leaves space for findings that connect to traditional theories such as trait theories (which focus on leaders' innate abilities), style theories (which focus on behaviours), and contingency theories (which focus on leaders' circumstances). Leaving room to find evidence of theories that are traditional or non-traditional offers more clues of how the interview respondents viewed the place of power.

In his earlier work, Gordon (2002) said the rise of dispersed leadership theory in organizations represents a shift in power that has led to the deconstruction of traditional power hierarchies. He suggested later that dispersed leadership theories may be hard to put into practice because traditional leadership approaches have strongly influenced

assumptions about how leadership *should* look in organizations (Gordon, 2014). People often consider traditional leadership approaches to be not only ordinary but how leadership *should* be, influencing members of an organization to view leaders who try non-traditional approaches as doing something wrong. Gordon (2014) called such deep-rooted institutional memories “historical antecedents”. One of Flyvbjerg’s (1998) propositions may support Gordon’s suggestion: “The rationality of power has deeper historical roots than the power of rationality” (p. 231), which means democracy and rationality are new ideas in politics, administration, and planning compared to long held power ideas such as class and privilege and, as a result, are less deeply embedded in organizations. Traditional leadership could be another long-held power notion in organizations while non-traditional leadership would be, as Flyvberg (1998) put it, “young and fragile” (p. 231). My analysis draws on Gordon and Flyvbjerg’s ideas about powerful institutional memories.

Leadership in Public Administration

The many issues associated with leadership, such as power dynamics, interpersonal relationships, and the ability to effect change, fascinate people. Great interest leads to a mountain of scholarship. Bryman et al. (2014) compiled a comprehensive overview of leadership studies in *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership*. Contributors come from diverse academic disciplines. Although planning is multi-disciplinary, many planners work in public administrations; therefore, my research focuses on leaders in public administration. Vogel and Masal (2014) argued that public administration is contextually distinct from other areas of leadership studies.

Many scholars have studied leadership in public administration yet several research gaps remain. Vogel and Masal (2014) conducted a comprehensive review of public leadership literature and identified four areas that need further investigation. The gap I intend to address is their call for researchers to study leadership as a complex phenomenon: “future studies must elaborate on the ‘fit’ between the context and process of leadership as well as between leaders and followers” (p. 1180). They said researchers should reconsider “how the various elements of public leadership (i.e. context, processes and outcomes) co-evolve and interact” (p. 1180).

An investigation of leadership in public administration as a complex phenomenon is closely linked to the discussion of leadership and power because, as Gordon (2014) found, the power embedded in the organizational context significantly influences leadership. I use power as a lens to analyze the connection between organizational context and leadership. My definition of leadership contributes a tool to study complex public leadership by creating an analysis framework (see the Appendix for more details). It may also be useful to other disciplines but, since I am using the definition to analyze planning professionals' perceptions, the implications are most directly applicable to public administration leadership theory and specifically to planning in administrations.

What do we already know about coordination and leadership in public administration? Hrelja (2015) studied the impact of "steering cultures", defined as formal organizational factors and informal factors like norms and discourses, on the management of integrating transportation and land use planning. He studied two Swedish municipalities with distinct steering cultures that led them to integrate planning in various ways; however, he found that the extent to which transport and land use integration are embedded in institutional norms, not differences in steering cultures, was the greatest factor for successful integration. My idea of organizational context is similar to the steering culture concept because it includes administrative (formal) and cultural (informal) aspects of organizations.

Hatzopoulou and Miller (2008) examined the impact of poor institutional integration on coordination of current planning goals in Canada. They found that the three levels of Canadian government have low levels of integration which has led to "sporadic and localized" (p.16), and ultimately ineffective, coordination attempts. Fairholm (2009) researched the leadership and organizational strategies of government managers. He associated leadership with higher level components like organizational strategy, vision, and values, while management fell to lower, more specific levels of objectives and tasks. I consider people leading at both levels to be leaders because this understanding is consistent with how the interview respondents discussed leadership. Although articles about leadership or organizations often contain underlying coordination themes, like efficiency and cooperation, they do not usually explicitly emphasize

coordination. I emphasize coordination to offer a novel perspective in the study of leadership and organizational context in public administrations.

Research Question

How do planning professionals perceive the connection between organizational context and leadership in coordinating transportation and land use planning?

Approach

I conduct qualitative analysis on interviews done by the Coordinating Multiple Plans research team in 2014 in Halifax, Nova Scotia; Edmonton, Alberta; and Vancouver, British Columbia. Bryman, Stephens, and à Campo (1996) reviewed the use of qualitative methods for leadership studies. I am using what they called a “multi-case-study design” (p. 355). Qualitative research has many strengths for studying social phenomena, although it tends to be undervalued compared to quantitative methods (Bryman, 2004; Filstead, 1970; Mason, 2002). Mason (2002) said qualitative research can effectively explain “*how things work in particular contexts*” and produce “very well-founded *cross-contextual generalities*” (p.1). Vogel and Masal (2014) suggested qualitative methods are particularly appropriate to research leadership as a complex phenomenon because they are better suited than quantitative methods for considering numerous factors at once. Filstead (1970) argued for the virtues of qualitative research versus quantitative research:

Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to “get close to the data,” thereby developing the analytical, conceptual, and categorical components of explanation from the data itself – rather than from the preconceived, rigidly structured, and highly quantified techniques that pigeonhole the empirical social world into the operational definitions that the researcher has constructed. (p.6)

My research focus evolved throughout analysis in a way similar to Filstead’s above description.

Limitations

Although they have many virtues, interviews and qualitative methods are also limited in several ways:

- My interpretation of findings will inevitably be influenced by personal perspectives. Mason (2002) encouraged qualitative researchers to continually remind themselves to focus on the interview content rather than their own thoughts about the content.
- The findings are not “facts” but respondents’ perspectives based on social constructions of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967).
- The perspectives represent a specific social interaction between interviewee and interviewer that future interviewers cannot fully replicate (Goffman, 1959).
- Working from anonymous transcripts denies me the option of interpreting subtle nuances in face-to-face interactions that could offer further depth to the analysis.

Qualitative methods are good at providing rich, detailed understandings of a phenomenon in a particular context but they can only support certain generalizations (Bryman, 2004). Bryman recommended establishing what Williams (2000) called *moderatum generalizations* in which the researcher identifies “what class of objects the findings from a study can be generalized to” (Bryman, 2004, p. 763). I cannot generalize the findings to all leaders in public administration but can generalize to theory about planners, councillors, mayors, and city managers as leaders of coordination in transportation and land use planning.

Study Areas

Why study Halifax, Edmonton, and Vancouver? Each operate as distinct regional systems, making them fruitful case studies to compare how organizational context impacts leadership. Map 1 locates the three regions in Canada. Halifax is the only regional municipality, which makes it simpler than the other regions because it only has one main administrative hierarchy while the others operate at regional and municipal levels with several different hierarchies. Vancouver is most complex with two regional organizations, Metro Vancouver and TransLink, and the most municipalities.

Map 1: Location of study areas in Canada

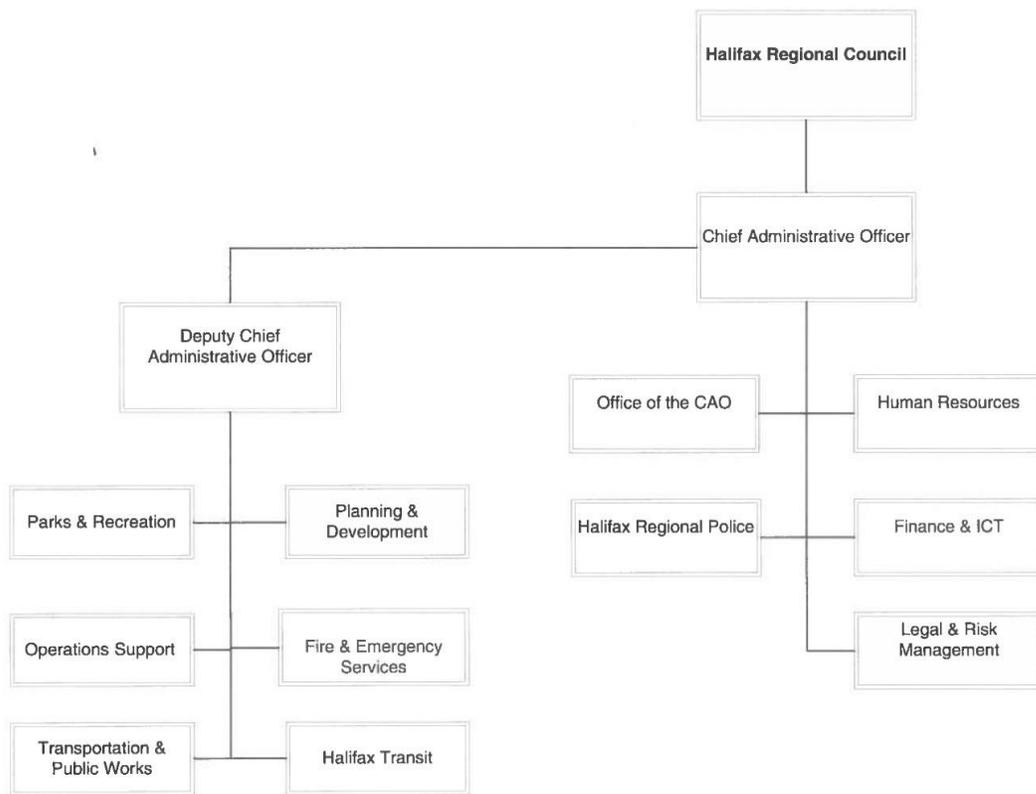
Map based on source: About.com, 2015

Halifax

Four municipalities amalgamated in 1996 to create the Halifax Regional Municipality (Halifax Regional Municipality, 2015). A regional council made of the mayor and a councilor from each of the 16 polling districts govern the municipality. Regional council is the top leader and decision maker and the administration carries out its directions under the leadership of the chief administrative officer (CAO) (see Figure 3). The deputy chief administrative officer follows directions from the CAO and has direct oversight of the administration's departments, which include Planning and

Development. I refer to the Halifax CAO as a city manager throughout this paper to simplify discussion comparing the three regions because the other two regions refer to a similar office as city manager, not CAO. Beneath but somewhat separate from the Halifax regional council are external boards, such as Halifax Water. Our team interviewed one respondent from Halifax Water while all other respondents, unless they were private consultants, worked in the Planning and Development department.

Figure 3: Halifax Regional Municipality Organizational Structure



Source: Halifax Regional Municipality, 2014

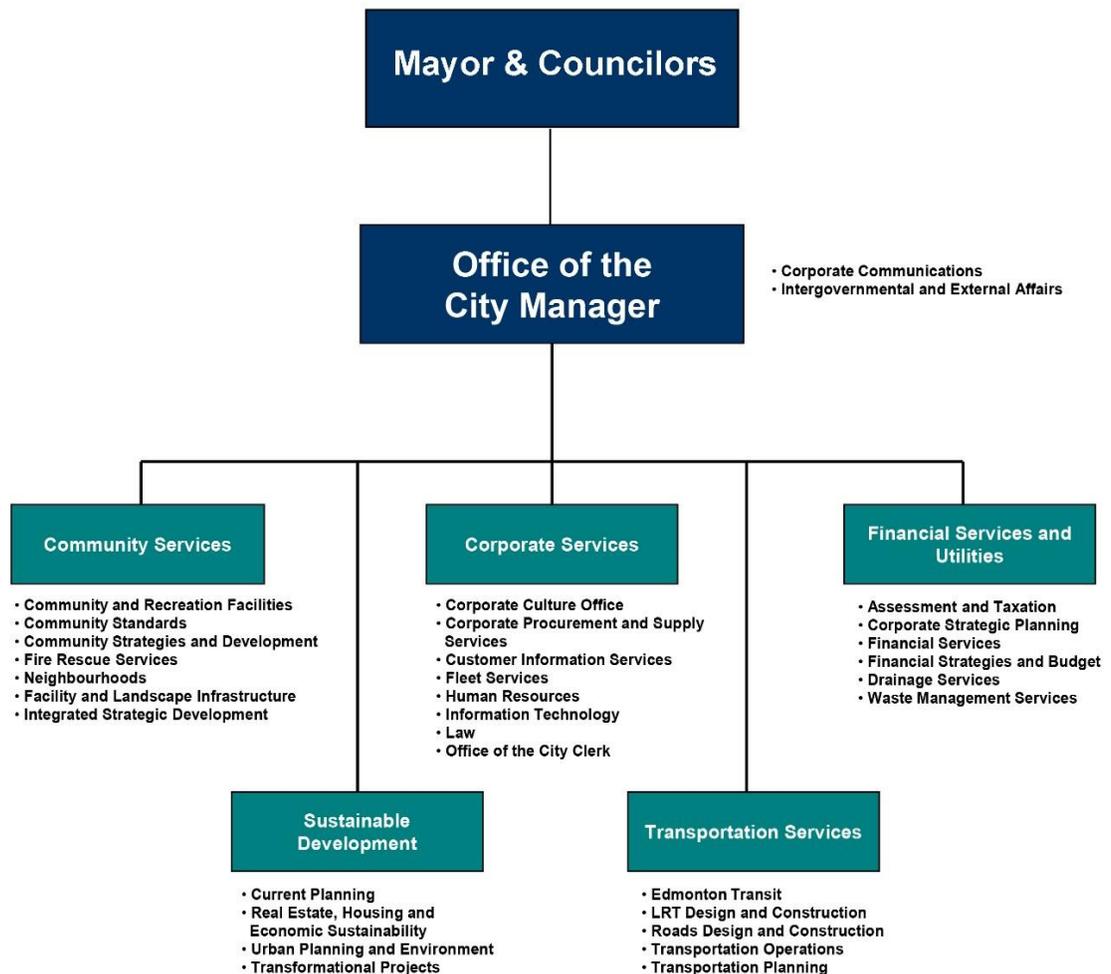
Edmonton

Edmonton's organization is more complex than that of Halifax. Twenty-four autonomous municipalities operate within the Edmonton Capital Region (a.k.a., Alberta Capital Region) governed by the Capital Region Board (CRB) (Capital Region Board, 2015). One elected official from each municipality, usually a mayor or councilor, sits on

the CRB, supported by a small administrative staff. The board creates and implements the capital regional growth plan.

The City of Edmonton is the most urbanized center of the capital region. Like Halifax, the elected mayor and the councilors, who each represent one of the 12 city wards, direct the region and the city manager oversees the administration as it carries out directions (City of Edmonton, 2015a). Figure 4 shows Edmonton’s organizational structure.

Figure 4: City of Edmonton Organizational Structure



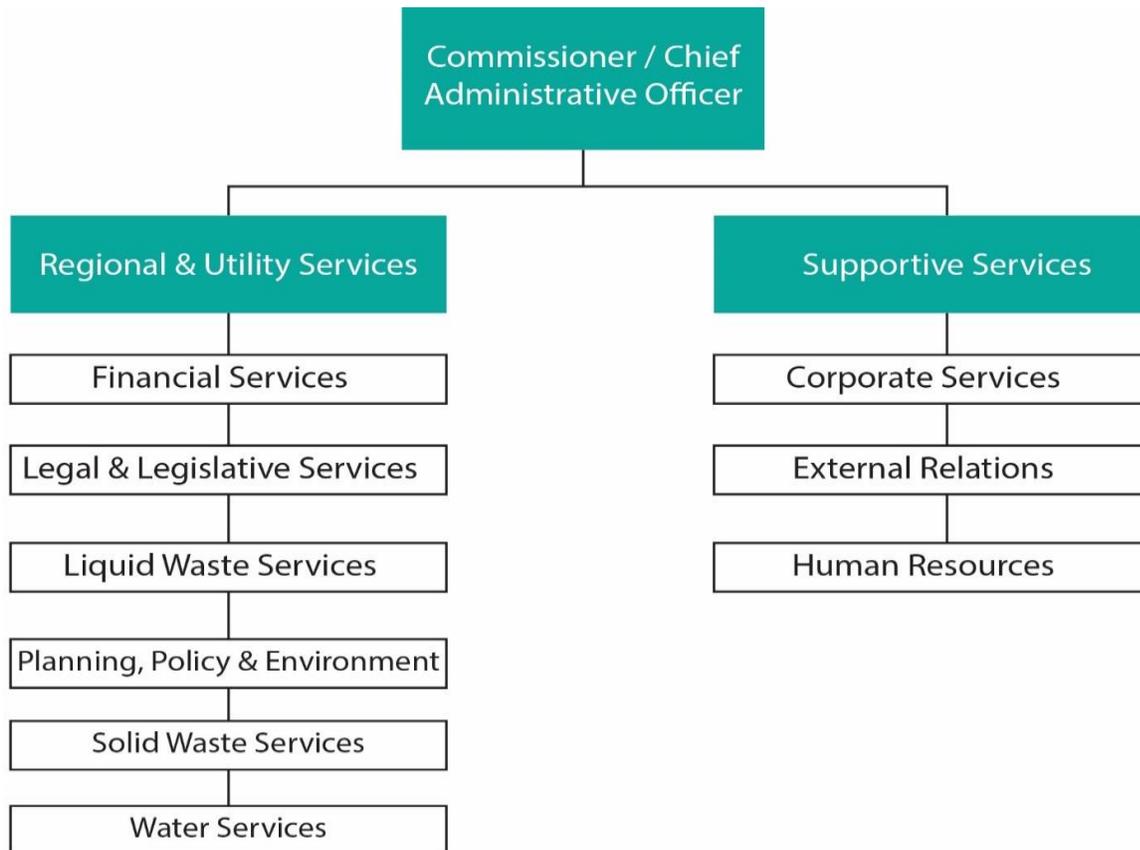
Based on Sources: City of Edmonton, 2015a; 2015b

We interviewed planning professionals from several municipalities within the region. Most respondents came from the City of Edmonton, specifically from three of the five city departments: Community Services, Sustainable Development, and Transportation Services. We also interviewed staff from Parkland County, the Town of Beaumont, and the City of Spruce Grove.

Vancouver

Vancouver has the most complex administrative system of the three study areas. Metro Vancouver region includes 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one Treaty First Nation (Metro Vancouver, 2015a). Figure 5 shows Metro Vancouver’s departments that operate under a CAO; the regional administrative structure looks much like that of a municipality.

Figure 5: Metro Vancouver Organizational Structure



Based on Source: Metro Vancouver, 2015b

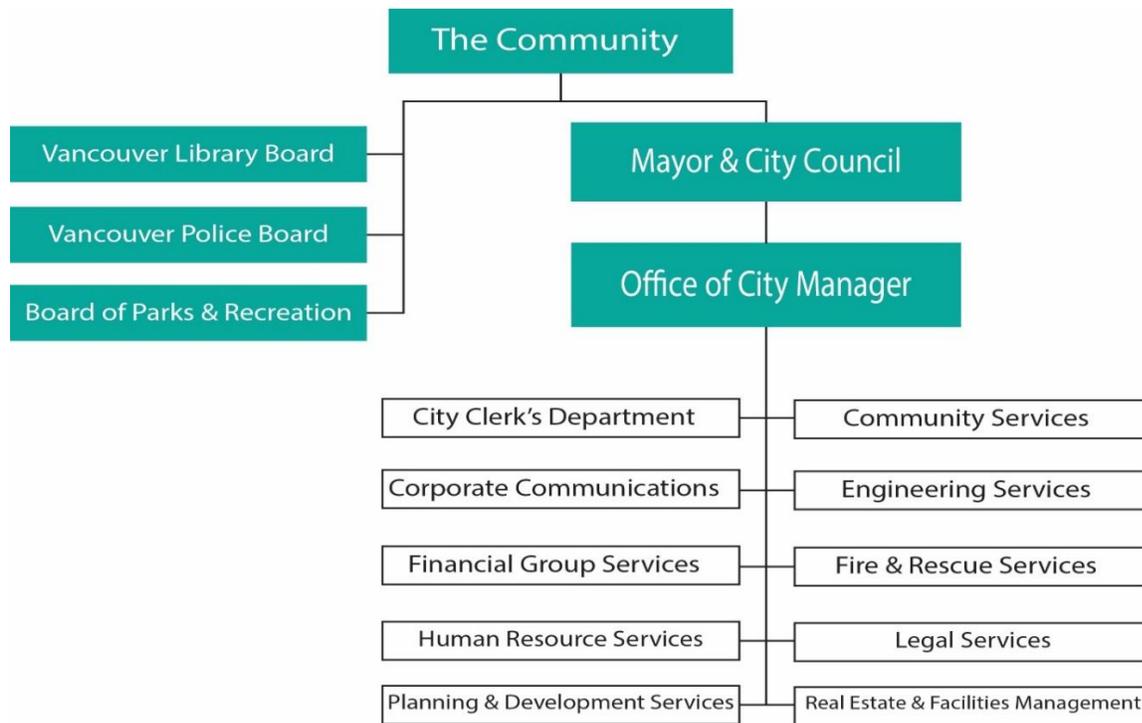
The Metro Vancouver Board of Directors is made of elected officials from each member area. The population of each municipality, electoral area, or Treaty First Nation determines the number of elected officials representing each area on the Board. Multiple committees operate at the regional level, including a regional planning advisory committee and a mayor's committee made of the mayors from every member municipality.

TransLink is the regional transportation authority for Metro Vancouver, operating separately from but cooperatively with Metro Vancouver (TransLink, 2015). A Mayor's Council on Regional Transportation, made of the mayors from each municipality, the chief of the Treaty First Nation, and an elected representative from the electoral district, leads TransLink by approving projects and appointing the TransLink Board of Directors. The Board of Directors appoints a chief executive officer to manage the TransLink administration. TransLink provides transportation services, such as roads and bridges, through its own administration or through three operating companies: Transit Police for security, Coast Mountain Bus Company for buses, and British Columbia Rapid Transit Company for the Sky Train, the region's light rapid transit.

We interviewed some professionals from Metro Vancouver and Translink but most were from the cities of Vancouver and Surrey, the two most populous municipalities in Metro Vancouver. The organizational charts from each city, shown in Figures 6 and 7, place the community at the top (City of Surrey, 2015; City of Vancouver, 2015). Vancouver's website says, "The City of Vancouver's organizational structure supports the community" (City of Vancouver, 2015), which implies the community is not the leader but rather the *raison d'être* of the administration. Surrey refers to the community as "customers", similarly implying that the administration serves the citizens.

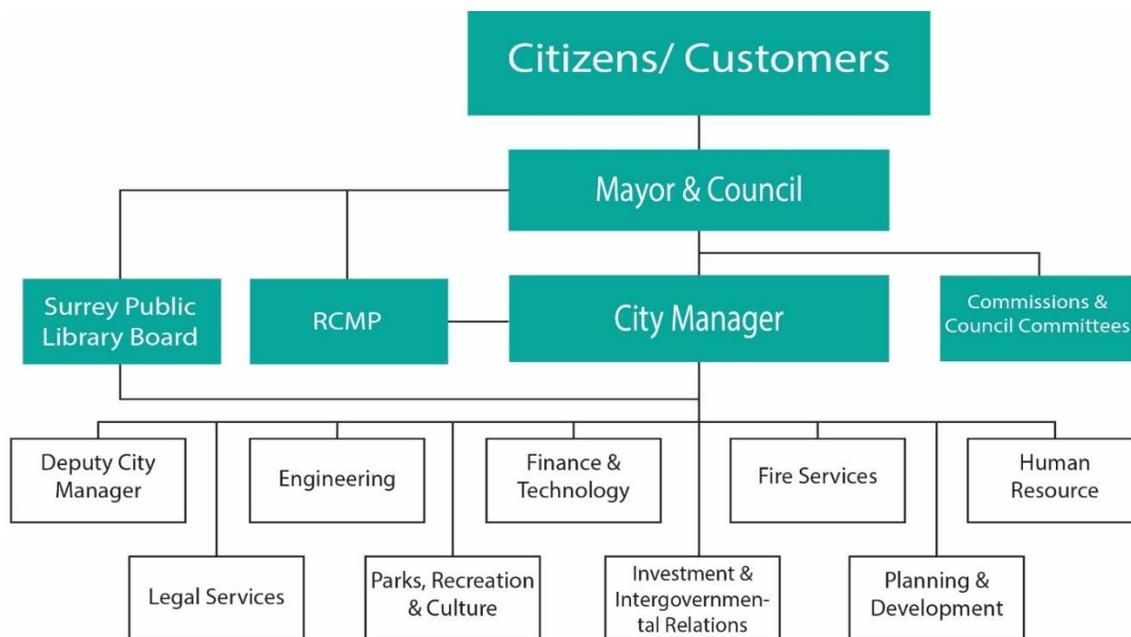
Leadership, coordination, and power in three public administrations

Figure 6: City of Vancouver Organizational Structure



Based on Source: City of Vancouver, 2015

Figure 7: City of Surrey Organizational Structure



Based on Source: City of Surrey, 2015

After the community, the rest of each city’s organizational structure looks like those in Edmonton and Halifax: the mayor and council are the highest level leaders, followed by the city manager, and then the departments. Most planners interviewed worked in the Planning and Development department of each city. A notable unique feature of the City of Vancouver’s administration is that their Parks and Recreation Board is made of elected representatives and is independent of council and the city manager (City of Vancouver, 2015).

Methods and Process

The Coordinating Multiple Plans team conducted and transcribed in-person interviews with 92 planning professional across Canada in 2014. I focus on interviews from three of the five regions. Table 1 shows the types of planning professionals interviewed from each region. The “Other” column refers to those in roles closely related to planning such as transit agency staff, development officers, and planning technicians. Harper and Wheeler’s (2015) summary report contains further information about each region and respondent characteristics.

Table 1: Types of planning professionals interviewed in each region

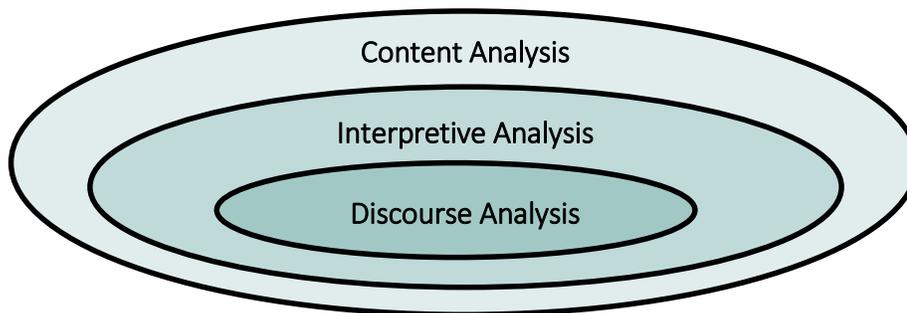
	Municipal Planners	Provincial Planners	Regional Planners	Consultant Planners	Other	Total
Halifax	7	2	2	2	2	15
Edmonton	16	0	1	0	1	18
Vancouver	7	0	4	2	2	15
TOTAL	30	2	7	4	5	48

Our team previously conducted a broad thematic analysis by coding the interviews from each region based on the objectives and themes of the main research proposal (Grant et al., 2013-2016). We developed and refined the initial code through a cyclical process that ensured each team member applied the code in the same way. I created a databank for my research by pulling only excerpts relevant to leadership from the coded interviews.

Analysis Methods

I used discourse analysis, a type of content analysis, to interpret the content of the interviews to respond to the research question. Figure 8 shows how the three analysis methods are nested within one another, with discourse analysis being the most specific.

Figure 8: Nested Analysis Methods



Neuendorf (2002) explained, “Content analysis may be briefly defined as the systematic, objective, quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (p. 1). It is a broad term which includes multiple different types of analyses, including interpretive discourse analysis. I use one of the most common content analysis techniques: coding. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) explained, “Coding involves attaching one or more keywords to a text segment in order to permit later identification of a statement” (p.201-2). Although the research team already applied preliminary codes to the interview transcripts, I applied an additional layer of coding specific to leadership and context.

The interpretive analysis piece involved what Mason (2002) referred to as *interpretive readings*, which read “*through or beyond* the data” (Mason, 2002, p. 149). I also conducted what she called *literal readings*, which study what is explicitly said. I coded literal and interpretive categories simultaneously while reading the transcripts because interpretive meanings often emerged while reading the literal content. For further discussion about approaches and points of contention in interpreting meaning from interview transcripts, see Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) guide to qualitative interviewing (pp. 207-18).

Discourse analysis studies what people say in speech or writings. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) said the method helps researchers understand interviewees’

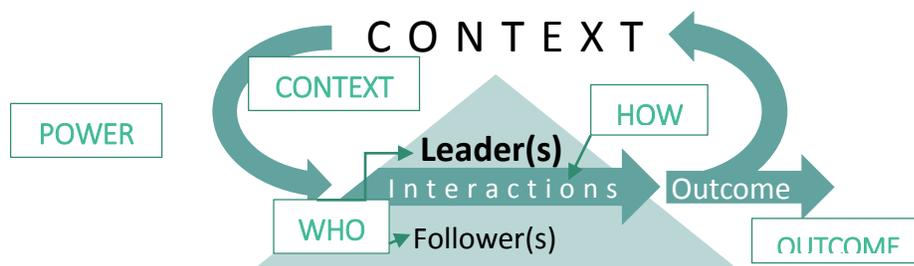
perceptions of concepts. Lees (2004) explained that discourse analysts usually look at the context in which actors make statements along with the statements themselves. Comparing the analysis findings with the organizational structures contextualizes my research.

Comparative analysis is the final method used in the research. It assesses similarities and differences among two or more research subjects. Comparisons revealed patterns and differences in perceptions about the role of leadership based on the organizational context.

Analysis Process

Qualitative research tends to be a more iterative than sequential process (Glaser & Strauss, 1970; Mason, 2002), although the process loosely followed two phases. First, I conducted an interpretive discourse analysis in order to understand which parts of the interviews discuss organizational context and leadership. I used codes based on the visualization of my leadership definition, making the diagram into an analytical framework. Figure 9 shows the pieces of the framework associated with each code. See the Appendix for further explanation of how I applied the code to the interview transcripts.

Figure 9: Codes associated with analytical framework



The second phase used comparative analysis to find patterns and differences in perceptions of leadership based on organizational context. I analyze the organizational context mainly using interview responses and supplement them with the organizational structure charts.

Part 2: Findings

I present the findings in two sections. The first discusses the actors whom interview respondents perceived as leaders of coordination, including how they led and their perceptions about power. How respondents saw leaders revealed a lot about the power dynamics in each context. The second section further unpacks the way organizational context and leadership affected one another.

Part 2.1: Leaders of Coordination

Respondents discussed several actors as leaders of plan coordination: planners, politicians, city managers, the community, developers, and groups. The way each actor leads and the outcomes they are able to achieve offer insights into the place of power in the interplay between leaders and their organizational context.

Planners

Planners identified themselves as good coordination leaders, seeing coordination as a vital planning activity due to the nature of their profession. A city planner in Halifax summed up the sentiment well: “Interdepartmental coordination in my opinion is the single most important issue facing us as planners, partly because we are inherently interdisciplinary in our work” (HRM11m). Respondents saw planners as well-equipped to coordinate planning due to their professional expertise. A planner from the City of Surrey (within Metro Vancouver) identified the whole planning department as a leader when asked about coordination success stories: “And we had a whole bunch of internal working groups working on different aspects of it, coordinated by our department” (VAN07m). Similarly, a planner from Edmonton region who used to work in Fort McMurray described how coordination meetings with the province went well because the planning department led the meetings.

A Vancouver city planner said, “all the kind of planners who lead the plans are kind of champions in and of themselves” (VAN06m). The use of the word “champion” implies that when planners “champion” (or advocate) coordination they are not formally-appointed leaders; champions advocate causes because of personal values rather than because of the mandate of a formal leadership position. The respondent who identified planners as champions implied that planners are more informal than formal leaders.

When respondents discussed planners as leaders, their followers were usually other planners or the community. Higher level planners, such as planning directors, could have a greater ability to make an impact than general planners. When asked about planners’ ability to make coordination happen, a Nova Scotia provincial planner said that having a strong planning director who can communicate clearly with staff is key to giving planners power in public agencies, although he did not have much optimism about the potential influence of other planning staff:

Well, a lowly planner maybe not. I mean a director of planning perhaps... It’s important to have a strong person and a person who has a vision, I think, in that role because I think they can then make it clear to the politicians. They can bring it to life. (HRM12m)

The description of a good leader in the above example – someone who is “strong” and “has a vision” – suggests personal traits are perceived as important to good leadership or at least to good higher level leadership.

Though some respondents from each region perceived planners as leaders, planners from Halifax suggested their administration often disempowers them while planners in Edmonton and Vancouver largely expressed feelings of empowerment. A planner from Halifax explained the impact of a previous planning director on planning staff:

One is having that innovative urge beaten out of them by a planning director who, for many years, didn’t like people popping up with new big ideas. You know, similar to the CAO is now, I guess you’d say. And so creativity was stifled. (HRM09m)

Responses from the City of Edmonton generally read differently. A city planner from Edmonton said, “We gave council the opportunity to be leaders in those different areas” (EDM09m). The respondent not only felt like a leader but implied that they were able to

empower city council to be leaders even though the administrative hierarchy formally places council above staff. Even though they operate in a similar municipal structure as Halifax, they felt they had power to distribute. In this case, they led using policy.

Planners in Vancouver also generally perceived themselves as more powerful than those in Halifax: “I think we really do have like a pretty strong culture of leadership there, like where there is definitely strong planners who lead the charge in developing the plans and then making sure that they happen” (Vancouver city planner, VAN06m).

Another Vancouver city planner explained the origin of planners’ strong influence:

So the planning department in Vancouver was set up in 1951. And the director of planning has played a primary role in setting policy and planning. I think the other thing that very much distinguishes our role, which is really fundamental: council passes the bylaws, council approves the policies, but we as staff, this is what we've been doing since 1956 when the zoning and development bylaw, which has evolved quite a bit but it's what we work with now, the staff administer... Administer the plans and we make decisions. (VAN02m)

The example shows that planners in Vancouver operate in a system much like that of Halifax where council makes the final decisions, yet planners feel they hold considerable influence. The finding supports Gordon’s (2014) argument that institutional memory impacts current leadership practice and the distribution of power.

According to respondents, planners mainly lead through policy. A provincial planner in Nova Scotia used a template to help municipal planners coordinate policies. Municipal planners often used policy to remind decision-makers about planning objectives that new proposals may undermine. Good policy provides planners with the power to persuade others even in the face of other strong influences:

And I realize too how important policy is. So when something is written down policy, it’s so useful to have that in writing in our discussions with developers because they will push us if... they will say, show me the policy, show me the line in the plan that says there has to be a shared use path in this location. (Planner with City of Edmonton, EDM06f)

Another one of the main ways planners lead coordination is by initiating interdepartmental groups. Planners can lead by teaching council and the community about planning policies. A planner from a smaller town in Edmonton region recounted the challenge of council not understanding smart growth policies; the respondent suggested to their manager that they do an information session for council.

Politicians

Politicians, specifically councillors or mayors, are frequently mentioned as leaders. Respondents sometimes discussed politicians as leading land use planning coordination but more often as leading the whole administration, with repercussions for coordination. Sometimes respondents described politicians as part of the organizational context of another leader, usually lower-level staff. Respondents sometimes saw politicians as good leaders of plan coordination. A Vancouver city planner applauded council: “Some of our biggest champions are actually our councillors. We have a very clear council on where they want to go and what their objectives are. And they generally align with the sustainability and affordability and such” (VAN01m). The mayor in Halifax was viewed positively because he used his influence with councillors to push certain planning objectives. In Edmonton, council required staff to develop the Ways plans, showing that council can be an effective coordination leader. The Ways are a series of high level, strategic planning documents for the City of Edmonton that most Edmonton interview respondents identified as examples of effective plan coordination; the two main Ways, the municipal development plan (The Way We Grow) and transportation master plan (The Way We Move), were developed together.

Respondents sometimes saw councillors as problematic leaders because of their effect on coordination. A Halifax planner described a case where the development community persuaded several councillors to create policies that contradicted previously established planning objectives; luckily, another councillor was able to stall and ultimately stop the policy from taking effect, making the case an example of coinciding positive and negative coordination leadership by councillors. Frequent disagreements between councillors were another perceived challenge. Councillors may not always understand the planning projects they approve, which can be a challenge for coordinating plan implementation. A city planner in the Town of Beaumont (in Edmonton region), gave an example: council approved smart growth policies but continuously rejected implementation projects based on the policies because they did not understand how smart growth policies would look when put into practice. Another problem for councillors as leaders for coordination is they can focus too much on their own district to see what would be best for the wider region. The issue stems from the nature of being an elected

representative, suggesting administrations should not rely on councillors to be the main coordination leaders.

Respondents saw mayors playing a somewhat different role than councillors.

Some Halifax respondents saw the Halifax mayor as a champion of good planning:

Certainly under the new mayor, there's good leadership. The new mayor in Halifax has corralled the sort of latent and/or dispersed good impulses amongst the council, and sort of corralled them into a coherent voice. Which has been really great. It helped to sort of quiet or mute the parochial or ward-based politics. Ultimately he's not their boss. He can only influence them. So he's wielding his influence very well. (Planner in Halifax, HRM09m)

Although the mayor occupies a high level position basically equal to that of councillors, his power comes from his persuasive personality which enables him to influence council's vote. A consultant planner in Halifax also praised the mayor for steadfastly arguing that the city should grow in accordance with HRM By Design (the downtown plan) during a regional council meeting. Respondents did not mention the mayors from the other two regions as often as Halifax respondents mentioned their mayor. It may be that the Halifax mayor has more obvious influences on planners because they are all part of a single government hierarchy while the mayors in the other regions must operate with multiple municipal and regional government hierarchies, leading them to spend more time coordinating with one another and less time working directly on planning issues. The finding that respondents mentioned mayors more or less often depending on the place indicates that the mayor's position in an administration enables them to be involved in plan coordination but does not require it. Their involvement in coordination may be more dependent on personal interests and approaches to leadership.

Respondents saw council exercise power mainly through their ability to approve projects and, of course, the budget which dictates what plans communities develop and implement:

And then ultimately city council has the decision-making ability because they approve our budget. So if they feel that something that we as a transportation department recommended not be funded, if council feels like that should be funded, they have the ability to say we want that moved above the line... council does have the ultimate authority to make decisions as to which plans are moved forward the quickest. (Transportation planner in City of Edmonton, EDM05f)

The high, formal position of council within the organizational hierarchy enabled them to have a significant influence on what happened in each place.

City Managers

Of the most powerful leaders, the city manager is most influential for land use plan coordination because they are the main avenue through which planners can recommend good planning principles to council. Respondents explained that city managers could be great or terrible for plan coordination. They saw the Halifax city manager's leadership approach as unhelpful to coordination because he stifled planners' ability to lead by enforcing their role as support staff. Based on the Halifax organizational structure chart, the city manager (or CAO) does not have direct oversight of the region's departments; direct oversight lies with the deputy chief administrative officer. Curiously, interview respondents never mentioned the deputy CAO, demonstrating that the Halifax CAO's decisions have more impact on planning staff than we may expect just from looking at the organizational chart.

Some respondents criticized the Vancouver city manager for making planning decisions that fell outside her field of expertise. A city planner from Surrey gave an example of when her city manager made poor planning leadership choices:

It was like a big sort of joint environmental sustainability-type plan. And the CAO wanted his sustainability people to run it. And they were not planners, first off. I think there was one planner, and she was about maybe 2 years into her career. And they just did not have a clue. They were way over their heads. And it was a big, big budget, and there were a lot of people looking at what was happening. And it eventually came to the planning department because we knew what to do. And as soon as we got it then it just completely went off in a totally different situation, and actually processed properly. Because we had the expertise, we knew what we were doing. (VAN08f)

City managers had some positive impacts on coordination. Speaking generally, a Vancouver city planner said, "it's having [an] administration that's headed by a city manager that wants the big picture figured out. We don't just want to hear about your world that you're responsible for" (VAN02m). Aside from the criticism of her expertise, perceptions about the Vancouver city manager were largely positive. According to a Vancouver city planner, "Internally, we have a very strong city manager. And she is very involved in ensuring that staff reports really turn the dial on the objectives we're trying to

do and really set clear goals” (VAN01m). Perceptions of the Edmonton city manager’s leadership approach were overwhelmingly positive in regards to the impact on coordination:

But the city manager, when he came, instituted, yeah, just a really proactive cultural shift in our organization. So we have five leadership principles. And one of them is we are one city. And so there’s a huge emphasis on breaking down silos, on working collaboratively. (Edmonton city planner, EDM10f)

High level leaders can enable or lead successful coordination or can create coordination barriers, which suggests that high level leaders’ perspectives on plan coordination lead to good or bad coordination. The finding suggests that public agencies should somehow impress the importance of coordinating planning on high level leaders, especially city managers, if a municipality needs to improve plan coordination.

The city managers in the cities of Edmonton and Vancouver were both let go in the Fall of 2015 (Stolte, 2015; Sundstrom, 2015). According to online news articles, each individual was let go because of leadership traits or styles and each city council’s desire to hire someone with a “fresh perspective” – both articles used this phrase – to help the city change as it moves forward. The dismissals hint that the way an individual uses power may determine whether or not they will remain in the position that gives them power. The finding also suggests that most of the leaders’ power in public agencies comes from the formal hierarchy rather than from a leader’s personal attributes, though personal attributes may help them obtain and hold onto formal positions of power.

The Community and Developers

Respondents occasionally discussed developers and community members, including citizen groups, as leaders but more often described them as part of the context of staff leaders. Examples of citizen groups were community league associations in the City of Edmonton, a community liaison group in Halifax, and citizen committees in Vancouver municipalities. One of the main ways respondents saw the community as a leader was in their ability to influence council:

...political leadership is huge, I’d say. We can write whatever we want, as many thousands of pages that we want to and bring them forward but at the end of the day, we work for our councils who work for our citizens. So we work for our citizens. (City of Edmonton Planner, EDM02f)

Developers in Edmonton are sometimes discussed as leaders because the city's planning system places responsibility on developers to develop area structure plans and neighbourhood structure plans. Respondents did not mention the community or developers as coordination leaders nearly as frequently as they mentioned politicians, planners, and city managers. One Vancouver respondent explicitly stated that the community does *not* play a coordinating role.

Respondents generally portrayed community member or developers as problematic coordination leaders in the few instances where respondents discussed them as leaders. Problems often came from the community or developers' lack of familiarity with planning concepts and processes. A planner from Halifax explained that the community can contribute to the proliferation of planning documents:

Some community groups have been pushing for their own document because they feel that their community is somehow special and requires its own document. I think we've been trying to limit that as much as possible... if you start doing that, we might go from 22 planning bylaws to hundreds and hundreds of planning bylaws. (HRM02m)

The proliferation of planning documents is a significant challenge to the coordination. Even when considered part of the context, the community and developers were sometimes seen as problematic for coordination because they opposed planning objectives. A Halifax planner described a situation where the administration had an opportunity to set growth distribution targets in a more sustainable, urban-concentrated way during the regional plan review process but ultimately leaders decided to discard the more ambitiously sustainable targets because of developers' influence: "a component of that decision to do that comes from developer influence for sure" (HRM09m).

Followers are the other type of actor considered in the analysis; however, their space in the analysis framework (shown in Figure 2 and explained in the Appendix) was most often left blank during analysis. Followers are important to leadership because identifying someone as a leader implies that at least one person or thing is following their lead. For this reason, followers are implicitly key to leadership even if seldom overtly mentioned in the interviews. Since my research approach is to allow findings to emerge from the dataset, I will not enter into closer analysis of the *implied* followers' identities.

Community members or community groups are the main actors *explicitly* mentioned as followers in a handful of cases. A development officer in Halifax explained that the community could become problematic when the administration gave them too much power:

I believe that what happens is the planner who is doing the visioning... goes into a community... tells them in an open-ended way that you can have whatever you wish as far as the built form characteristics.... And then of course the community embraces that uniqueness and wants it legislated. And the planner runs with it and ends up with a document that makes it unique... but that's where I think the planner allows too much leeway, too much free will. And it's not even will, it's just design consideration by the community. Where it's not really relevant when you look at the entire community as a whole. (HRM13m)

Considering community members with too much power to be a problem may suggest planning professionals prefer leaders who are officially recognized within their organizational structure or it may simply show they prefer informed leaders.

Groups

Respondents perceived groups as central to coordination. Groups could include advisory committees, steering committees, or working groups and any of these group types could have been considered a “leader” or a “method” depending on how the respondent discussed the group. I coded groups as leaders when respondents discussed them as leading certain projects while coding discussions of individual leaders instigating the formation of groups to help coordinate as a method. Interdepartmental groups are a means for staff who may not otherwise interact to communicate and ensure that everyone who needs to be involved in a project is informed and consulted. The groups themselves are often responsible to lead the coordination of certain projects. Groups operated at all levels for many purposes, although they were all ultimately working at coordinating among actors whose departments, divisions, professions, government levels, or municipalities usually separated them.

The three study regions used groups to coordinate but they were most common in Edmonton and Vancouver. City of Edmonton respondents frequently mentioned the Transforming Edmonton Committee as a formal coordination leader. One of the city's branch managers explained the group:

And it's populated by branch managers. All of the Ways plans are represented by a branch manager... And we sit on this committee with a couple of other branch managers because some folks felt that their line of work, their business line wasn't really...they didn't know where they fit in. Anyway, we rounded it out. And our principal task lately has been making sure that the outcomes that we're working to identify in those plans then with targets and measures are all aligned. (EDM09m)

Another Edmonton city planner described higher level staff meeting in groups regularly:

Well, we have dedicated a group of managers to meeting regularly, and then a working group to meet regularly to focus solely on the integration of these plans. So I think that's important. And that's been a success. And it shows that this concept of integrating them is core to what we want to do as a city. (EDM02f)

Groups are used all through the levels of the City of Edmonton:

And those are entirely devoted to the extremely frustrating process of actually trying to coordinate these plans and actually trying to figure out what the city's priorities are with all of these competing interests, etc. And of course this happens at all sorts of different levels. I mean right down to project-based coordinating groups. (Edmonton city planner, EDM11m)

The Vancouver region makes extensive use of committees to coordinate. The regional entity, Metro Vancouver, has many formalized advisory committees:

And so there's a number of those levels of advisory committees. They often have subcommittees. So we'll have a housing subcommittee made up of housing planners around the region. Or a social issues subcommittee. We have an agricultural advisory committee... And then sort of at the highest advisory level, we have what's called RAC [Regional Advisory Committee], which is essentially all of the city managers from around the region kind of at the highest level." (Regional Vancouver planner, VAN03f)

Another regional planner described multiple layers of regional planning advisory committees:

All the planning directors get together once a month. Major roads and transportation advisory committee is more like the municipal transportation folks. Engineering and planning get together once a month. So those are sort of just to keep everybody updated, in the loop, especially with information on regional projects as well as things they are working on that might affect everybody else. (TransLink planner, VAN04m2)

The cities of Surrey and Vancouver have many formal and informal groups. Surrey's groups tend to be made on a project to project basis. In the City of Vancouver, committees of leaders coordinate at the higher levels within the city:

At the City of Vancouver, you have the major projects steering committee and the capital planning committee which are the general managers for the different departments. And they clearly have the big picture and are making sure that things are being balanced and prioritized. (City of Vancouver planner, VAN02m)

The City of Vancouver similarly has many layers of committees, including planners: "...there's the technical committee and then there's management committees. The planning department has a management committee. And then the city manager, you know, would chair more the managers over the whole city, their committee" (VAN02m). The extensive use of groups to lead for coordination suggests non-traditional leadership theories, which disperse power among actors, explain some aspects of leadership; however, evidence that those occupying the highest levels within each administration continue to exert the most influence suggests traditional leadership approaches which privilege leaders continue to accurately describe leadership in each region as well.

The Place of Power: In the Person or the Position?

The actors most often discussed as leaders suggest formal positions are major indicators of whether or not respondents perceived a leader as powerful. As one Edmonton city planner said, "council has suggested it is a high priority – so the planning effort goes on" (EDM05f). Politician and city manager positions hold enough power to enable them to make decisions that are perceived as negative for planning. The Halifax city manager's ability to make changes to the administration even when followers disagreed showed the power he held in his formal position:

So interestingly, during RP+5, there was an opportunity to adjust those numbers [of regional growth distribution targets]... Some more urban and therefore more sustainable split. And it looked good for a while. Then there were some staff changes at the city. Some of the staff leadership was no longer present. The city manager, as I've mentioned, was lukewarm on championing innovation and new big ideas. He liked to keep the waters smooth. So the whole idea of shifting those numbers, those targets, was sort of quietly shelved. And instead, staff began to double down or continue to hold out the original targets, growth targets, as being okay. So that was a significant disappointment. (HRM09m)

The organizational structure gave the city manager's directions power while diminishing the staff's power. The Surrey city manager was able to assign leaders to tasks that

inappropriately matched their experience and skills, demonstrating his power in how his decisions had tangible outcomes without followers' support.

The power or influence of planners is less obvious than that of higher level leadership because their actions have less immediate and obvious outcomes. Evidence of the less immediate or guaranteed results of planners' actions are seen in how respondents frequently used cautiously optimistic language like "trying" and "hope" when speaking about planners' efforts to coordinate. A Surrey planner (VAN07m) said, "I hopefully know what's going on" when talking about his strategy to constantly collaborate with his colleagues. An Edmonton city planner illuminated the power difference between council and planners and used cautiously optimistic language:

Yeah, it kind of comes down to those moments, like council has to have the leadership to say, you know, I recognize how you're feeling but this is the direction we're going in. So we **hope**... We make our recommendation to council but we **hope** they are going to, you know, stick with our city policy. [emphasis added] (EDM06f)

Until now the findings demonstrate that organizational context primarily empowers or disempowers leaders of coordination. Did respondents perceive leaders' styles or personal traits to have any effect on how leaders coordinate? Yes. A successful coordination story about the Regional Transportation Plan in Metro Vancouver came down to leaders having the "right" personal attributes:

But it was like the right person came into the right role in both, at the regional level and at the provincial level, and they just had a conversation. The right transportation minister was appointed at the time or elected... And they were able to make it happen. But had it been different people, it might not have happened. (TransLink planner, VAN04m2)

Successful coordination was due to leaders having the right traits; however, they still had to be in "the right role". They each held high level positions (e.g., provincial minister of transportation) indicating their place in the administrative context was still a key factor. A planner from Halifax discussed how new leaders "bring their own passions" (HRM09m) to the administration. Respondents discussed leaders' styles or traits when comparing individuals who occupied the same position in the administration. For instance, a developer in the City of Vancouver compared the impact of different planning director's leadership styles on the administration. Their personal traits affected coordination but

they still occupied a higher position that enabled their particular approaches to leadership to impact the administration.

The findings suggest that personal attributes alone do not give actors much power to effect good or bad coordination or affect general planning but, once they occupy a high level position, their personal attributes have major impacts. Respondents saw certain leadership qualities or actions as particularly important. “Strong” described good leaders numerous times, although what respondents specifically meant by the term is unclear. Respondents saw setting and sticking with priorities to be a positive leadership approach, as shown in recurring discussions of “objectives”, being “consistent”, and deciding what should be “prioritized”. It was very important to respondents that leaders have “where they want to go”, “the bigger picture”, or the “vision” in mind. Awareness of all plans and all departments’ work was important. Being able to persuade council was seen as another positive trait, seen in the Halifax mayor and the City of Vancouver planning director. Having “expertise”, “experience”, and “knowledge” were additional positive traits. The importance of having good high level leadership is again clear. Negative leadership traits recurred in responses as well, the most significant of which was stifling staff’s ability to be creative and initiate which a planner in Halifax expressed in phrases like “didn’t like people popping up with new big ideas” (HRM09m) or being “lukewarm on championing innovation and new big ideas” (HRM09m).

Respondents rarely discussed the personal traits of staff in lower levels of the administration. One Edmonton city planner said good coordination came down to “the aptitude and the personalities” (EDM14m) of staff at lower levels. The minimal mention of personal traits of staff at lower levels, along with the minimal mention of lower level staff as leaders, suggests that the personal traits of lower level staff have minimal impacts on the respondent’s perceptions about coordination. It also suggests respondents do not consider lower level staff to be leaders and, as a result, do not discuss them as leaders in the interviews. Both findings demonstrate that respondents continue to hold a traditional view of leadership.

Part 2.2: Organizational Context and Leadership

Organizational context warrants closer examination in light of the evidence of its impact on respondents' perceptions about leaders. Respondents perceived the direction of influence between leaders and the organizational context to flow both ways: context affected leaders but leaders sometimes also affected context. I divide organizational context into three categories: regional, administrative, and cultural. The direction of influence between the context and leadership varies in each category, as summarized in Figure 10. Context affects leadership in more ways than leadership affects context and there are no categories where leadership only affects context, suggesting that context has more implications for power in public administrations than leaders do for the context. Respondents perceived that the regional and administrative contexts can alter the cultural context, also shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10: Perceived direction of influence by organizational context category

Organizational Structure Categories	Direction of influence (C=Context; L=Leadership)
Regional Context	
Regional Organization	C -> L
Administrative Context	
Size	C -> L
Policy	C <-> L
Administrative Level	C -> L
Staff Changes	C <-> L
Cultural Context	
Corporate Culture	C <-> L
Perceptions	C <-> L

Regional Context

Halifax, Edmonton, and Vancouver are distinct and similar in several ways that may influence respondents' perceptions about leadership. Figure 11 shows the relationship between the regional organization of each place, the leadership approach of high level leaders (particularly the city manager), and the respondents' general perceptions of their own power.

Figure 11: Regional context's relationship with leadership approach and respondent perceptions

	Halifax	Edmonton & Vancouver
Regional Organization	Single Regional Municipality	Multiple Municipalities in Region
Leadership approach	Maintain hierarchy, distinctions between roles, and separations between departments	Interdepartmental and inter-municipal cooperation, open communication, and collaboration
Respondent perceptions	Disempowered; segregated	Empowered; cooperative

Figure 11 shows possible relationships, not chains of cause and effect, although regional organization may have some effect on leadership approaches and respondents' perceptions of power and coordination.

Halifax respondents expressed more sentiments of disempowerment than those from the other two regions, shown in statements like “lowly planner” or “staff don’t initiate”. Respondents said the city manager enforced the differences between roles in the Halifax administration, including enforcing planners’ role as supporters rather than initiators. Respondents’ showed the controlling approach affected perceptions of their own power in phrases like “creativity was stifled” and “why try to innovate, it’s only going to get smacked down” (HRM09m). Being the administrative leader of a single regional municipality may have enabled the Halifax city manager to be controlling which may have contributed to the respondents feeling limited in their capacity to initiate. Council may have directed the city manager to strictly define and enforce staff roles yet the interview respondents spoke mainly of the city manager or the institutional history, not council, as the origin of the inflexible structure. The Halifax mayor, on the other hand, was seen as a strong planning advocate. Concentrating power at the top of a single regional hierarchy in Halifax may enable high level leaders’ personal approaches to have significant impacts, positive or negative, on the administration.

Edmonton and Vancouver operate in regions with multiple municipalities that require leaders at the regional and municipal levels to be more collaborative than those in Halifax. Most respondents worked at the municipal level and expressed the view that their departments were fairly good at collaborating within and among departments. City managers were collaborative as well. City managers in Metro Vancouver sit on the Regional Advisory Committee. Respondents saw the Edmonton city manager as a

champion of collaboration. The need to collaborate at a regional level may have influenced the city managers and other administrative leaders' approaches to running their administrations, which trickled down to make the departments more collaborative.

Administrative Context

The aspect of organizational context most frequently discussed in connection to coordination and leadership is the administrative context. Administrative context includes size, policies, administrative levels, and staff changes.

Planners interviewed in all three case study regions said smaller bureaucracies make coordination easier. A provincial planner from Nova Scotia said it is easy to coordinate in the provincial planning department because the staff is so small. Smaller bureaucracies make communication within and between departments easier. It allows staff to be more aware of other projects or plans because they work on a wider variety of projects. A planner from Surrey explained, "Surrey is tight enough that we all kind of know what we're working on" (VAN07m). Smaller bureaucracies do not need to appoint as many coordination leaders because they have less coordination problems.

Interdepartmental and even intra-departmental communication is a serious challenge in larger administrations, leading to a need for more coordination leaders. A municipal planner from Halifax described the challenges of their previous experience working as a planner in the City of Toronto's giant administration:

It was just very hierarchical... And in an organization, just having those open lines of communication is a real challenge when there's like 50,000... The City of Toronto, it's a big employer. It would be really challenging even within Planning. So Planning had... Their structure was fairly similar where they had sort of Applications side and it was broken up by district. So there was North York, kind of Toronto proper, Scarborough and Etobicoke. And then there was also the Policy people and the Official Plan team, and Research Department. Even within those, everybody was housed in different buildings and different parts of the city. So I think keeping the dialogue even within Planning was kind of a challenge for a lot of people. I think it's really important to have good management. Because that becomes the manager's job... to know what the other departments are doing. (HRM05f)

Having a large administration necessitates more hierarchical organization and more leaders to coordinate among and within departments. The finding supports Calvert's

(1992) idea that leaders derive power from inevitable coordination problems that arise when people operate in social groups, at least in large social groups.

Respondents seemed to prefer more open communication between departments and levels of the hierarchy which suggests they dislike bureaucracies; however, at least one respondent saw bureaucracy as helpful to leaders and coordination:

But the reality is there are reasons for silos. These are complex bureaucracies with a huge amount of technology that we take for granted that requires systems management... And we're human beings so we need clarity and leadership. And leadership tends not to work well if from day-to-day, you never know a) who's in charge, b) what they want, and c) are able to correct direction. If everything has to be taken into account then effectively nothing can be done because you can't take everything into account. (Retired politician, VAN12m)

Attributing coordination challenges to “reality” and being “human beings” naturalizes the challenges leaders address, portraying them as inevitable. The perception aligns with Calvert’s (1992) argument that coordination dilemmas are inevitable in human social groups. Can leadership exist without some hierarchy in bureaucracy? Leadership can still exist without a formalized hierarchy but then leaders tend to emerge based on personal attributes rather than institutional arrangements.

The policies governing a context influence how leaders coordinate plans. Policy empowers planners to enforce good planning in their communities. Good planning includes well-coordinated planning. Policies can become barriers to coordination when they become too specific; some respondents suggest making policy more flexible. A planner in Halifax expressed his perspective on policy and planning: “Policy should never trump a better solution. You should be able to do the right thing and not have some section 44b in a book somewhere prevent you from doing the smart thing, the better outcomes for the community” (HRM09m). He thought leaders should be able to influence policy.

High and low levels of municipal administrations experience coordination differently. Respondents perceive coordination in Edmonton to be good at higher levels of the administration and more challenging at lower levels. An Edmonton city planner explained,

...there has been consistent direction to try and coordinate certainly at the highest levels the overall municipal development plan, we should look at that at the same

time as the transportation plan, for instance. At that level, there does seem to be an effort in political and leadership direction to try and coordinate. When you get down into the lower level, when it's one small project and another small project intersecting with someone else's plan, and you have... It comes down to the aptitude and the personalities of the individuals involved a lot of the time as to how important considering other people's work is taken into regard as they work. So it's a mixed bag at the lower level. (EDM14m)

Respondents often discussed the Ways plans in Edmonton as a case of effective high level coordination; meanwhile, when the city created plans to implement the Ways, coordination of specific actions became more challenging. A Vancouver regional planner identified the same pattern:

I think the regional growth strategy really is unique... this is a vision for growth in the region that has been signed onto by 21 municipalities, adjacent regional districts, TransLink, and our board of directors. And that's no small feat, you know, to really kind of say this is where we want to go in the future of this region... It's kind of a huge success in terms of integrating that many agencies and local governments together in one kind of common vision. It's not always so pretty when we're implementing it. You know, there's definitely challenges that way. (VAN03f)

The professionals we interviewed saw that administrative context not only impacted leaders and coordination but that leaders could affect the administrative context. High level leaders could create a domino effect on leaders at other levels. Respondents from all three cities had examples of multi-level impacts. The Halifax city manager was able to redirect the focus on the administration, which had multi-level repercussions:

And then of course you have successive administrations in the cities who bring, whether they're political or elected or administrative, who bring their own passions and bring their own sense of duty to various topics. In HRM, the current city manager, he's been there for 3 years. And he's seriously focused on fiscal discipline. So there are a lot of new policies built around that. He's seriously focused on streamlining the council approval process and narrowing the aperture of things that go to council for approval. Although good outcomes have come from it, it certainly has distracted them away from fulfilling pre-existing mandates and the promise of previous plans even. (HRM09m)

A city planner from Vancouver gave another example:

It's coordinated right up to the top. You know, even to the city manager's office where, you know, she's aware of and sets a real tone for how these things are structured and what the narrative is through all these plans. And through the general manager of planning and through all the directors and down to the

planning assistants, right. Like I think there's a flow and an understanding of how it all fits together. (VAN06m)

An Edmonton city planner explained how high level leaders impact other decision-makers:

You'll find the city manager is always bringing pieces out about the Ways, the Ways plans... But of course where it matters is whether or not the understanding of the plans, the philosophy of the plans and actually the business end of the plans actually make their way into other groups. For example, we have the people who are deciding what the budget is. And this is why it's very important that we have the corporate support from the city manager's office in terms of directing interest for the Ways plans. (EDM11m)

Staff changes at the highest levels affect the administrative context because of differences in leadership approaches:

Council changes next time, the mayor changes next time, the CAO changes, and it shakes everything up. You know, the CAO in a municipality, the change of a CAO or a change of approach of a CAO... What happens throughout the corporation during those moments... should not be underestimated. (Consultant planner in Halifax, HRM06m)

A developer in Vancouver compared the leadership styles and traits of three individuals who had been the City of Vancouver planning director along with the effects of their approaches on the administration:

...when [Director A] was director of planning, he was bright enough and articulate enough and intelligent enough that the politicians generally listened to him and took his advice. But we have had other planners who weren't as bright or as articulate or intelligent, and they allowed the politicians to basically tell them what they wanted to see happen. And so there is no doubt that it is a reflection of both the quality and respect for the planners and the quality of the politicians, and some of the other administrators... And [Director B], who is a very nice fellow to my mind, is not as strong or forceful as [Director A] was. [Director C], who was there before, was in fact quite strong and forceful but managed to alienate a number of people. And as a result I think there wasn't as much respect for the role of a planner as there might have been. (VAN09m)

The example is a case of leaders affecting the context and the context (staff changes) simultaneously affecting other leaders.

Respondents described some cases of the administrative context affecting the cultural context of an administration. A city planner from Surrey said, "there're certain groups around the city, and it's not a real big staff. And so every one of these plans has

had a good spirit of collaboration” (VAN07m). The Surrey planner held up the development of the sustainability charter as a positive, collaborative interdepartmental planning experience due to the size of the administration that helped the corporate culture. Highly segregated government departments, often referred to as “silos”, cause many cultural coordination problems. According to a planner from Halifax, the municipality’s history of rigid separations between departments and leaders can foster a culture of jealousy which undermines effective coordination and impacts leaders:

But for sure those silos within HRM are difficult too. You know, everyone reports to a director. Every director has their priorities. They need to report success and accomplishment on their basket of objectives. And if an employee from another department is asking this department for information and help, well then that employee is being drawn away from helping that director meeting their objectives. So it’s sort of a jealously guarded, and oftentimes actively discouraged for that reason, horizontal sharing between departments. (HRM09m)

Though respondents saw setting and sticking to priorities as helpful at higher levels of the administration, they did not say the same for lower level priorities, especially when those priorities varied across departments. Having a high level leader who emphasizes the segregation of department roles leads departments to have their own set of priorities, which may result in a culture where staff jealously guard their priorities.

Cultural Context

Respondents perceived cultural context as the aspect of administration a leader has the most potential to change. In response to the interview question about success factors of plan coordination, a planner from Spruce Grove (in Edmonton region) replied, “I think of course having strong leadership so that there’s a feeling of teamwork and moving forward together” (EDM08f). A planner with the City of Vancouver said, “I think one of the main challenges is at the staff level, you know, you have to have respect for the different disciplines and you have to have a team-oriented attitude. And management have to build that team-oriented attitude” (VAN02m). The “culture of leadership” (VAN06m) in Vancouver helps coordination because it empower all staff, including planners whose expertise generally makes them effective coordination leaders, to lead. In Edmonton, planners frequently discussed the cultural shift led by the city manager. He promoted five leadership principles and appointed over 200 cultural ambassadors to bring

the principles to their respective departments. Appointing cultural ambassadors shows a leadership approach that disperses power in a non-traditional leadership approach. Respondents report a positive outcome for coordination from the city manager's initiative.

Changing the culture may sound like a soft intervention but it has tangible impacts on staff. For example, a planner in Halifax said,

But now the staff under the current leadership of that [legal] department is slowly becoming more willing to be less dogmatic about enforcing the exact letter and rather going back to the intent. So these bylaws always have an intent statement, like a preamble, and then there's specifics. So what traditionally has happened in the city is that staff gets mired in the minutia of the policy. Now what's happening is they're finally, thank heavens, in more of an alignment of other cities, are stepping back in their interpretation of the minutia to look at the intent.
(HRM09m)

The department leader reformed how staff interpreted and enforced land use bylaws, allowing them to more accurately implement the original intent. Sticking to the original intent of bylaws may improve coordination if the intent is consistent with the intent of other municipal bylaws but, if the original intents were inconsistent with one another, then it may not help coordination.

Not all leader's effects on corporate culture were positive. A Halifax planner shared how a certain leadership approach disempowered Halifax planners:

And then beyond that, there's also a strange culture of obedience, you know, of meekness in and among the city planning staff by and large. Where does that come from? I guess it comes from 2 things. One is having that innovative urge beaten out of them by a [past] planning director who for many years didn't like people popping up with new big ideas. You know, similar to the CAO is now, I guess you'd say. And so creativity was stifled. And so some of these career planners got used to the idea that why try to innovate, it's only going to get smacked down. So I'm just going to spend my time in my cubicle and grind away.
(HRM09m)

An earlier quote from a Halifax planner referred to a culture of jealousy among the Halifax departments. Leaders in Halifax can help counter the problematic culture:

And traditionally in Halifax, it's been a very guarded... There hasn't been a lot of horizontal trust and sharing. It's been sort of very siloed. That's starting to change. There are a lot of good, smart people working on changing the culture... So that's starting to happen. But for sure those silos within HRM are difficult too.
(HRM09m)

Changes to culture may have negative repercussions that extend to the way planners interact with community members. A planner from Halifax (HRM02m) and a Halifax developer officer (HRM13m) talked about the problems of giving the community too much power to initiate or lead plan development, which resembles the way the city manager in Halifax prevents planners from initiating plan development. It suggests high level leaders can have tangible impacts on leaders all through administrations.

Cultural context has a particular influence on perceptions held by those in an organization. Perceptions about power and roles in an organization have major impacts on leaders. Berger and Luckmann's (1967) theory about the social construction of reality explains why perceptions are so powerful. They theorize that people's perceptions about social reality, such as roles and power within institutions, create social reality. Actors' perceptions are what enable institutions, like municipal governments, to exist; without people's belief in its existence, the government and all of its functions would not exist. How planners understand their own role and power influences how much power they will try to exercise as leaders. If they do not think they have the power to lead then they will not try. When the organization enforces planners' role as supporters and assistants to council, rather than as community leaders, respondents expressed feelings of disempowerment and resignation to remain in a follower role:

It's the role of council only to have that initiative in its relationship with the public. We're here to support them, we're not here to drive or give direction to the organization... staff don't initiate any recommendations out of the blue anymore. That's what regional council... The CAO sees the role of regional council being that sort of, you know, seeing what the values in the community are and bring forward that. And staff are there to implement that and not be the drivers of that. (Halifax municipal planner, HRM14m)

The above example demonstrates the impact the city manager in Halifax was able to have on planners' perceptions of their own ability to lead in the administration. Another perceived source of disempowered perceptions was planning schools:

But the other place it comes from is that some planning school, and this one [Dalhousie] is not immune to it, teach their students that planners shouldn't lead, shouldn't make decisions but rather are only providing information to help others make decisions. And that is deadly for innovation. I get so frustrated by that. (Planner in Halifax, HRM09m)

Respondents saw planners as well-equipped to lead land use planning coordination because land use planning is their area of expertise. The outcome of planners believing that they should not lead could be a shortage of leaders who are well-equipped to coordinate land use planning.

Perceptions impact coordination in other ways as well. If coordination is perceived as unimportant compared to other priorities, coordination activities may be seen as an illegitimate use of staff time and, therefore, staff may spend less time coordinating. An Edmonton planner implied city council saw coordination in this way:

...this is really kind of now at a stage where what are we doing? We're like spending our professional planning time thinking about how our plans can be coordinated with each other... every time we take a planner off a plan, in terms of implementing it, and have them involved in conversations about coordinating, there's that opportunity cost if their time is missing. So yeah, we would be hard-pressed, for example, to go to council and ask for new positions or something to just monitor our plans. So essentially what that means is that people have to do it off the side of their desk or as one of their projects, and it's not anybody's top priority. (EDM02f)

The perception is a challenge to coordination because administrations will not appoint a coordination leader, which respondents identified as an important coordination success factor. Two TransLink planners expressed that coordination is as a legitimate use of staff time at the regional level in Vancouver because it is key to their successful operation:

VAN04m2: Yes, there's a lot of effort and time spent on coordination.

VAN04m1: Yes. It probably adds 50% at least to the sort of timelines and advising, getting feedback. It's essential but...

VAN04m2: Yes, it actually is interesting if you start to quantify those costs, the costs and the benefits. And this is where you might get into the sort of should all the 21 plus municipalities in the region just amalgamate into one or into a few smaller ones? Or is it totally, is this more developed approach better?

The response demonstrates that one aspect of context (regional, specifically having multiple municipalities in a region) can affect another aspect of context (culture, specifically perceptions) which then influences how leadership becomes involved in coordination.

Are there regional differences in how planners perceive their own power? Some planners perceived themselves as quite powerful. For example, one planner from Edmonton said that they gave power to council to lead planning by making the Ways

plans so that council could choose priorities among the plans' targets. Edmonton and Vancouver respondents may consider themselves more powerful, playing more of a leadership role than Halifax respondents because of the differences in corporate cultures. Edmonton and Vancouver both have cultures (Vancouver) or principles (Edmonton) of leadership that empower staff, including planners, to act creatively and collaboratively. Halifax respondents tended to speak as though they had less power to influence their cities because of the culture of meekness and rigid structures. One planner in Halifax stood out because they intentionally refused to accept that planners must play an assistant role and resolutely asserted that planners should be leaders regardless of their contexts.

Actors' perceptions in public administration perpetuate the power of formalized leadership structures. A Halifax development officer more enthusiastically recommended speaking with someone in a formal position of leadership for coordination than with an informal leader:

[SC], would be a perfect person to speak to. She's in this office. [SC] was the coordinator for the review of the regional plan that's just gone through. Now, there's somebody who's involved in all the plans and bringing all the plans to make sure that the regional plan is consistent with the local interest in the community plans. So she's an excellent resource. And these are the kind of questions that she would, I would hope, be able to just eat up and give you lots of good feedback on. **Privately**, there's probably people like [AF]. He's always a good one. He's very experienced, very knowledgeable. [emphasis added] (HRM13m)

The addition of the word "privately" demonstrates that the respondent did not feel as comfortable recommending an informal leader, someone who was a leader because of personal traits and not because of their place in the organization, as he did recommending a leader who was formally recognized in the organization, showing the strength of the notion that formal positions legitimize leadership and the power the organizational structure holds in the respondent's mind. Several other respondents perceived challenges to working outside of the formal system. For example, in Surrey coordination is often more informal than formal and viewed as varyingly successful by respondents.

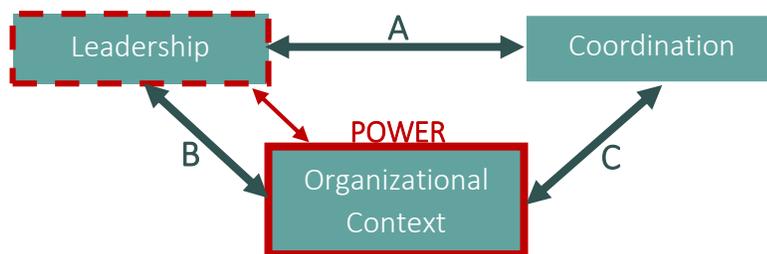
Part 3: Implications

Implications for Theory: The Place of Power

In the Leaders or the Context?

I set out to explore how planners perceive the connection between organizational context and leadership with the implications for coordination, using power as an investigative lens. The findings contribute to the knowledge gap identified by Vogel and Masal (2014) by studying public leadership as a complex phenomenon that involves interactions between leaders and their context. The findings suggest that power to do good coordination in planning comes from the organizational context rather than from leaders themselves, as depicted in Figure 12. Even when respondents perceived leaders as able to influence context, the leaders they saw as most able to make an impact occupied high level positions, showing it was still the organizational context giving those leaders the power. Respondents brought up leaders' approaches or personal traits when discussing individuals who occupied high level positions, especially city managers. The findings show that respondents see leadership as both formal and informal, yet the respondents perceive leaders in formal positions as more powerful. Forester (1989) argued organizations reproduce social and political relationships, which the findings about the influence of organizations in assigning leaders power support.

*Figure 12: The place of **power***



Where does the power of the organizational context come from? Hrelja (2015) found that steering cultures, similar to my concept of organizational context, were not the

most important factors for successful integration; the most important factor was rather how well integration was embedded in institutional norms. The findings support his suggestion that the power of a formal leadership hierarchy comes from how deeply the hierarchy is engrained in an actor's consciousness. Similarly, how people perceive coordination affects how coordination happens in public administration. Respondents showed that they generally recognize leaders who held formal positions of leadership as more capable of influencing coordination. They tended to see community members and developers as problematic planning leaders and hesitated to recommend informal staff leaders. The perceived importance of the leadership hierarchy empowers those occupying upper positions in the hierarchy. Respondents believed that the hierarchy exists, so they act accordingly. The finding supports Foucault's idea that organizations disindividualize power, leading individuals to see institutions as holding the power rather than individuals.

Although the organizational context plays a major role in distributing power to leaders, it only has power to distribute because actors in the administration perceive the organization, including its power hierarchies, as meaningful and act accordingly (notice the two way direction of the red arrow in Figure 12). Respondents socially construct leadership and power by agreeing to participate and, as a result, perpetuate the system. The system (or organizational context) is socially constructed as well. Formal leaders would no longer have power if everyone in each administration stopped believing the power hierarchy was important because they would act as though the power relations did not exist and, since the power relations are socially constructed, they would cease to exist. Ultimately, the power in the relationship between leadership and organizational context comes from actors' perceptions about power and leadership, which makes followers and leaders' perceptions the source of power, rather than the organization. The dotted red line outlining Leadership in Figure 12 demonstrates that the leaders, including the respondents, actually hold power to influence the organizational context and their own situations in the power hierarchy but that power remains largely unrecognized.

Though the organizational context is constructed through social interactions and agreements in the same way as leadership and power, the context still affects how respondents socially construct leadership and power. Specifically, the context affects respondents' perceptions of self. Respondents from Vancouver and Edmonton tended to

perceive themselves as more powerful because their context often allowed planners' initiatives and projects to have an influence and their advice was often valued by higher level leadership. Halifax respondents perceived themselves as less powerful because they worked in a context that not only discouraged but prevented planners from proposing new initiatives. The findings support Gordon's (2014) suggestion that institutional memory, held in the consciousness of actors, influences how leadership and power operate in organizations. Forester (1989) described how organizations can affect individuals:

Citizens are profoundly affected, therefore, not only by what gets *produced* by public and private organizations, but also by how these organizations *reproduce* social and political relations of knowledge and ignorance, consent and deference, trust and dependency, and attention and confusion... Instead of finding community members with thriving, cooperative community organizations, planners may find them isolated from and distrustful of one another, yet trusting in the good intentions of established power and thus all the more dependent on them. (pp. 77-78)

Although he was describing an organization's influence on community members, Forester's observation may also describe the influence on planning professionals. Halifax respondents mentioned a culture of jealousy among departments, which may have been a result of working in an organization that enforced departmental and role separations. Conversely, Edmonton respondents shared numerous examples of interdepartmental working groups and improvements to the collaborative culture across the city's administration because of the promotion of the "one city" principle.

Leaders' personal traits or leadership approaches were not the main factor that led respondents to view them as powerful but they were the main determinant of whether or not respondents valued certain leaders. Respondents spoke positively about leaders who championed planning ideas and especially those who supported initiatives undertaken by the respondents. The Vancouver city council and the Halifax mayor were two such examples. One of the main ways leaders supported planning was through their steadfast support of planning policy. Respondents viewed leaders who developers and other interest groups persuaded to ignore or compromise policy more negatively. When council or other leaders choose to ignore policy, they remove one of the few avenues through which planners exercise power. The respondents, like most people, reacted negatively to being deprived of power.

Concentrated or Dispersed?

Are respondents' perceptions more consistent with traditional or non-traditional leadership theories? Traditional leadership theories implicitly concentrate power with the leaders while non-traditional theories disperse power among actors, so the type of theory to which responses are most connected offers clues as to how respondents perceive power (Gordon, 2002; 2014). The findings about the source of power, followers, groups, and administrative structures require a combination of traditional and non-traditional theories to explain practice. The finding that respondents see organizational structure as the source of power for leaders supports contingency leadership theories where leadership depends on the situation rather than the leader. Gordon (2014) categorized contingency theories as traditional because they still privilege the leader rather than the followers with power.

Respondents do not often clearly state the role of the follower, suggesting that followers play a small role in respondents' perceptions of leadership; traditional leadership theories more accurately explain this aspect of respondents' perceptions about leadership and power. The finding that respondents, whether consciously or unconsciously, recognize formal leaders as more significant and powerful than informal leaders continues to align with traditional theories.

Each region's municipalities operate within a similar organization: council and the mayor sit at the top of the hierarchy, followed by a city manager and then the rest of the departments. Decision-making power is concentrated with council, a group ultimately empowered or disempowered by the community's vote. We may draw a parallel between the place of power in organizational context and in the administrative structure: in the first case, power comes mainly from the organizational context; meanwhile, the actors in the context were the ones who ultimately gave the organization power but mostly failed to recognize their own power to make or break the system. In the second case, council gets power from their position in the administrative hierarchy which the community and administration ultimately enable; however, the community and staff often fail to recognize their power to perpetuate or change the system. The power of the masses goes unrecognized in both cases.

Non-traditional (dispersed) leadership theories explain the ubiquity of interdepartmental or interdisciplinary groups in each study area. For instance, Metro

Vancouver made extensive use of advisory committees going from the highest level with the Regional Advisory Committee composed of city managers to advisory committees within municipalities and subcommittees within those committees; however, the committees still sat in a clear hierarchical order. The finding supports Gordon's (2002) argument that when dispersed theories, such as team-based leadership, are put into practice, power is not always truly dispersed among followers but the team or group is instead another method through which leaders exercise power. Edmonton is similar to Vancouver. Councils in each region arguably hold the greatest power to make decisions, yet they are a group of individuals sharing power, making them a case of concentrated yet dispersed power (traditional and non-traditional leadership).

Traditional and non-traditional theories apply differently within the levels of the planning administrations. Single leaders remain important in higher positions (e.g., city manager, director, branch manager), which is consistent with a traditional distribution of power; however, dispersed leadership theories are consistent with how the city managers, directors, and branch managers take part in meetings or committees. Dispersed leadership theories begin to dominate traditional theories at the lower, project levels of administrations because working groups or advisory committees seemed to be the norm for projects. The jumble of concentrated and dispersed power shows, as research often does, that practice refuses to be as simple as theory.

Implications for Practice

Perceptions about leadership, organizations, coordination, and power have implications for how administrations function. Municipalities should carefully consider the impact organizational structures, like department organization and corporate culture, have on staff, particularly on staff's ability to innovate. The analysis showed that planning professionals considered themselves well-equipped to lead land use planning coordination, yet administrative processes and structures sometimes prevented them from exercising the ability. In order to have good plan coordination, planners may need a greater leadership role in public agencies.

Although not the main way leaders exercise power, the personal attributes and leadership approaches of the highest level leaders had major impacts on other leaders in the administrations and on the administrations themselves. The implication is that municipalities must take extra care in whom they hire and how they direct their high level leaders, particularly city managers or chief administrative officers. The city manager has a lot of power to make or break good coordination of land use planning. Municipal council has the power to lead coordination as well but, since the community elects them to represent specific areas, public administrations may not want to rely on councillors to be the main leaders of plan coordination.

Avenues of Future Research

The research connects to several avenues of future research. Future research could compare and contrast perceptions of power based on different planner roles and consider the implications for the distribution of power in organizational contexts. Studying the connection between organizational context and coordination would be another valuable contribution. Geerlings and Stead (2003) said the connection has received minimal attention and gave a helpful starting point by reviewing literature on policy integration. Kaufmann and Sager (2006) also studied the connection with its impact on transport and land use coordination. Finally, researchers could investigate strategies and challenges specific to coordinating plan implementation. Respondents saw coordination as more challenging at the detailed, implementation level of planning than at the higher, strategic planning level.

Coordinating planning efforts is necessary to help communities efficiently provide for today while proactively building for tomorrow. Leaders and the contexts in which they work impact good coordination and communities' abilities to do good planning. Although there is much more to learn, we have gained some understanding of how leaders and contexts can help or hinder coordination and planning.

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Appendix: Using the Analysis Framework

The visual conceptualization of my definition of leadership became an analytical framework for interpretive discourse analysis of the interviews. Figure A1 shows which codes are associated with which parts of the analysis framework.

Figure A1: Codes associated with analytical framework

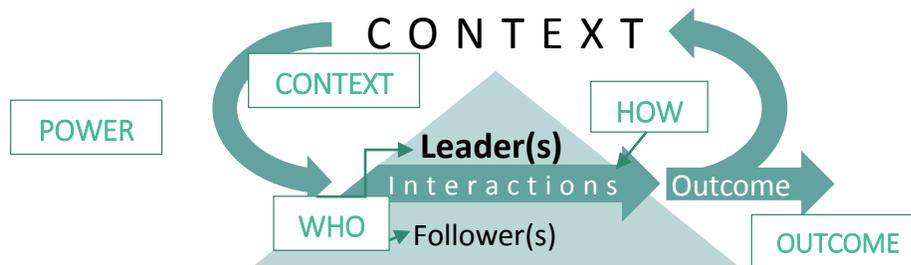


Figure A2 is an example of how the codes and analysis framework were applied to the interviews. The codes appear on the left side of Figure A2 (i.e. context, who, how). The coded aspects of the interview were then written into their corresponding places within the analysis framework diagram, sketched on the right side of the figure.

Figure A2: Example of discourse analysis on an interview with a Halifax municipal planner

The analysis framework was useful in several ways. It made it easy to see the parts of the diagram to which respondents least often referred. The diagram made it clear that followers were not an important part of the respondents' perceptions of leadership. It also offered a fairly simple image to use for comparative analysis. I could determine who respondents most often discussed as a leader by looking at who generally occupied the space at the top of the hierarchy (i.e., the top space in the triangle in Figure A2). The straightforward comparative analysis facilitated category creation, a key step in discourse analysis. By comparing only the items written in the context portion of the diagram, I could easily see emerging patterns in the ways respondents spoke about context which helped create categories. Being simple was helpful for the qualitative study because it made the diagram quite flexible, which allowed it to capture diverse themes and nuances in the interviews. The tool's simplicity, however, is also its weakness. Reality is more complicated than the diagram indicates. In its current form, the diagram is not particularly useful for predicting the outcomes of certain contexts on leaders; creating such a diagram would require further analysis.