

Innovative Differences among Canadian Federal and Provincial Governments

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Abstract

The 1970s were an innovative period in some Canadian governments, especially in the province of Saskatchewan for policy and program innovations. It had a social democratic government. Federal and provincial governments in Canada were and are not equally innovative. Federal governments led in administrative innovations, while provincial governments led in program and policy innovations. Constitutionally, provinces and territories are responsible for most program delivery. Sometimes the federal government supported provincial governments with program funding but it tended to do so only after one or more provincial governments had introduced the innovations and following extensive lobbying by the province. The federal government thus tended to be an early adopter of innovations rather than an innovator (first), except for administrative innovations. Small governments were the most innovative in substantive policies and programs.

Introduction

Although public sector innovation has been studied to some extent over the last years, it has not been a common subject of scholarly study in Canada, even though specific innovations have sometimes been examined. Nonetheless, relevant work has been produced on the subject. The Canadian scholars most consistently interested in public innovation have been Luc Bernier, Sandford Borins, James Iain Gow and myself.

Innovation is the conception, early adoption and implementation of significant new services, ideas or ways of doing things as government policy in order to improve or reform services, ideas and ways of doing things (Glor, 1997).

Bernier, Hafsi and Deschamps (2015) and Deschamps and Bernier (ND) studied Canadian federal, provincial and territorial innovations nominations for the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) Award for Innovative Management, launched in 1990.

Sandford Borins (1998, 2008, 2014) examined American federal, state and municipal innovations nominated for Harvard University Ford Innovation Awards. Ford also funded international innovation awards in Brazil (Simões and Goulart, 2006; Farah and Spink, 2008), the Philippines, Chile, China, East Africa, Mexico, Peru, South Africa, and Native American innovations (Spink and Brigagão, 2004; Farah and Spink, 2008).

My primary interests have been Saskatchewan innovations of the 1970s and early 1980s. I have developed a database of these 185 innovations and demography of innovations, comparing their survival rates to those of normal programs and administration. Bernier, Gow and I have developed innovation theory (Glor, 1997, 2002, 2023). While I have studied many Canadian government innovations, my particular interests have been Saskatchewan innovations (1997, 2000, 2021b, 2002, 2021b) introduced 1971-82 and Canadian government innovations (2015). *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal* has published 21 case studies of Canadian public innovations. I (1998a, b) and Deschamps and Bernier (ND) studied Canadian innovations nominated for IPAC Innovation Awards.

In 1994 James Iain Gow published *Learning from Others*, describing fifteen administrative innovations introduced since 1960 by Canadian federal and provincial governments. An emeritus professor of the University of Montreal, Gow was an editor of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) Monographs on Canadian Public Administration series. His book was jointly published by IPAC and the Canadian Centre for Management Development (CCMD), the federal government's then-management school for senior public servants. In 2014 Gow inquired into the state of public sector innovation (PSI) theory by addressing the work of four authors, Everett M. Rogers, Sandford Borins, Robert D. Behn and Eleanor D. Glor.

While research on innovation has found that size, complexity, communications and openness favour innovation and centralization and formalism hinder it (Gow, 1994: 4), Gow found that federal public servants typically looked to senior managers and central agencies to initiate administrative innovations (Gow, 1994: xvi). Despite this seeming contradiction, Gow concluded that the federal government was the level of government and the specific government most likely to introduce administrative innovations (Gow, 1994: 75), and that size and wealth of governments were good predictors of administrative innovations (Gow, 1994: 125). He further concluded that if the federal government was not an early adopter (among the first governments to introduce the innovation), then it was not likely to introduce an administrative innovation at all (Gow, 1994: 80).

In 2014 Gow revisited the question of innovativeness and compared the work of four Canadian and American innovation scholars. His sample allowed identification of areas of consensus and of controversy in the field. He found important disagreements remained around defining parameters of PSI study and about the basic questions PSI studies should address.

Gow produced a useful text on administrative innovations but he did not address the area of program and policy innovations, that have been well studied as individual policies but have not been well studied as a phenomenon. Colleagues and I edited two books on innovation in the Government of Saskatchewan (GoS) during the 1970s and early 1980s, and have also reviewed earlier innovations of the Saskatchewan government. *Policy Innovation in the Saskatchewan Public Sector, 1971-82* (Glor, 1997) concluding that the Saskatchewan government over time and during the 1970s was highly innovative in programs and policies. It was also but not equally innovative in administration (Glor, 2002). Gow did not identify

an administrative innovation that the GoS adopted first in his list, although I identified fifteen (Glor, 2002). Boyd and Olive (2021) edited a book about six innovations they called *Provincial Policy Laboratories*, provincial innovations that disseminated.¹

The work of Bernier, Borins, Gow and Glor leave an unanswered question: Which Canadian governments—provincial/territorial or federal—have been the most innovative, especially in policy and programs?

There is no Canadian data base with which to answer this question. The only Canadian public innovation databases are the self-identified GoS 1971-82 innovation database (Glor, 2023) and the self-identified IPAC Innovation Award nominees. This study compares the provinces responsible for the 185 Saskatchewan innovations, the 1685 IPAC innovation award nominations and some other innovations.

In the domain of program and policy innovations, social democratic Saskatchewan governments have been both leaders over time and have played a key role in encouraging the federal government to co-fund its innovations. For example, both hospital insurance, which came into effect in Saskatchewan in 1946, Canada-wide in 1961, and medical insurance, introduced in Saskatchewan in 1962 and Canada-wide in 1968, were innovations first introduced in Saskatchewan and later implemented across the country through the mechanism of federal 50/50 cost-sharing. In the 1970s, Saskatchewan introduced the first provincial day care program, universal drug program, children's dental program and family income support program (FIP) for the working poor with children in 1974 (the next one was the 1992 federal Child Tax Benefit, following the abolition of the universal family allowance made available to all children) (Glor, 2023). The FIP program was abolished in 1986, and replaced by the next NDP government in 1998, with federal support.

Saskatchewan played this key role for both political and administrative reasons. The social democratic Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) was in power in Saskatchewan when hospital and medical insurance were introduced. The social democratic New Democratic Party (NDP) was in power in Saskatchewan when its child subsidy was introduced in 1998. During subsequent federal elections the federal NDP ran on these issues. The federal Liberals eventually adopted them as minority governments supported by the CCF and NDP. This pattern recently repeated itself when the federal Liberals in minority had a formal agreement with the NDP to introduce a national day care program, school food program, pharmacare program (initially funding medications for two health issues), and a national child dental care program. All except the school meal program were first introduced by the Saskatchewan NDP government of the early 1970s.

Interestingly, there was also an administrative link to introduction of these programs. While Saskatchewan had CCF/NDP governments for many years after 1944, when the CCF was first elected, Saskatchewan politics have been both volatile and polarized. The CCF government was one of the first provincial governments to introduce the concept of the neutrality of the

¹ It was interesting to see Boyd and Olive and their colleagues try to trace the dissemination of these six innovations. We tried to do the same for the first three adoptions of 185 innovations.

public service, and of a permanent public service. The alternating provincial Liberal and Conservative governments in Saskatchewan fired large numbers of senior civil servants in both 1964-5 and 1982-3, when they defeated the CCF/NDP. Only a few senior officials were released by CCF and NDP governments. Because the CCF/NDP governments had actively recruited and been able to attract very capable public servants, they were in demand by the Liberal governments then in power in Ottawa. Substantial numbers of them were consequently hired by the Government of Canada (GoC).² Of course, these public servants brought Saskatchewan ideas about innovation with them. Consequently, Saskatchewan public servants such as Al Johnson³ who had been involved with introducing Medicare in Saskatchewan, was also involved with introducing it nation-wide.

Saskatchewan also introduced many more innovations during the 1970s. Colleagues and I identified 170 policy and program innovations and 15 administrative innovations introduced during those years, a total of 185 innovations (Glor, 2023, Database). They included, for example, Canada's first holding company to hold the equity of all Crown corporations; a compulsory environmental assessment policy; a profit-sensitive royalty system; a new basis (income replacement) for workers' compensation; equal pay for similar work for women; a unified family court; requirements for all day cares to be run by parent boards of directors; a province-wide library system; a community college system without permanent facilities or staff; crop insurance; and university- and college-level educational programs specifically for aboriginal people. Some of the programs subsequently adopted by federal and provincial governments included compulsory environmental assessment of development projects; crop insurance, that was negotiated as a federal-provincial program and introduced nation-wide; environmental protection for air; the 40-hour work week; paternity leave; a human rights code; and government support for public consultation and participation (Glor, 1997). Some of the management/administrative innovations included a comprehensive innovation program (the 1971 NDP platform included over 100 commitments, that were tracked), Canada's first sovereign wealth fund⁴; establishing a provincial Crown corporation to manage computer facilities for the government, Crown corporations, and universities; and Canada's first currency swap (derivative) transactions by government or private sector, and among the first by anyone in any market.

Although many of these programs were adopted by other provinces, they were less likely to be accepted by the conservative federal government, for several reasons. First, the turn to the right world-wide in the early 1980s, including in Canada, saw the federal Liberals replaced by the Progressive Conservatives in 1984. The Progressive Conservatives of the 1980s were not as interested in left-wing innovations (they were hostile toward them) as the Liberals had been during the 1960s and 1970s. Second, Canada's financial situation had changed, and far fewer new programs were being introduced. Third, the NDP was weak at the federal level and unable to successfully promote left-wing solutions. Fourth, the GoS was in the process of abolishing

2 For example, in 1964-5, Al Johnson, Tommy Shoyama, Tommy McLeod, Donald Tansley and Arthur Wakabyashi; and others who then went on to academic careers, like Meyer Brownstone.

3 Al Johnston had been Deputy Minister of Finance and Secretary of the Treasury Board in Saskatchewan. He held several senior positions within the Government of Canada, including Secretary to the Treasury Board, Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare, and President of the Canadian Broadcasting Network.

4 First: Saskatchewan Energy and Resource Fund; second: Alberta Heritage Fund, 1976; third: Saskatchewan Heritage Fund, May 1978.

many of those same programs and policies, unlike the previous, also right-wing Liberal Government elected in 1962, which left most of the CCF's innovations in place. Last, the Conservative Premier of Saskatchewan was personally close to the Conservative Prime Minister during the 1980s and would have resisted implementation of Saskatchewan NDP innovations at the federal level. Politics and ideology played an important role in adoption and dissemination of innovations.

While it is clear CCF and NDP governments in Saskatchewan were policy and program innovators, other provinces also introduced policy and program innovations. As shown in Table 4, they did not adopt the GoS innovations as commonly as the GoS did. For example, Canada and Manitoba were the first Canadian governments to introduce a single agency to serve their northern, underdeveloped areas. Manitoba was the first province to introduce a comprehensive home care program for the elderly and disabled. Alberta was the first to establish a health research fund and second to introduce a sovereign wealth (Heritage) fund to hold and invest additional taxes on windfall profits in the oil and gas industry. Ontario was the first to introduce compulsory seat belt legislation, a human rights code and an arms-length human rights commission (a CCF GoS was the first to introduce a bill of rights, in 1953). In the administrative field, Ontario was the first to appoint a female deputy minister and to adopt a program-based management information system. In these areas Saskatchewan was an early adopter.

This evidence demonstrates active program and policy innovation in the provinces that is not reflected in the IPAC management nominations. While the federal government was not an active policy and program innovator (introducer of new programs), it did pilot test a number of new programs which were not adopted as policy. The federal government during the 1970s, for example, co-funded an important demonstration of a minimum income program, MinCom, jointly with Manitoba that increased social assistance and permitted recipients to retain larger portions of earned income, and maintained the benefits received under welfare, thereby reducing the disincentives to work inherent in the minimal, cost-shared welfare system. During the 1990s the federal government similarly co-funded a pilot project in New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Works Program, that offered an integrated and expanded program of support to welfare recipients attempting to get off social assistance. Under the Liberal Kathleen Wynne government in Ontario, two minimum income demonstration programs were introduced. Supports included education, training, day care for children and work placements. All three programs were successful in getting people off welfare. None of these programs, however, was implemented past the pilot stage: they were more costly than the already-expensive existing programs, were not adopted on a broad basis nor supported further federally, and were abolished immediately provincially by subsequent conservative governments.

Methodology

In 2023 the author published a database of 185 Saskatchewan administrative and policy innovations implemented by its government, 1971-82. The author edited two books on these innovations (Glor, 1997, 2002) and authored other articles and books. The two books involved 25 authors who had personal knowledge, consulted others, and combined our knowledge of policy, program and administrative innovations in which Saskatchewan was either an innovator

(first Canadian government to adopt the innovation) or an early adopter (second or third). This data set of 185 innovations is the basis for the analysis of innovations and early adoptions in this paper. It was not always possible to identify the rank of adoptions of an innovation or adoption. This was true of 12 of the innovations/adoptions. They were nonetheless included in the database.

The Saskatchewan database is Saskatchewan-focused. This means that only innovations adopted by Saskatchewan 1971-82 were included in the database. Other governments that adopted these innovations were included in the database but not innovations and governments that adopted other innovations that Saskatchewan did not. Several other studies of Canadian innovations are summarized in Table 4. These include 46 IPAC medal winners and finalists, 1990-97; 1685 IPAC innovation award applicants, 1990-2018 (these databases only overlap if the applicants won an award or were a finalist); Gow's (1994) study of 17 Canadian administrative innovations; Poel (1976) studied 31 provincial policy innovations; and Boyd and Olive (2021) studied 14 provincial innovations that disseminated, primarily during the 2010s. The table includes an additional 20 Saskatchewan administrative innovations and 233 policy adoptions.

This paper compares the results of the Saskatchewan studies to other Canadian studies of public innovation. The major influence in the data is from the 1685 IPAC innovation award nominees. The data is considered by including and excluding the IPAC study.

The study explores several hypotheses:

- H1:** Other governments were as innovative as Saskatchewan.
- H2:** Saskatchewan was a unique society, with a unique set of problems, and the innovations were addressing that uniqueness almost exclusively.
- H3:** Saskatchewan had more political space in which to innovate because it was a more progressive government than others in Canada at the time.
- H4:** Saskatchewan was a uniquely innovative society. It was this uniqueness, rather than the fact that it was a small province that was the relevant factor here.
- H5:** The Government of Saskatchewan was a successful innovator because it created the resources to fund these innovations and adoptions and was committed to implementing them.
- H6:** The provincial/territorial governments have been more innovative than the federal government.

Results

We identified 185 unique innovations and early adoptions (each case in which a government was identified as having innovated or adopted) (Table 1). Four of the policy innovations could also be considered to be administrative innovations (Table 2). Saskatchewan was the innovator (first to introduce) for eleven of the 15 administrative innovations and 140 of the 170 policy and program innovations. It was an early adopter (second or third), mostly in Canada, for two administrative innovations and 37 policy and program innovations.

We attempted to identify the first three governments to adopt an innovation. Through this process we were able to identify another nine Canadian government innovators and early adopters, the governments of Canada, Ontario, Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia (B.C.), in that order. Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador each introduced two of the innovations/early adoptions. Nova Scotia did not introduce any of them.

Outside the 140 policy and program innovations for which Saskatchewan was first, in 12 cases small provinces were the innovators (Prince Edward Island [both times tied for first with Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Manitoba, Alberta and B.C.], while in nine cases a large province (Ontario) was the innovator, and in five cases Canada, also a large government, was the innovator. A small province adopted the innovation second 44 times (Saskatchewan 33 times, Alberta ten times, Manitoba twice). A large province adopted second seven times (Quebec once, Ontario six times). Canada was second nine times. Saskatchewan adopted third six times, small provinces eight times, large provinces and Canada three times each (Table 1).

Table 1: Canadian Government Innovators, 1971-82, from GoS Database

Govt	Management (Administrative) Innovations					Policy & Program ⁴ Innovations					Total Management, Policy, Program Innovations				
	<i>Ist</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Ist</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Ist</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>DK</i>	<i>Total</i>
Sask.	11	2	-	2	15	140	31	6	8	185	151	33	6	10	200 ⁵
Canada	2	3	-	-	5	3	6	3	-	12	5	9	3	-	17
Ontario						9	6	1	-	16	9	6	1	-	16
Alberta						3	10	1	-	14	3	10	1	-	14
Manitoba						4	2	4	-	10	4	2	1	-	7
B.C.						1	1	1	-	3	1	1	0	-	4
Quebec						0	1	1	-	2	0 ³	1	1	-	2
New Brunswick						0	0	2	-	2	0	0	2	-	2
PEI						2	0	0	-	2	2	0	0	-	2
Nfd & Labrador						1	0	1	-	2	1	0	1	-	2
Nova Scotia						0	0	0	-	0	0	0	0	-	0
Other ²	1				1	4	2	-	-	6	5	2	0	-	7
Total Innovators	14	5	-	2	21	167	59	20	8	254	182	64	19	10	275

¹ Others: Include USA (4 1st, 2 2nd, 0 3rd including Oregon, a county; Japan 1st 1.

² In later years, Quebec's reputation was as an innovator, especially in the health field. Governments scoring first once each included: USA 1, USA state: 1, France: 1, Japan: 1. Governments scoring second, once each, included: USA: 1, USA State of Oregon: 1.

³ Policies and programs are treated together, as is done in the public policy literature.

⁴ The number of innovations and adoptions for Saskatchewan do not add up to 185 because some innovations had two innovators in the same year, each of which was counted.

DK= Don't know

On the face of it, small governments seemed to be the most innovative (Table 3). This was certainly true when Saskatchewan was included. When Saskatchewan was removed from the data base, however, the larger governments seemed to be the most innovative (Table 3), as found in the literature. Small governments excluding Saskatchewan innovated and adopted (third) more than the medium-sized governments.

Table 2: Administrative Innovations that were also Policy/Program Innovations, GoS

Service Coordination:			
One-stop entry into all provincial government (esp. regulatory) requirements for development projects (interdepartmental committee)	Sask		
Organize a single agency to deliver almost all programs in the north	Canada	Man	Sask
Other:			
Non-government employment equity program (for Indian and native people) (Cluff Lake)	Sask		
Create holding company to hold the equity of (almost) all Crown corporations	Sask		

Table 3: Comparison of Number of GoS Innovations and Early Adoptions by Large, Medium-Sized and Small Governments, GoS database

Number of Innovations/ Adoptions Introduced	Large Governments	Medium-Sized Governments	Small Governments
First (innovator)	14	14	160 - Sask. 151= 9
Second (early adopter)	16	16	37 - Sask. 33= 4
Third (early adopter)	5	5	13 - Sask. 6= 7
Total	35	35	210 - Sask. 190=20

The large governments were Canada, Ontario and Quebec. Medium-sized governments were Alberta, and B.C. Small governments were, Newfoundland, PEI, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan was the only small government that was an administrative innovator in this database.

Based on 15 other administrative innovations and an examination of the innovation literature, Gow (1994) concluded that large size and population produce governments which are more likely to create administrative innovations. As the largest government in Canada, the GoC, according to this theory, was the most likely to be administratively innovative. In Gow’s study it introduced six administrative innovations. The Saskatchewan government introduced 15, the same number studied in the Gow study and more than any single government in the Gow study. While the Saskatchewan government in this study introduced more administrative innovations (15) than any of the governments in the Gow study, the numbers were not of the same magnitude as the policy and program innovations (254 innovations and adoptions). In terms of policy and program innovation, a somewhat different story emerges. Although no studies of innovation as a whole in the federal government were found, Poel (1976) studied 25 policy innovations introduced by Canadian provinces from the 1940s to the 1970s and found Saskatchewan, a small province, followed by Ontario, a large province, were the most innovative. Glor (2023 database) identified 185 innovations that were introduced first primarily in Saskatchewan, but some of which were initiated in the rest of Canada or elsewhere from 1971-82 and in Saskatchewan by Saskatchewan second or third (Table 1). This is more innovations than has been identified in one government, large or small, in any other study. My examination indicates that the innovations identified could have been created or adopted by either the federal or a provincial government, since both federal and provincial governments were or have since become active in the domains covered.

Discussion

What were the factors at work in Canadian innovations?

H1: Other governments were as innovative as Saskatchewan.

Table 4 reveals differences in innovativeness among governments in different studies. The studies with the largest numbers of innovations are the IPAC nominations and the Saskatchewan innovations. Importantly, the databases address different time periods.

The Saskatchewan database addresses innovations introduced by the province 1971-82, an 11-year period. The IPAC database addresses nominations 1990-2018, a 28-year period of largely New Public Management (NPM) implementation. The mean implementation of innovations and adoptions per year over 11 years in Saskatchewan was 16.8 per year by one government. The mean implementation of innovations nominated for the IPAC Award per year over 28 years was 60.2 innovations per year by 14 governments, a mean of 4.3 innovations per year among Canadian governments. During the 1990-2018 period, one government implemented a mean that was higher than that of Saskatchewan 1971-82: The mean GoC innovation and adoption nominations was 20.4 innovations per year, slightly higher than the Saskatchewan mean (Table 4). The Ontario government was nominated for a mean of 16.6 per yer, slightly lower than Saskatchewan.

During the 1970s, innovation was not promoted by university programs or governments. Starting in the 1980s it was largely with a focus on implementing NPM. NPM were largely management and administration innovations. Deschamps and Bernier (N/D: 3) described the IPAC nominations as management and administration innovations, as promoted by NPM (Pollitt and Dan, 2011), New Public Governance (NPG) (Halligan, Sarrico, and Rhodes, 2012; Rhodes, 1996), or e-government (Bekkers and Homburg, 2005; Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow and Tinkler, 2006).

Table 4: Comparison Numbers of Federal and Provincial Innovations, Several Studies

Govt	IPAC Medal Winners & Finalists 1990-97 Glor, 1998b	IPAC Mgmt Innovn Award Applications 1990-2018 Deschamps, Bernier, N/D	Gow Admin Gow, 1994	Glor Admin 2023	Poel Provincial Policy Poel 1976	Boyd & Olive 2021	Glor Policy 2023	Total Innovations
Canada	11	570	6	1	0	-	21	39 w/o IPAC, 609 w/
Ontario	12	464	4		5	2	16	39 w/o IPAC, 503 w/
Quebec	4	96	0		2	2	2	10 w/o IPAC, 106 w/
B.C.	12	160	3		4	3	3	25 w/o IPAC, 185 w/
Alberta	4	133	2		2	1	14	23 w/o IPAC, 156 w/
Manitoba	0	55	0		3	0	10	13 w/o IPAC, 68 w/
Saskatchewan	2	72	0	15	10	1	170	198 w/o IPAC, 270 w/
Nova Scotia	0	52	1		4	0	0	5 w/o IPAC, 57 w/
New Brunswick	1	36	1		1	2	2	7 w/o IPAC, 43 w/
Newfoundland & Labrador	0	36	0		0	0	2	2 w/o IPAC, 38 w/
Prince Edward Island (PEI)	0	11	0		0	0	2	2 w/o IPAC, 13w/
Total Innovators	46	1685	17	20	31	44 11	233	358 w/o IPAC applns 2043 w/
Other ²				1		1	6	8
Grand Total	46	1685	17	21	31	45-12	239	366 w/o IPAC applns, 2051w/
Admin innovns				1769				
Policy innovns								

w/o= without, w/= with; *= Deschamps, Bernier, N/D

While only 8% of the 1971-82 innovations were administrative, 100% of the IPAC nominations were. The Saskatchewan government was much more innovative in policy and the IPAC nominations in administrative/management innovations and adoptions. Although the GoC was more innovative, based on its mean innovations, than the GoS, the innovations were of a different kind and the GOC was a much bigger government than the GoS. It thus had a much bigger apparatus to administer.

H2: Saskatchewan was a unique society, with a unique set of problems, and the innovations were addressing that uniqueness almost exclusively.

Each territory and government has its own unique qualities and populations, and Saskatchewan had them as well. It innovated substantially in its programming for Indigenous people, for example. But other provinces, such as Ontario, Manitoba and B.C. also have large Indigenous populations, and did not. Making Indigenous people a priority in Saskatchewan was politically risky, as there is considerable feeling against Indigenous people in Saskatchewan.

While Saskatchewan had a history of innovativeness under CCF governments, it was a poor province with a population largely of immigrants who came from conservative areas in eastern Europe. The values of the CCF were social democratic but also substantially influenced by the Social Gospel Movement, the labour movement and other progressive movements. The

Social Gospel was a Protestant social movement that applied Christian ethics to social issues such as poverty, economic inequality, and alcoholism. The movement's goals included (1) Improving the living conditions of the poor in cities, (2) Applying the Golden Rule to society, and Transforming society by living out Christian morality.

The Social Gospel movement emerged in the United States after the Civil War, when progressive ministers recognized the injustices of capitalism. Some prominent figures in the movement included Walter Rauschenbusch and Tommy Douglas, a Baptist minister who later led the CCF government in Saskatchewan. The Social Gospel was a major force in Canadian religious, social, and political life from the 1890s to the 1930s. The CCF used Christian moral values to defend democratic socialism. Many of the Social Gospel movement's ideals were realized in the 1930s through the rise of organized labor and the USA New Deal legislation of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Saskatchewan was thus a unique society but so were all Canadian provinces, territories and regions. While Saskatchewan's problems were somewhat unique, they were not entirely so. Concern for the poor and applying Christian morality through politics, for example, was not unique to Saskatchewan. The Social Credit governments of Alberta and B.C. spoke of them but did so in the same way as they were economically and socially conservative governments. The GoS under an NDP government was not for the most part.

H3: Saskatchewan had more political space in which to innovate because it was a more progressive government than others in Canada at the time.

While the CCF avowed it was socialist, it did not implement a great deal of socialist policies while in power. It spent small amounts of money purchasing some businesses that were in trouble, such as a boot factory, but this approach was not predominant. It implemented universal hospital and medical insurance, that were of particular benefit to the poor but served everyone. In Europe such programs were implemented by social democratic governments, not socialist governments. The CCF GoS was the first implementer of these programs in Canada.

The 1971-82 NDP GoS focused on economically developing the province. It did so by investing public money in the development of oil and gas, potash, sodium sulphate, uranium, and coal. The private sector had invested little in exploration in Saskatchewan. The difference in the GoS approach was that it insisted on securing some ownership in return for its investments (never half) and established a Crown corporation to coordinate and monitor its role in these industries, the private industry and the economy. Its other left-wing approach was to labour: Worker rights were improved

An analysis of the portion of GoS innovations that were left- and right-wing found 38 of 185 innovations were left-wing (intervened in the economy) (20.5%) and 2 were right-wing (1.1%). Deschamps and Bernier (ND: Table 1) likewise did a political analysis of the IPAC nominations. They found 61 of 1685 applications described as left-wing innovations (3.6%) and 124 right-wing (7.4%). Again, the GoS innovations were largely policy and program innovations, while the IPAC nominations were entirely administrative/management innovations starting 20 years later.

Mandated space to innovate was also a factor of the political support governments enjoyed. The June 23, 1971 GoS vote results were NDP 55.00%, Liberal 42.82%, Progressive Conservative 2.13%. The NDP secured 45 of 60, 75% of the seats. It had strong political support.

The GoS had more political space in which to innovate because it was more progressive than the other Saskatchewan parties and because it had a strong political mandate.

H4: Saskatchewan was a uniquely innovative society. It was this uniqueness that was the relevant factor here.

Other studies have found that large governments are the most innovative, and they have the most resources. Deschamps and Bernier (ND) found this phenomenon in their data on IPAC nominations. The GoS was a small province but during 1971-82 it was highly innovative. This uniquely innovative period in GoS history was in part due to its history of innovativeness during the Tommy Douglas CCF governments, including its caring for the disadvantaged, but other factors were also at work: the NDP government was preceded by a 7-year inactive government—the government needed to catch up; it was supported by an active party; the government included members from the groups that supported it, such as the Christian churches and the unions; the NDP was inspired by other progressive governments, in the USA, Europe and New Zealand and by its active membership.

H5: The Government of Saskatchewan was a successful innovator because it committed to implementing its platform and created the resources to fund it.

Commitment is a crucial element in innovation. Creating new policies and programs also takes time and money. As Donald Trump was successful in dragging out the court charges against him long enough that they were not concluded before he was re-elected as President of the United States, so the potash companies subject to the new tax regimes introduced by the GoS dragged them out. The GoS did not nationalize its share of the potash industry but bought shares at market prices (the potash companies refused to pay the increased royalties). The funds to pay for this purchase were secured through increased royalties on other industries, small increased personal taxes, and loans. Commitment and resources were key. The NDP ran into problems, though, as the revitalized Progressive Conservative Party ran against this purchase, successfully convincing enough of the population that the money spent on potash should have gone into their pockets. This occurred as the economy soured.

H6: The provincial/territorial governments have been more innovative than the federal government.

The data in Table 4 compares the results of the Glor (1998) IPAC, Deschamps and Bernier (ND) IPAC, Gow (1994) administrative and Glor (2023) administrative/management studies with the Poel (1976), Boyd and Olive (2021), and Glor (2023) policy/program studies. The studies described a total of 1765 administrative innovations and 275 policy innovations. In this data, the GoS was most innovative in policy innovations and the GoC in administrative

innovations. There were 6.2 times as many Canada-wide administrative innovations as GoS policy innovations. In terms of policy innovations, the small GoS was the most innovative. In terms of administrative innovations, the large and medium-sized governments were the most innovative.

A possible reason for explaining these results is that Saskatchewan is a uniquely innovative society, and that it was this uniqueness, rather than the fact that it was a small province that was the relevant factor here. In other words, this unique small province was acting like a large jurisdiction. The GoS certainly thought big. If Saskatchewan is removed from the data in this study, for example (Table 3), the large governments become the most innovative. This argument is weak, however. How does a large government behave? Saskatchewan's combination of circumstance, community development and politics led, as did those in Minnesota and Wisconsin in the USA at the time, to the creation of an openness to change and innovation, and a desire on the part of the population to see government act on its problems. Nonetheless, Saskatchewan remained a small province.

Another hypothesis is that the GoS was a successful innovator because it created the resources to fund these innovations and adoptions and was committed to implementing them. Many innovations and adoptions cost new money and Saskatchewan created new money, due to the increase in the value of oil and gas during the early 1970s and again in 1978; because it created Crown corporations that produced revenues for the province; and because of an increase in resource taxes and a small income tax increase, at a time when personal incomes were rising. The GoS was successful in accelerating its economy through government investment.

The NDP was an activist and participatory party that passed resolutions at its party conventions that were then were incorporated into its 1971 and subsequent election platforms. The government tracked and reported on whether these pledges had been fulfilled. The Saskatchewan NDP and the government were committed to fulfilling their platform.

Another way to assess H6 is by considering whether the provincial/territorial governments introduced more first, second, third adoptions than the federal government. It did. The federal government was responsive to GoS requests for cost-sharing sometimes but not always.

This study therefore provides some evidence that Saskatchewan in particular and the provinces generally were innovative during the 1970s and early 1980s. While Canada introduced 17 of the innovations also introduced by Saskatchewan during this period, some of them through cost-sharing, this is a relatively small number for the size of the federal government. At this time the federal budget was about equal to the combined budgets of all the provinces and territories.

In terms of Saskatchewan's administrative innovations and adoptions, I was only able to identify the federal government as having implemented five of the GoS's fifteen innovations. I was not able to identify them in any other provinces.

The question of whether large or small governments were more innovative in the policy and program areas can be addressed in four ways. First, Canada should have been expected to be

an active innovator and early adopter if large governments are more innovative than small ones and to have been pushing the mandate boundaries. It was only an innovator three times and an early adopter nine times in a total of 254 cases of policy and program innovation and early adoption. Large governments introduced innovations and adoptions 35 times, most of them as second adopters (Table 3). This data does not support a claim that the federal government was more innovative than the provincial governments during 1971-82.

Second, while the numbers of innovations and adoptions are small for provinces other than Saskatchewan, there is also a suggestion in this study, which would require further research, that small provinces were just as likely to innovate as large ones. The GoC, Ontario and Quebec, the large governments, were policy innovators and early adopters 30 times, in a total of 258 GoS cases. The medium-sized governments innovated or adopted policies 17 times. This is not evidence of big provincial governments being more innovative in the policy areas.

Third, we can remove Saskatchewan from the data and see whether large or small governments were more innovative. In this scenario, large governments were innovators and early adopters 35 times and small governments twenty times. While this is tilted somewhat toward the large governments, it is not a valid comparison as it stands, for two reasons. First, Canada, Ontario and Quebec have the largest population and include most of the resources devoted to the public sector in Canada. They would therefore be expected to include most of the innovations. In 1981, for example, the GoC had a budget of \$82.963 billion, the GoS \$2 billion, 2.4% of the resources. Second, by removing the GoS, we have probably removed the most innovative province in the 1970s from the data base.

In conclusion, there is some evidence in this study that in the policy and program domain small provinces, especially Saskatchewan, were more innovative than large governments in Canada 1971-82. Large provinces were more innovative in the administrative/management domains. While it would have been desirable to survey all the 14 governments during the 1970s, to determine the totality of innovations introduced during that period, this is 50 years ago. The innovators have retired, some have passed away, and some no longer remember clearly. It would not be possible now. It would also be desirable to track innovations over time.

Some focus is needed on what exactly it means for people involved in the development of an innovation or early adoption to identify the order in which they were adopted. The more appropriate question is, how is it possible to determine the order? Other university-based scholars have used the same approach as this study (e.g. Bloch and Bugge, 2013). Surveys are filled out by public servants. While people involved may feel particularly positively toward the innovation—not necessarily overly positive, they have the clearest picture of the order of creation. No one else knows more about the order of creation except perhaps others who have implemented the same innovation. It is impossible to find them at this point.

The data for provinces other than Saskatchewan is incomplete in the Saskatchewan database studied here, because data for them is only provided, when possible, for innovations that Saskatchewan adopted. At the same time, the ranking of the governments for innovations (Table 4) are very similar in all of the other five studies, compared to the two Saskatchewan studies.

For the 185 innovations and second and third adoptions studied in Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan implemented by far the most innovations and adoptions (185) when the Deschamps and Bernier (ND) study of IPAC innovation award nominations was excluded, but the third most innovations and adoptions when the Deschamps and Bernier study was included. In the study including all IPAC nominees, 1990 to 2018 (28 years), the most innovations and adoptions were implemented in the Government of Canada (GoC) (607) across all seven studies. Ontario (503) was second, Saskatchewan (270) was third, B.C. was fourth (185) and Alberta was fifth (156). The problem is that the IPAC applications study has an oversized impact on the results and addresses a different period. As in Saskatchewan, the innovations were self-identified.

The federal government was the primary implementer of management innovations in these studies overall. This would have been expected, given its size and adoption of the New Public Management (Borins, 1995; Glor, 2001), that it and IPAC considered innovative. The GoC began actively nominating itself during the mid-1990s. The reasons the federal government was not the primary actor introducing Canadian policy innovations 1971-82, before the NPM period, are several. First, jurisdiction. Under the Canadian constitution the provinces are responsible for health and social services but they lack the spending power to fund them in keeping with post-World War II expectations. The federal government was only able to legislate in these areas when it could secure the agreement of the provinces. This it was able to achieve in introducing unemployment insurance (UI) during the 1940s, which required an amendment to the constitution, and the Canada Pension Plan (CPP), public hospital insurance and public medical insurance during the 1960s. These were programs it was difficult for provinces to fund, some were reluctant to fund, but which did not work as well when available only in one province (coverage ended if people moved, for example, and Canadians are highly mobile). The federal government cost-sharing these programs provided the provinces with a financial motive to cooperate. In addition, the federal government had larger capacity to tax than did the provinces. Only during the late 1970s did the federal government transfer some of this tax room to the provinces, and therefore spending power, to allow them to fund and control health and social programs themselves. The federal government has been less likely to introduce new health and social innovations since that time, except recently, when, as in the 1940s and 1960s, it was also under pressure in a minority government from the CCF and NDP to introduce such programs. The current Liberal minority government has introduced four new national programs—a \$10-dollar-a-day child care program, starting in 2022; a school-based National School Food Program for 400,000 children; the beginnings of a national drug/ pharmacare program, that covers two drugs; and a national dental program, that will help cover some of the costs of oral health care services for middle- and low-income Canadian residents who do not already have insurance. The drug plan is a publicly-funded insurance plan that aims to improve the affordability and accessibility of prescription drugs. The Pharmacare Act, introduced in February 2024, is the first phase of this program and will provide universal, single-payer coverage for certain diabetes and contraception medications. Canada was the only developed country with a universal hospital and medicare program that did not include universal coverage for prescription drugs. Instead, Canadians have a mix of private, public, and out-of-pocket insurance plans. The drug and Canadian Dental Care (CDCP) plans started in 2024.

Second, it was politically difficult for the federal government to initiate new programs that ultimately required provincial financing on an ongoing basis. Canadians, like Americans, seem to have reached their limits for paying taxes, and because of ongoing deficit funding, expect more than they pay for. In health and social services, the federal government-initiated research and development programs, beginning during the 1970s, that provided short-term (three-year) funding for pilot programs. The programs funded services and projects in keeping with the innovative thinking of the time, and within the jurisdiction of the federal government. So, non-government agencies were funded to create programs aimed at specific target groups (e.g. adolescents, Indigenous people). These were often delivered by small, isolated, not-for-profit agencies created specifically for that purpose. Once federal funding ran out, the agencies sought funding from provincial governments, the private sector and donating Canadians, with declining success over time (Canada has 65,000 non-profit agencies). This approach became less and less acceptable to the provinces. The federal development programs served to initiate new services and approaches but their focus was not on innovation as such. Nor were they evaluated in a way that allowed governments to conclude whether the approaches were more successful or cost-effective than previous ones. While evaluations were eventually required, they tended to focus on processes rather than results. Results are very difficult to demonstrate within a 3-year window.

Third, throughout the 1980s and early 1990s federal and provincial governments ran large deficits in a poor economy,⁵ and hence were not in a position to fund many new programs.

Fourth, since the 1960s the federal government has regularly been absorbed with national unity issues; this has permitted less attention to other matters. As well, its response to the Quebec separatist threat has hampered its ability to take action on many issues. The federal approach has been to try to treat every province equally, while assuring that Quebec got at least its fair share of all resources, but Quebec has exited a number of federal programs and created its own (e.g. its retirement pension plan). As a result, most programs funded by the federal government have been universal and identical across the country, except in Quebec. This has not allowed local solutions and innovations to bloom in the rest of the country.

Fifth, the federal government did not promote its role to the provinces as being one of policy and program leadership. Rather, partly because of the separatist threat, but also because of developing and growing provincial and regional sentiment in the rest of Canada, especially Western Canada, the federal government has perceived its role as one of consensus-building. Moreover, many national innovations, for example unemployment insurance and the Canada Pension Plan, required not just consensus but unanimity, something very difficult to create in the decentralized Canadian federation.

H6 is that the provincial/territorial governments have been more innovative than the federal government. This can be considered several ways. First, the provinces varied in their interest in and capacity to fund innovations. This was partly, but not exclusively, due to the existence of CCF/NDP governments in some western provinces and conservative governments in

⁵ All governments except Alberta and Saskatchewan, the provinces with large oil and gas reserves, also ran deficits during the 1970s.

others. Innovations need funding. Over time the provinces learned to look more to the federal government to fund programs, and less to develop them. As they developed their own policy, program and financial capacity, Quebec and a growing number of other provinces were unwilling to take their lead from the federal government.

As a consequence, while the federal government played a key role in the introduction of some new programs, these were often not federal government innovations, having been proven in the provinces first (e.g. Medicare and hospital insurance in Saskatchewan). Rather the federal role hinged on the federal capacity to fund programs and on the need for a national program in order to achieve the universal coverage needed and the magnitude necessary to permit programs to function well. For example, crop failures due to drought or hail damage tend to be regional or local rather than national, so a crop insurance program was viable on a national basis but could become highly indebted on a provincial basis.

Because the Saskatchewan data only refers to administrative and policy/program innovations adopted by the Government of Saskatchewan, 1971-82, the data from other studies were also included and compared. The IPAC management self-nomination process identified the governments of Canada, Ontario and B.C. as the most innovative. During the period covered (1990-07, Saskatchewan had an NDP government that was bringing the budget back into balance, and therefore it was not introducing new programs. The Gow study, with case studies chosen by the author, six of 17 innovations were federal, 4 from Ontario, and 3 from B.C. Saskatchewan was nominated twice. Glor's management/administration innovation study in Saskatchewan found 15 innovations introduced by Saskatchewan and 5 by the Government of Canada. The Poel policy study of 33 provincial innovations found ten introduced by Saskatchewan, 5 by Ontario and four by B.C. Table 4 compares the governments innovating in six Canadian studies. The Boyd and Olive (2021) study of the diffusion of six Canadian innovations found B.C. adopted 3 innovations, and Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick two each, Alberta and Saskatchewan one each. As noted earlier, the Glor policy and program study found 170 Saskatchewan adoptions, followed by 21 Government of Canada, 16 Ontario, 14 Alberta, and 10 Manitoba adoptions (Table 4). This produces a cumulative total, among all the studies, of 270 Saskatchewan adoptions, 609 Canada, 503 Ontario and 156 Alberta innovations.

The governments sometimes had different perspectives on their innovativeness, however, as represented by their nomination of themselves for the IPAC Management Innovation Award. While the Government of Canada, for example, ranked fourth among in the Saskatchewan innovations, it perceived itself as the most innovative by nominating itself for the Innovation Award 507 times among 1685 nominations, 30% of the nominations,⁶ among 14 governments.

Conclusion

⁶ I am the person who alerted the federal Treasury Board staff that they were not nominating for the Award much. Their competitive spirit kicked in, I suspect. Someone commented to me at the IPAC conference that while the federal government nominated a good deal, its nominations were not all that innovative.

There is some evidence in this study that in the policy and program domain small provinces were more innovative than large governments in Canada during the 1970s and early 1980s. It also demonstrates that the GoC, Canada's largest government, was the most innovative in management and administration from 1990 to 2018. The question of size and innovativeness needs more study to be conclusive.

Although it seems uniquely placed to initiate policy and program innovations both on a pilot project basis and as part of the national agenda, the federal government of Canada has tended to be a follower rather than a leader in the policy and program sphere. Provinces have led in introducing policy and program innovations, and convinced the federal government (mostly later) to adopt them on a broader basis. Federal cost-sharing under the federal welfare act required the province to have implemented the program already 1971-82.

On the other hand, in the field of administrative innovations, the federal government was an early innovator, or it has not introduced innovations at all. The federal public service, which with at times good leadership, has focused its innovative efforts where it could have the most influence, within its own, large, structure. This is not so much driven by the potential for cost-saving (only one third of the federal budget went to all departmental spending including administration in 1994-95, for example, unlike the provinces where it can be much higher), but because it is an area directly under the control of the federal government.

Looking at the fate of provincial innovations, non-adoption by the federal government both in policy and in administrative fields can kill provincial innovations over time, because they leave the province without federal funding and out of step with the federal government. Political non-alliance can mean no funding, but less obviously, administrative non-alliance can mean a province that is not well poised to take advantage of opportunities for new funding.

This was the situation in the past. Much of this changes, of course, when the federal government periodically and continuously attempts to deal with its deficit and debt. Major cut-backs leave very little room indeed for funding of new programs and fewer funds for the provinces. On the other hand, they create room for expansion in the future. Hence more diversity can be expected to develop in provincial policies and administrations. Eight out of ten took major steps to balance their own budgets during the 1990s, when the federal government cut back its program funding to the provinces. This brought their budgets into better balance, but at the expense of the poor. It also put the ones that wanted to innovate in a better position to fund at least some new programs, in response to changing needs in their populations. Innovation does not always require new funding, but it often does.

The failure of the federal government to play out its potential as a leader in testing, advocating for and introducing innovations has had a detrimental effect upon the Canadian union, in my opinion. With such strong regional and provincial interests; a recurring, strong separatist movement; and serious public sector financial problems, the federal government has been uniquely placed to identify, fund, evaluate, promote and disseminate information about innovations that could help to deal with these and the many serious economic, social, health and other problems facing Canada today. This has not been the role it has chosen or been able to

fulfil, however. Moreover, provinces have become less and less willing to accept federal priorities for funding, demanding open funding that can be applied to province priorities.

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Eleanor D. Glor worked for the GoS and the GoC, always with an interest in innovation. She edited *Policy Innovation in the Saskatchewan Public Sector, 1971-82* and *Is Innovation a Question of Will or Circumstance: An Exploration of the Innovation Process through the Lens of the Blakeney Government in Saskatchewan*. She has published many articles about public sector innovation. For ten years she organized the Innovation Salon, an Ottawa-based discussion group about public innovation. She established and edits *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal* on Internet at: <http://www.innovation.cc>

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The author presented a paper on this subject to the Institute of Public Administration of Canada conference, 1995.

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