

Conclusion

Public Policy Success: Lessons from the Canadian Experience

Grace Skogstad, Geneviève Tellier, Paul 't Hart, Michael Howlett, and Evert A. Lindquist

This volume, like its predecessors dealing with New Zealand and Australia (Luetjens et al., 2019) and more globally (Compton and 't Hart, 2019), has aimed to correct a perceived bias of the public policy literature to focus on policy failures to the neglect of policy success. Following in the wake of McConnell's (2010) pioneering multi-dimensional conceptualization of policy success, each of these volumes has addressed the question of the elements of policy success using a methodology of detailed case studies that track policy histories and assess policy processes and outcomes over time. This volume's 22 case studies, comprising a wide span of carefully pre-selected instances of successful policies across Canada, thereby shed light not only on how best to conceptualize policy success, but also on the contextually specific conditions that contribute to policy success. Each chapter in this collection has added to this body of knowledge by describing the historical context and pathways to programmatic, process, political, and enduring success in a particular policy or public management domain. In this concluding chapter, our objective is to collate their findings to generate broader lessons and themes for conceptualizing and explaining policy success.

To accomplish these knowledge-building goals, we begin with a summary of the success ratings of the case studies. This scorecard, supplemented by authors' elaborations of any caveats to their ratings, allows us to demonstrate the considerable extent to which our authors have found useful the multidimensional PPPE (programmatic, process, political, endurance) assessment framework that has been presented in the introductory chapter of this volume in ascertaining the nature and degree of policy success in discrete cases of public policy in Canada. Second, drawing on the findings of the individual case studies, we identify the factors across policy domains—some common, some particular, some contingent—that contribute to the different dimensions of policy success. Third, and relatedly, we

extract from our case studies the complex role of macro-institutions—federalism, executive-dominated parliamentary government, and the judiciary in the case of Canada—in accounting for programmatic, process, political, and enduring policy success. Finally, we offer suggestions on lines of future research to strengthen our understanding of policy success.

Applying the PPPE Framework to Canadian Cases

The authors of the 22 Canadian case studies provide further, confirmatory, evidence of the usefulness of the PPPE conceptualization and indicators of policy success advanced by [McConnell \(2010\)](#), [Compton and ‘t Hart \(2019\)](#), and [Luetjens et al. \(2019\)](#). As described in the Introduction to this collection, their framework identifies clear criteria for judging policy success even while it recognizes that success is a matter of degree and rarely complete. Accordingly, it places policy success on a continuum, with intermediate categories from success to failure. It also recognizes that a policy’s placement on the continuum can vary over time, as can judgements of the success of a policy by different stakeholders. Moreover, success on one dimension may entail trade-offs on another dimension: a successful program traded off for unsuccessful politics, successful politics traded off for an unsuccessful program, or a successful process traded off for unsuccessful programs.

A summary of authors’ assessments of their individual case studies is presented in [Table 24.1](#). By way of reminder in reviewing their assessments, programmatic success reflects the extent to which outcomes are consistent with the objectives of government and stakeholders. Process success refers to the extent to which government policy goals and favoured instruments are preserved throughout the policy process, the policy process is consistent with norms of legitimacy, the policy is sustained by a durable coalition of supporting actors, and the policy process encourages innovation. Political success represents the extent to which the policy’s political benefits outweigh its political costs, maintain the broad values of government, and marginalize critics ([McConnell, 2010](#), 352–356). The fourth criterion, endurance, is the sustainability of programmatic, process, and political benefits of a policy over time.

As [Table 24.1](#) shows, authors generally were able to use McConnell’s (2010) success–failure continuum to provide a more granular assessment of their cases. In most instances, and not surprisingly given the deliberate case selection’s focus on policy success, numerous cases were rated highly across all four criteria of programmatic, process, political, and enduring success. Yet intermediate categories on the spectrum proved helpful for assessing some of the cases when contributors sought to make more qualified assessments. Even while judging a policy as a success, authors also acknowledge that some stakeholders, depending on their own policy goals, ability to shape policy developments, and/or accrue political benefits

Table 24.1 Summary of Case Assessments on the Success Spectrum

Chapter	Topic	Programmatic Assessment	Process Assessment	Political Assessment	Endurance Assessment
2	Medicare	Success	Success	Success	Success
3	Tobacco use regulation	Success	Success	Success	Success
4	Safe injection of drugs	Success	Success	Success	Success
5	Elementary to secondary education	Success	Success	Success	Success
6	Quebec universal childcare	Success	Success	Success	Success
7	Early years policies	Success	Success	Success	Success
8	University research policy	Success	Success	Success	Success
9	Immigration	Success	Success	Success	Success
10	Multiculturalism	Success	Resilient to conflicted success	Resilient to conflicted success	Success
11	Pensions (OAS & GIC)	Success	Success	Success	Resilient success
12	Equalization	Success	Conflicted success	Conflicted success	Success
13	Bank regulation	Success	Success	Success	Success
14	Dairy and Poultry supply management	Success	Precarious to resilient success	Success	Resilient success
15	Canola development	Resilient success	Success	Success	Success
16	Developing Canada's wine industry	Success	Success	Success	Contested success
17	Managing national parks	Success	Success	Success	Success
18	Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement	Mixed success	Moderate success	Success	Success
19	Ontario coal phase-out	Resilient success	Conflicted success	Success	Resilient success

Continued

Table 24.1 *Continued*

Chapter	Topic	Programmatic Assessment	Process Assessment	Political Assessment	Endurance Assessment
20	First Nations and the courts	Conflicted-resilient	Success	Conflicted-resilient	Conflicted/Precarious Success
21	Federal 1995–1996 Program Review	Success	Success	Success	Mixed
22	Creation of Canadian Airport Authorities	Success	Success	Success	Success
23	2009 Economic Action Plan	Success	Resilient Success	Success	Not applicable (policy was a one-off crisis response)

from the policy, would render harsher judgements of the policy (cf. [McConnell et al., 2020](#)).

Medicare is widely viewed by Canadians as a policy success, yet Marchildon (Chapter 2) records some deterioration in its ability to achieve its programmatic goal of universal access to essential health care services. He further acknowledges that while public support for Medicare remains high, its political success is marred by intergovernmental conflict over federal health transfers to provinces and court challenges on the part of doctors seeking to run for-profit clinics inside Medicare. Callard (Chapter 3) judges Canada's regulation of tobacco use a success in reducing smoking but also observes that other countries have higher levels of tobacco control than Canada. Wallner (Chapter 5) rates Canada's public education system from elementary to secondary school as highly successful—except for Indigenous children. Burlone (Chapter 6) describes the province of Quebec's provision of affordable and high quality childcare spaces as a 'huge success' but still reports that available spaces fall short of demand for them. Davidson and White (Chapter 7) rate early years policies of the federal government and some provinces an overall success, even while noting that Canada lags behind other OECD countries when it comes to investments in children. Banting (Chapter 10) describes multiculturalism as a strong success as judged against its explicit goals but also notes its success has not ended racial economic inequality and discrimination in the Canadian labour market. Lecours, Béland, and Tombe (Chapter 12) describe equalization, by virtue of achieving its goals of reducing provincial inequality and preserving provincial autonomy, as a programmatic success. Still, they note equalization is also subject to criticisms in the name of both fairness and efficiency. This

criticism is one that Skogstad (Chapter 14) also observes with respect to supply management plans in the Canadian dairy and poultry sectors. Wilder (Chapter 15) describes Canada's development of the popular and healthy oilseed, canola, to be an example of successful innovation, even while environmental groups and organic farmers see themselves as losers of the policy. Johns (Chapter 18) judges the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between Canada and the United States to be a 'mixed' success of program successes and failures, and a 'moderate' success of a well-designed process but also one subject to some 'notable challenges'. 'Mixed success' is also the verdict of Satsan, McNeil, and Abele when it comes to the efforts of Canada's first nations to transform public policy through the courts (Chapter 20). Although they describe Indigenous peoples as 'remarkably successful' in achieving some of their legal and political goals through court action, they also believe that 'much has yet to be accomplished' when it comes to Indigenous nations being recognized as a third order of government and Indigenous law being accepted as part of Canada's legal architecture. To cite one final example, Tellier (Chapter 21) rates the Canadian Government's 1995–1996 Program Review an 'undeniable' programmatic success, but also acknowledges that those who bore the social cost of the federal government eliminating its deficit would disagree. In short, judgements of success are rarely unanimous or without caveats.

As mentioned earlier, the continuum of intermediate categories from full success to complete failure also proved helpful, as has the proposition that the success of a policy can vary over time. Banting describes public policies with respect to multiculturalism (Chapter 10) as transitioning over time from a resilient success (that is, as subject to but also overcoming non-life threatening challenges via policy adjustments) to a conflicted success (subject to substantial controversy) as the policy process became undermined by politicization and ideological conflicts. Lecours, Béland, and Tombe (Chapter 12) document the same politicization occurring with equalization; a policy that was uncontroversial at its origins is now a highly charged area of intergovernmental dispute, beset by conflict on both process and political grounds. Winfield and Saherwala (Chapter 19) rate Ontario's phase out of coal in electricity generating facilities by 2014 a conflicted success on process grounds, and, further, describe the McGuinty (2003–2013) and Wynne (2013–2018) governments' overall handling of electricity policy as a political failure. Skogstad (Chapter 14) tracks the transition of supply management plans in the dairy and poultry sectors from their precarious early days, when their very existence hung in the balance, to their current resilient success. And Johns observes that over its five-decade history, the 1972 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement has undergone 'simultaneous and significant periods of policy failure'.

The Canadian case studies also lend some support to the proposition in the policy success literature that success on one policy dimension can come at the expense of success on another dimension. Although he judges Canada's immigration policy a success across the board, Triadafilopoulos (Chapter 9) argues that in

response to public pressure the Canadian government has made it very difficult for asylum seekers to enter Canada, trading off process success for normative standards of justice for refugees. Supply management, notes Skogstad (Chapter 14), is seen by its critics as a case of ‘good politics but bad policy’, with the political benefits politicians accrue from supporting the policy undermining their incentives to reform it. Winfield and Saherwala (Chapter 19) also see clear trade-offs between programmatic, process, and political success. They argue that the coal phase-out—a programmatic success in improving the quality of air in Ontario by reducing emissions of GHGs, smog and acid rain precursors, and heavy metals, like mercury—would not have occurred without political direction from the Wynne government. Yet, this politicization of the policy process ‘eroded transparent, evidence-based decision-making regarding major infrastructure projects.’ Notwithstanding these examples of trade-offs across policy dimensions, and as we discuss further later, our case studies also reveal a different pattern whereby success on one policy dimension can have positive feedback effects for success on another policy dimension.

Even while Canadian case studies thus collectively affirm the merits of Chapter 1’s PPPE framework for evaluating policy success, individually they also suggest some ways to further enhance its utility. In its focus on the success of what governments do, the framework overlooks developments that, by delimiting the parameters within which governments operate, also establish new criteria for policy success. Indigenous peoples’ use of the courts to secure recognition of their traditional rights and self-government is a case in point (Chapter 20). Satsan, McNeil, and Abele observe that through a succession of court cases, Indigenous peoples have achieved some of their legal and political goals, forced governments to revise their policies, and thereby ‘significantly shaped’ the development of future policies pertaining to Indigenous peoples. In other words, what counts as success in terms of governments’ relations with Indigenous peoples on both programmatic and process grounds has itself been re-defined. In other cases, a government-centric approach can ignore public policies co-produced by governments and private firms, examples of which are Wilder’s case study of the Canadian development of canola (Chapter 15) and Migone’s of the development of the Canadian wine industry (Chapter 16). As Wilder observes, an important measure of the programmatic success of such public–private partnerships must be the extent to which the beneficiary (private firm) bears the risk so that the public is spared excessive costs.

Other case studies also point to the efficiency of public policies—that is, the extent to which policy objectives are met at a reasonable cost—as a criterion of programmatic success but not one explicitly identified in the PPPE framework.¹

¹ We are grateful to an external reviewer for suggesting this criterion of policy success.

Healthcare and pensions are examples of cost-efficient policies. Canada's single-payer healthcare system delivers high health outcomes at lower administrative costs (Chapter 2), while Canada's pension policy mix of Old Age Security and a Guaranteed Income Supplement is effective at fighting poverty among older people at public costs significantly below the OECD average (Chapter 11). The transfer of responsibility for governing and managing Canada's airports to private airport authorities is another example of policy efficiency (Chapter 22). The federal government achieved its intended objective of off-loading its responsibility for financing airport infrastructure, even while the airport authorities generated considerable revenue for the government prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Finally, several case studies reference the diffusion of a policy to other provinces or to the national level as a criterion to judge policy success. Examples include Saskatchewan's universal healthcare insurance being taken up by the federal government to become Canada-wide Medicare (Chapter 2), other Canadian cities' adoption of Vancouver's innovative supervised safe injection of drugs site (Chapter 4), the interprovincial spread of and convergence on quality public education programs and practices (Chapter 5), and other provinces' emulation of Ontario's full-day kindergarten (Chapter 7). They also include the diffusion of provincial agricultural marketing boards and their coordination in national supply management plans (Chapter 14) and Ontario's phase-out of conventional coal-fired electricity to the national level (Chapter 19). However, Quebec's universal and low-cost childcare centres (Chapter 6) have failed to be adopted by other provinces. Its counter-example suggests limits to treating diffusion as a measure of success in federal systems. An important federal principle is respect for the distinct preferences and values of citizens within constituent units. That divergent societal preferences can result in policies unique to one province should not therefore necessarily be a minus on that policy's success scorecard.

Policy Success Factors in the Canadian Context

The PPPE framework is intended to be a cross-jurisdictional template for *assessing* policy success by identifying outcomes associated with success/failure. In order to advance the policy success literature further, we now ask whether there are any commonalities across the cases in terms of structures, actors, styles, and processes of policy-making that are associated with these outcomes. Here, our discussion is necessarily specific to the Canadian policy-making context: one constituted by executive-dominated parliamentary government, a professional public service, a federal system in which governments at both federal and provincial orders are legally powerful, and a liberal market economy. Are there some broad conclusions that can be drawn about the overall effects of this policy-making context

on policy success in general? For example, are there some types of political actors and policy processes that are generally associated with successful outcomes? If factors like careful policy design, administrative capacity, and fiscal resources are important to programmatic and overall policy success, how does the Canadian political-institutional context affect their supply? At the same time, variation in policy success across policy domains (see Table 24.1) suggests the importance of sectoral-level contextual factors. And hence, another important question is what are the sectoral-level dynamics associated with different dimensions of policy success, and particularly with the durability of public policies, over time? We begin by providing an overview of factors associated with policy success across our cases before turning to sectoral-level dynamics.

Taken as a whole, the Canadian experience highlights, first, the importance of *leadership* in many Canadian policy successes. The concentration of political authority in the political executive (the prime minister/premier and Cabinet) in Canada's parliamentary system means that political leadership at the highest levels of government is critical for policy success. Provincial leadership on universal healthcare insurance from Saskatchewan Premier Tommy Douglas produced the template for Canadian Medicare (Chapter 2). The success of the federal university research program (Chapter 8) and the 1995–1996 Program Review exercise (Chapter 21) owed a great deal to the strong leadership and commitment of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. Having narrowly escaped a political crisis following his initial failed reaction to the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, Prime Minister Stephen Harper was subsequently motivated to act quickly to design and implement a politically saleable economic action plan (Chapter 23). At the cost of his own political career, Vancouver Mayor Phillip Owen's leadership proved pivotal to legitimizing the harm reduction strategy advanced by the coalition supporting safe injection sites for drug users in the city (Chapter 4).

Leadership need not come from the very top of government; ideologically committed cabinet ministers can provide the crucial political support for policy innovations, as illustrated by the creation of Canadian supply management in the agriculture sector (Chapter 14). Nor is leadership necessarily associated with a single individual. Liberal premiers Dalton McGuinty and Kathleen Wynne provided the requisite political leadership to phase out coal-fired electricity production in Ontario (Chapter 19). Political leadership can also be observed across party lines. Although Canada's multiculturalism policy was initiated by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau in the 1970s, it was embedded in legislation by Prime Minister Mulroney in 1988 (Chapter 10).

Leadership outside government in the form of 'policy entrepreneurs' who seize opportunities to put issues on the government's agenda (Kingdon, 1984) and stay the course over time has also been an ingredient in policy success. A good illustration has been the regulation of tobacco products where civil society organizations

repeatedly faced severe opposition from the industry (Chapter 3). In other instances, activists had to convince governments and the population about the merits of their proposal. For instance, the idea of setting up safe injection sites for drug users seemed counterintuitive at first. Yet by gradually building a coalition for their initiative, proponents of safe-site injection centres were able to convince governments to adopt this policy (Chapter 4).

Second, resources of *independent legal authority* and *fiscal capacity* are associated with policy success at both the federal and provincial levels. Several areas of programmatic, process and political success in this volume occurred where the federal government had the legal authority to exercise its regulatory and the fiscal powers to act independently of the provinces. They are tobacco and banking regulation (Chapters 3 and 13, respectively); university research funding (Chapter 8); multiculturalism (Chapter 10); seniors' pensions (Chapter 11); equalization (Chapter 12); national parks (Chapter 17); Great Lakes water quality (Chapter 18); the government of Canada's 1995–1996 Program Review (Chapter 21) and response to the 2008–09 great financial crisis (Chapter 23); and the devolution of responsibility for managing airports (Chapter 22).

At the provincial level, the programmatic, process, and political success of policies is also facilitated by provinces having exclusive legal authority over a problem or policy. Examples are supervised injection sites in Vancouver, British Columbia (Chapter 4) and the phase-out of coal-fired electricity in Ontario (Chapter 19). At other times, provinces can only redress problems by accessing federal fiscal resources. Illustrative cases in this volume of the latter are provinces' early years (pre-school) and childcare policies, as well as their elementary and secondary education policies (Chapters 5–7). In have-not provinces, the federal equalization program (Chapter 12) has been crucial to the fiscal capacity of provinces to carry out these social programs.

The nation-wide diffusion of provincial social and economic/regulatory policies—such that they can be described as national policy successes—has usually required a role for the Government of Canada. The federal role is normally fiscal, as in the support of social policies, like Medicare. However, the intergovernmental negotiations required to finance them are usually not only opaque (Béland et al., 2017) but also subject to the shifting fiscal fortunes and priorities of governments at the two federal orders (Bakvis and Skogstad, 2020). Accordingly, the policy success of these shared-cost programs, from a durability perspective, can be subject to the priorities of an incumbent federal government. The case study examples cited earlier of policies diffusing cross-provincially are consistent with findings of other studies (Poel, 1976; Lutz, 1989; Boyd and Olive, 2021).

Public resources—in the form of the fiscal and regulatory support from both federal and provincial governments—are also usually needed for successful innovation and economic development policies. The examples here are the

development of one of Canada's top agricultural products, canola (Chapter 15), and the domestic wine industry (Chapter 16).

Third, skilful *administrative professionalism* and *government capacity* are also important, especially with respect to programme success and successful implementation (Wu et al., 2015). In some instances, success comes after several trials and errors. For example, the 1995–1996 Program Review sought to avoid replicating the mistakes of several previous administrative reforms (Chapter 21). In the same vein, the government's response to the 2008–09 Global Financial Crisis benefited from concerted consultations with diverse stakeholders, a mechanism previously used by the Department of Finance (Chapter 23). Expertise within a single or several departments has also been a key element of success for the establishment of a radically new governance model. Johns identifies bureaucratic leadership, policy instruments informed by scientific evidence, and sustained resources as important ingredients in the successful implementation of the Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (Chapter 18), while Langlois credits the success of the creation of Canadian airport authorities to manage Canadian airports to a small team of government officials working in concert with key internal and external stakeholders (Chapter 22).

Fourth, although not sufficient to guarantee success, *popular support* has often been critical in forcing an issue onto the agenda, giving rise to a public policy to address it and maintaining the policy in the face of pockets of determined opponents. Examples include the implementation of the Canadian Medicare program, which was forcefully opposed by the medical profession and the insurance industry (Chapter 2), and the Canadian Pension Plan, which most provinces initially viewed as too expensive (Chapter 11). However, in both cases the opposition dissipated once it became clear that most Canadians supported the initiatives. Sometimes it takes a considerable amount of time and energy to convince the population of the social desirability of a policy: examples here include regulating the tobacco industry (Chapter 3) and implementing supervised injection sites (Chapter 4). However, governments usually initiate policies that already enjoy considerable popular support, such as early childhood policies (Chapters 6 and 7), immigration (Chapter 9), national parks (Chapter 17), and banking regulation (Chapter 13).

Fifth, *contingencies and chance* have played a role in the success of public policies. Triadafilopoulos attributes some of the success of Canadian immigration policy to 'place luck': Canada's isolated geography limits flows of asylum seekers and other unwanted immigrants to Canada (Chapter 9). Besides strong leadership and administrative capacity, Tellier attributes 'a bit of luck', in the form of favourable political and economic conditions, to the success of the Liberal Party's implementation of unpopular program cuts in its 1995–1996 Program Review.

Sixth, notwithstanding some common patterns of success, there are also discernible *sectoral-level dynamics* associated with different dimensions of policy

success. One dynamic is the political actors who dominate the policy process. Elite political and bureaucratic actors have dominated, and often monopolized, successful innovations in Canadian public management. Examples are university research funding (Chapter 8), equalization payments (Chapter 12), the 1994–1996 Program Review (Chapter 21), the devolution of responsibility for managing airports (Chapter 22), and the Economic Action Plan in response to the 2007–09 Global Financial Crisis (Chapter 23). In all these cases, although parliament’s approval was eventually required to turn elite actors’ decisions into law, the policy process was relatively closed to civil-society actors. At the same time, the relative lack of contestation around these policies demonstrates, as Tupper says of university research, that ‘good processes need not engage large groups of people, interest groups or even parliamentarians to be successful’ (Chapter 8).

By contrast, a plurality of non-state actors—interest groups and civil-society actors—has been involved in the agenda-setting, policy formulation and/or policy implementation phases of policy-making in many other policy domains. Examples are tobacco and banking regulation (Chapters 3 and 13, respectively), multiculturalism (Chapter 10), seniors’ pensions (Chapter 11), supervised injection sites in the city of Vancouver (Chapter 4), elementary through secondary education (Chapter 5), the phase-out of coal-fired electricity in Ontario (Chapter 19), and early years (pre-school) and childcare policies (Chapters 6 and 7). In some cases, such as with respect to multiculturalism and the Ontario coal phase-out, opening the policy process to a broader array of political actors has been associated with greater politicization and contestation. In other cases, such as the deregulation of banking, the approval of transgenic canola (Chapter 15), and the management of Canada’s national parks (Chapter 17), a more open and pluralist policy process has enhanced the legitimacy and effectiveness of a policy.

Our case studies also provide insights regarding the conditions for the durability or maintenance of a policy’s performance over time. In addition to the capacity for political actors to adjust policy processes (as earlier) or policy instruments (as with supply management boards, Chapter 14) as altered circumstances require, other self-reinforcing material and interpretive feedback effects are also evident (Pierson, 1993, 2000). As demonstrated by the examples of pensions (Chapter 11), equalization (Chapter 12), and agricultural supply management (Chapter 14), policies endure because their beneficiaries have strong incentives to sustain them. Policies also persist over time by self-generating a narrative of achievement and/or by becoming part of the identity of Canadians. National parks (Chapter 17) and the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (Chapter 18) are examples of the former, while Medicare (Chapter 2) and, to a lesser extent, multiculturalism (Chapter 10) are examples of the latter.

As illustrated by the instances of conflicted success in this volume, policy endurance should not be equated with the absence of negative or self-undermining feedback effects (Jacobs and Weaver, 2015). The constitutional entrenchment that

fortifies the principle of equalization has not eliminated intergovernmental contestation over the government of Canada's determination of the formula used to distribute equalization payments. Nor has the joint decision trap (Scharpf 1997), which requires agreement across multiple federal and provincial governments for changes to supply management in the Canadian dairy and poultry industries (Chapter 14). Institutional and constitutional bulwarks can thus make policies resilient even when they fall short on some programmatic or process grounds.

Looking Ahead: Learning through Comparative Research

Policy dynamics—understood as motors of innovation, continuity, and change—are complex phenomena and the role played in these dynamics by policy-makers and publics learning from previous policy experience has rightly drawn much attention in attempts to explain not only how policy change occurs but also endures (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018b; Capano, 2012). This endeavour extends to the derivation of different types, triggers, and modes of learning including 'positive', 'negative', and 'non-learning' among others (Dunlop and Radaelli, 2018a).

In exploring these types of policy learning, it is necessary to build upon a clear understanding and analysis of policy success and failure. In particular, understanding the processes through which policies evolve and endure over time requires learning from policy successes—a reorientation away from focusing only or mostly on policy failure and non-learning or 'negative' learning.

In this way, the book aims to improve the understanding of policy learning and especially the possibility of 'positive' learning and lesson-drawing (Rose, 1993). Such an effort, we argue, is needed not only to improve policy scholarship but also to enhance policy practice in many countries, including Canada. The importance of policy learning is arguably greatest during crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic which began in 2020. If the experience of the Canadian Harper government's response to the 2008–9 Global Financial Crisis (Chapter 23) is any guide, governments need to learn quickly, and the expertise of seasoned public servants who have dealt with political crises in the past is a key ingredient in their ability to do so. In addition, the Covid-19 crisis has also demonstrated that programmatic success depends upon governments' political leadership and their ability to draw on the expertise of medical professional experts.

The suite of Canadian cases presented in this collection also suggests further lines of inquiry for learning about policy success processes and patterns. One avenue of research is the cross-national generalizability of the Canadian pattern of province-led innovation, as well as the requisite of joint federal and provincial action for policy innovation and success. Whether these patterns are distinct to Canada, or found in other federal countries such as Australia, is an example of the kind of future inquiry the book may help engender. Comparative research can

also profit from examining the extent to which specific sectoral dynamics of policy successes—in particular, their distinctive policy processes—are generalizable to other countries. That is, are the elite-dominated and comparatively closed policy processes of public management successes associated with policy success in other jurisdictions and countries? Do the more open, pluralist, and contested processes of policy successes in social policy fields prevail in the same social policy domains elsewhere? Finally, as demonstrated by the Canadian cases, future research can also profit from broadening analyses beyond cases of unqualified policy success to those of precarious and/or conflicted success on one or more of programmatic, process, or political grounds.

References

- Bakvis, Herman and Grace Skogstad (eds). 2020. *Canadian Federalism: Performance, Effectiveness and Legitimacy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Béland, Daniel, André Lecours, Gregory P. Marchildon, Haizhen Mou, and M. Rose Olfert. 2017. *Fiscal Federalism and Equalization Policy in Canada: Political and Economic Dimensions*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Boyd, Brendan and Andrea Olive. 2021. *Provincial Policy Laboratories: Policy Diffusion and Transfer in Canada's Federal System*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Capano, G. 2012. "Policy Dynamics and Change: The Never-Ending Puzzle." In *Routledge Handbook of Public Policy*, edited by E. Araral, S. Fritzen, M. Howlett, M. Ramesh, and X. Wu, pp. 451–472. New York: Routledge.
- Compton, M. and 't Hart, P. (eds). 2019. *Great Policy Successes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dunlop, C. A. and C. M. Radaelli. 2018a. "The Lessons of Policy Learning: Types, Triggers, Hindrances and Pathologies." *Policy and Politics* 46 (2): 255–272.
- Dunlop, C. A., and C. M. Radaelli (eds). 2018b. *Learning in Public Policy: Analysis, Modes and Outcomes*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jacobs, A. M. and R. K. Weaver. 2015. "When Policies Undo Themselves: Self-Undermining Feedback as a Source of Policy Change." *Governance* 28 (4): 441–457. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12101>
- Kingdon, J. W. 1984. *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Luetjens, J., M. Mintrom, and P. 't Hart (eds). 2019. *Successful Public Policy: Lessons from Australia and New Zealand*. Canberra, Australia: ANU Press and Australian and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG).
- Lutz, J. M. 1989. "Emulation and Policy Adoptions in the Canadian Provinces." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 22 (2): 147–154.
- McConnell, A. 2010. "Policy Success, Policy Failure and Grey Areas In-Between." *Journal of Public Policy* 30 (20): 345–362.
- McConnell, A. 2017. "Policy Success and Failure." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, edited by William R. Thompson, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McConnell, A., L. Grealy, and T. Lea. 2020. "Policy Success for Whom? A Framework for Analysis." *Policy Sciences* 53 (4): 589–608.
- Pierson, P. 1993. "When Effect Becomes Cause: Policy Feedback and Political Change." *World Politics* 45 (4): 595–628. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2950710>

- Pierson, P. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics," *American Political Science Review* 94 (2): 251–267.
- Poel, D. H. 1976. "The Diffusion of Legislation among the Canadian Provinces: A Statistical Analysis." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 9 (4): 605–626.
- Rose, R. 1993. *Lesson-Drawing in Public Policy: A Guide to Learning across Time and Space*. Chatham: Chatham House Publishing.
- Scharpf, F. W. 1997. "Introduction: The Problem-Solving Capacity of Multi-Level Governance." *Journal of European Public Policy* 4 (4): 520–538.
- Wu, X., M. Ramesh, and M. Howlett. 2015. "Policy Capacity: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Policy Competences and Capabilities." *Policy and Society* 34 (3–4).