

Importing Notions of Governance: Two Examples from the History of Canadian Water Policy

Michaels S, de L oe R

Abstract

As stress on water resources increases from growing human demands and a changing climate, recognition of the need to develop effective strategies for water governance is expanding. Consequently, it is timely to consider the legacy of effective instances of water policy innovation that have been highly influential in water resource management in Canada. We present two historical examples of policy transfer - that is, when policy employed in one jurisdiction is adapted for use in another. The first is the late nineteenth-century adoption of water allocation law in the North-West Territories that was a noteworthy departure from how water had been allocated in eastern Canada. The second is the twentieth-century introduction of conservation authorities in Ontario as regional watershed-based management entities. These examples illustrate how, in an era of expert-driven natural resources management, notions of governance were adapted from Australia and the United States. They also reveal how the biophysically-based policy context of water influences which policy transfer mechanisms are appropriate for lesson-learning. We conclude that the potential for policy transfer and lesson-learning to shorten the policy innovation timeline must be viewed as a critical response to urgent and evolving demands on water.

www.informaworld.com/index/929453090.pdf