Summarized

**G. Skogstad (2008):** Policy Networks and Policy Communities: Conceptualizing State-Societal Relationships in the Policy Process

* Thesis:Skogstad argues that Canadian scholars have played a significant role in contributing to the analytical popularity of the policy community/policy network concepts among students of public policy and contemporary governance. They have been both intellectual “borrowers” as well as “givers.”
* There are several approaches to PC/PN:
  + Networks as *interpersonal* relationships.
  + Networks as *structural linkages* between corporate public and private actors.
    - Scholars taking each approach utilize both quantitative and qualitative methods.
    - There are differences in their assumptions about the factors that account for behaviour within policy networks; some assume a rational actor, other adhere to institutionalist assumptions, and still other situate themselves within constructivist approaches.
* In Canada, the structuralist approach is dominant.
  + Policy making within discrete policy fields is characterized by regularized patterns of interaction between state actors and representatives of societal interests. These “structures” constitute the policy process alongside the formal and macro-level decision-making bodies such as Parliament.
* Criticisms of PC/PN:
  + The concepts of PC/PN add little explanatory power; rather than the feature of the network itself, it is the attributes of actors in policy networks that are consequential for policy making and policy outcomes.
    - Canadian scholars have demonstrated the importance of PC/PN in shaping definitions of policy problems, the selection of appropriate solutions, and thus the substance of public policies.
  + The concepts of PC/PN are static, capturing a patterned relationship at a point in time, and have little capacity to explain political or policy change.
  + Current realities of governing no longer replicate the conditions that gave rise to the concepts and therefore undermine the case for their continuing analytical utility.
* Canadian Contributions to the literature:
  + The proposition that transnational policy communities— some composed of experts, other of civil society experts— are more likely to emerge to link actors in the national and international arenas. Transnational networks are associated with supranational institutions.
  + Policy networks are the crucial linchpin in the capacity of governments to adjust their economies and public policies to the constraints and opportunities posed by globalization.

**Orsini and Smith (2009):** “Critical Policy Studies.”

* Orsini and Smith argue that policy makers and students of public policy alike need to re-examine their tool kits and reflect on just what policy analysis is supposed to achieve. They use the term “critical policy studies” as a container for an ensemble of approaches and perspectives that they believe are best-suited to the changing policy context.

**Doern (1996):** The Evolution of Canadian Policy Studies as Art, Craft, and Science.

* **Thesis:** Doern argues that the evolution of Canadian policy studies should be seen as embracing the art, craft, and science of policy studies:
  + It is an *art* in the primary sense that the making of policy involves the purposeful pursuit of ideas, beliefs, and goals that are valued by interests and citizens in a democracy, but that are not easily, or perhaps no properly reducible to scientific study.
  + It is a *craft-like activity* because it must involve, and account for, the actions of both practitioners and policy advocates—it must factor in both the role of analysis and the nature of advocacy.
  + It is also part *science*. Manifested in several ways: in elementary efforts at classification in comparative study among countries and among provinces, and in efforts to integrate the politics and economics of public policy within and among countries.

Five major areas of policy study in Canada:

* Canadian public policy and the Inner State
  + Originated in 1960s and 70s in response to the fact that, while politics had been well studied, governing and policy making had not been
  + Study was largely neo-institutionalist or state-centered, focusing on structures and processes. It was a reaction of the excesses of *formal* institutionalism, which was too descriptive and formal a view of institutions.
* Canadian policy studies and the two political economies
  + (1) *Marxist political economy* – focuses on the presence and nature of inequality both in policy outputs and in policy representation/power within the state. Method is very state-centered
  + (2) *Public choice political economy* – focuses on the incentive systems of institutional leaders and players. Also associated with attacks on the efficacy of the state and on the progressive assumptions underlying the entire liberal democratic social welfare state
* State-Centered vs. Society-Centered Debate on policy studies
  + *Policy Communities and Policy Networks* – insights can be seen as moving directionally from society of large policy-based realms to relationships inside the state
  + *Policy Sectors –* moves in the other direction – from internal state structures to groups, interests, and communities. A policy sector is a matrix or cluster of govt organizations that regularly interact and compete in an effort to defend or promote their policy interests, and gain access to the policy sector on the basis of their control over organizational resources that are critical for policy sector activities
* Comparative policy studies – See Skogstad, Banting, Tuohy
* Globalization – See Haddow/Skogstad

**Dobuzinskis, Howlett, and Laycock (2007):** Policy Analysis in Canada: The State of the Art

* The *policy analysis movement* represents the efforts of actors inside and outside formal political decision-making processes to improve policy outcomes by applying systematic evaluative rationality to the development and implementation of policy options. Not as strong in Canada as it is in the United States (i.e. greater number of think tanks, etc.).
* Despite a discernable trend towards professionalization, a variety of actors continues to contribute diverse ideas to policy debates
* Policy Actors and Communities:
  + Lindquist (1990) argues that policy actors can be arranged into three general sets or communities:
    - Proximate decision-makers: that is, those with actual authority to make policy decisions, such as cabinets and executives, etc.
    - Knowledge generators: those located inside academia and research institutes who provide the basic scientific, economic, and social scientific data upon which analyses are often based and decisions made.
    - Knowledge brokers: that is, those who serve as intermediaries between the knowledge makers and the proximate decision-makers, repackaging data and information into usable form (bureaucrats, commissions and task-forces, non-govt specialists, think tanks, interest groups).

**Banting (1997):** The Social Policy Divide: The Welfare State in Canada and the United States.

* The different versions of the liberal welfare state that emerged in Canada and the US are deeply rooted in the economic, social and political structures of the two societies
* According to many commentators, globalization also generates a second level of constraint, but narrowing the degrees of freedom that each nation-state has to craft its policy response – according to these interpretations, govts are under powerful pressures to harmonized their economic and social policies with those of their trading partners --- process of convergence
* Three cleavages important within Canada in the creation of its social policy: (1) economic class; (2) social heterogeneity in terms of race, ethnicity, and language; and (3) regional divisions
  + In Canada, the poor were not socially distinctive along ethnic/racial/language lines – rather the main cleavage was French/English which was not associated with class
  + Whereas class cleavage in the US is strongly associated with racial cleavage
  + In the US, regionalism also played a big role – resistance from the South represented a barrier to the expansion of welfare
* Federalism offers the only exception to the general pattern of fewer institutional blockages in Canada
  + In US, federalism contributes to the larger system of checks and balances, but history records few major initiatives in social policy that were blocked primarily by constitutional limits on federal jurisdiction
  + That is definitely not the case in Canada.
* Overall, the record of the 1980s and 1990s is helpful in warning against the assumption that convergence is necessarily a consequence of economic integration
* Despite pervasive globalization of economic life, the nation-state retains important degrees of freedom in charting its course, and politics within the nation state retains social importance

**K. Banting (1987):** The Welfare State and Canadian Federalism

* Evidence clearly demonstrates that the evolution of federalism is the institutional feature that has had the greatest impact on income security in Canada.
* Jurisdiction and power relationships in this field have been radically transformed since the 1930s – three constitutional amendments and vigorous use of the federal spending power has turned an area of virtually complete provincial responsibility at the turn of the century into one of federal dominance in the postwar era
  + This centralization has proved reasonably resistant to decentralizing pressures that have reshaped other areas of policy over the past 20 years
* Why provinces were prepared to surrender formal jurisdiction in this area has never fully been answered – nonetheless, income security has emerged as one of the few exemplars in domestic policy of the centralist concept of Cdn federalism
* The centralization has had important consequences for both the *scope* of income security programs and their *consequences*
* All other things being equal, countries with decentralized governments devote a smaller proportion of their resources to welfare than do those with centralized govts – thus, in comparative terms, federalism is clearly a conservative force in welfare politics (though the impact is more modest today).
* In keeping with other forms of fragmentation, federalism (divided jurisdictions):
  + Raise the level of consensus required for innovation; and
  + Complicates the process for introducing new programs
    - These conservative features have been partially offset by competition between governments
    - The revisionist interpretation contends that federal institutions contribute to the growth of the public sector by multiplying the number of governments with expansionist tendencies
* Federalism has changed the *impact* of income security programs. Does not necessarily result in programs that are more redistributive between income classes, but rather transforms income security into a powerful redistribution mechanism between *regions*
* Adding federalism to the institutional mix does create buffers between policy and public. Federal-provincial dynamics can constrain elites from taking initiatives of which the public would probably approve
* The argument advanced throughout the book is that although institutional patterns do influence income security, they are not the only, or even the most important, determinant of policy. The nature of Cdn political economy, the nation’s social and demographic profile, its cultural and political configuration, all leave their imprint on the Cdn welfare state (though the institutional framework may be *more* important in other policy areas).

**Soroka (2003):** Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada

* Findings:
  + Despite work that emphasizes regional differences, there is a Cdn newspaper agenda
  + There is also a Cdn public agenda
* Agenda-setting dynamics are often multidirectional – and it is incorrect to assume that the media agenda leads to the public agenda
* Argues that “politics and political science are too often divided. Political science has a value on its own, certainly, but efforts to link academic work with everyday politics are especially valuable”

**Tuohy (1999):** Accidental Logics: The Dynamics of Change in the Health Care Arena in the United States, Britain, and Canada

* The separate healthcare systems that emerged in Canada, UK, and Britain resulted largely, if not entirely, from “accidents” of the timing of their birth – each had windows opened at different times. Had these windows been different, things might look nothing like they do today
* Between these policy episodes, the systems were shaped by their own internal logics
* This is really a path dependency argument
* Argument made throughout the book joins the social science literature about the survival of the welfare state at the turn of the 21st century. In particular, it can inform two lines of thought about 21st century welfare-state development:
  + Points to an increasing cross-national convergence in welfare state policies – Ruggie in here analysis found a degree of convergence in health policy in the US, UK and Canada
  + Another line of argument sees the development of welfare states as path dependent and emphasizes national differences

**R. Simeon (1976):** Studying Public Policy

* Despite this recent preoccupation with what, after all, is one of the oldest concerns of political science, we have not really advanced very far in increasing understanding of how government policies and actions are to be explained or understood. There is a proliferation of isolated studies, and of different methods and approaches, but precious little in the way of explanation.
* His is an argument for the role or place that studies of policy should have in political science and it is a response to the apolitical, atheoretical, non-cumulative, and noncomparative characteristics of much of the recent work in the area.
* The framework of policy analysis is most unhelpful in one way: it presents not a theory, but a way of looking at policy; it does not simplify study, but instead makes it more complex.

**R. Simeon (1996):** Afterword: ‘New’ Directions in Canadian Policy Studies

* Revisits “Studying Public Policy” and argues that that there has been an extraordinary growth and maturation of policy studies in Canada (citing Doern and Phidd, Pal, Brooks, and Atkinson, edited texts, *Canadian Public Policy*, *Policy Options,* and *How Ottawa Spends*). Argues that:
  + The field has become more comparative: m explicitly comparative studies are being undertaken, *and* Canadian research draws very heavily on the comparative literature.
  + Increase in case studies of an array of policy fields.
  + Research has become much more theoretically self-conscious and explicit.
  + There have been important conceptual contributions – Coleman and Skogstad on policy communities, Hoberg on policy styles, etc
* Despite this richness, the impact of policy studies on the real world of policy making remains very limited, with a few exceptions such as constitutional policy. Economists, lawyers, and business have probably had more impact.
* Research tends to look backward at why things are as they are, rather than forward to what they might be. An emphasis on constraint, multicausality, and unintended consequences makes us skeptical about the possibilities for reform.

**Howlett (2009):** Policy analytical capacity and evidence-based policy-making: Lessons from Canada

* Evidence-based policy-making represents a contemporary effort to reform or re-structure policy processes in order to prioritize evidentiary or data based decision-making. Like earlier efforts in the ‘‘policy analysis movement,’’ its aim is to avoid or minimize policy failures caused by a mismatch between government expectations and actual, on-the-ground conditions through the provision of greater amounts of policy-relevant information. A significant factor affecting the ability of policy-makers to engage in evidence-based policy-making pertains to both governmental and non-governmental ‘‘policy analytical capacity.’’
  + That is, governments require a reasonably high level of policy analytical capacity to perform the tasks associated with managing the policy process in order to implement evidence-based policy-making and avoid several of the most common sources of policy failures.
* Recent studies, however, suggest that, even in advanced countries such as Canada, the level of policy analytical capacity found in many governments and non-governmental actors is low, potentially contributing to both a failure of evidence-based policy-making as well as effectively dealing with many complex contemporary policy challenges:
  + “Without prior or at least concurrent efforts to enhance policy analytical capacity, unfortunately, ‘‘failure may be the only option’’ available to governments in their efforts to deal with critical contemporary policy challenges”
* Find it difficult to believe that somehow policy capacity is weaker today than in the past.

**Zuberi (2006):** Differences that Matter: Social Policy and the Working Poor in the United States and Canada

* Argues in favour of a sociological understanding of poverty – and the way in which *institutions shaped individual lives*
* “Even before an individual’s birth, social policy creates the conditions that either enrich or deteriorate his or her life trajectory”
* The sociological understanding of poverty must include a detailed examination of the role of social policy in shaping the socioeconomic hierarchy and the quality of life of low-income workers and their families.

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Council of the Federation Advisory Panel on Fiscal Imbalance, *Reconciling the Irreconcilable: Addressing Canada’s Fiscal Imbalance* (Ottawa: The Council, 2006)

W.D. Coleman and G. Skogstad, eds., *Policy Communities and Public Policy* (Mississauga, 1990)

T. Lewis, *In the Long Run We’re All Dead: The Canadian Turn to Fiscal Restraint* (Vancouver UBC Press, 2003)

A.M. Timpson, *Driven Apart: Women’s Employment Equality and Child Care in Canadian Public Policy* (Toronto, 2001)