
Federal-Municipal-Provincial Relations in Saskatchewan: Provincial Roles, Approaches, and Mechanisms

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Ce chapitre fournit un cadre d'analyse pour étudier le rôle de médiation des gouvernements provinciaux dans le contexte de la gouvernance à niveaux multiples et analyse ensuite la médiation effectuée par le gouvernement de la Saskatchewan au cours des dernières années. Ce chapitre examine la nature et les facteurs déterminants des rôles joués par le gouvernement de la Saskatchewan en ce qui concerne la gestion des relations provinciales-municipales-fédérale, ainsi que les approches et les mécanismes utilisés dans chacun de ces rôles. Le gouvernement provincial joue cinq grands rôles différents : la surveillance, la défense des intérêts, la médiation, la réglementation et le partenariat. Il a tendance à utiliser principalement des approches discrètes, informelles, non intrusives, réactives et bilatérales lors de l'accomplissement de ses rôles. Le gouvernement provincial a également tendance à utiliser des mécanismes intergouvernementaux et des mécanismes intra-gouvernementaux dans la gestion des relations provinciales-municipales-fédérale. Finalement, les décisions prises concernant ces rôles et ces mécanismes ont été influencées par ses politiques, ses intérêts politiques et financiers, ses ressources politiques et financières et par la mesure dans laquelle il a adhéré à la doctrine de la « nouvelle gestion publique ». De plus amples recherches devront toutefois être effectuées sur la gouvernance à niveaux multiples et sur la formulation des politiques.

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian federal system produces many interesting and important inter-governmental relations among the various orders of government. Such relations have varying degrees of effect not only on the nature and scope of public policy but ultimately for the operation and unity of the political system. The

literature on Canadian federalism devotes extensive systematic analysis to most, though by no means all, facets of intergovernmental relations. One facet, which to date has not received extensive and systematic analysis, is federal-municipal-provincial relations. This is particularly true of the roles performed by provincial governments in managing these relations and the approaches and organizational mechanisms they use in doing so. Until recently, attention devoted to federal-municipal-provincial relations in both the federalism literature and the local governance literature focused primarily on three general topics: (1) constitutional and jurisdictional issues related to municipal governance (L'Heureux 1986, 179–214; Kitchen and McMillan 1986, 215–62); (2) federal interest and involvement in municipal infrastructure and in economic and social development programs and projects through the use of either its constitutional powers or, more commonly, its power of the purse; and (3) the vigilance with which various provincial governments have guarded against federal involvement in these programs and projects (Graham, Philips, and Maslove 1998, 171–202; Tindal and Tindal 2000, 207–54). However, relatively little attention was devoted to the provincial role in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations and to the approaches and mechanisms used for that purpose (see, for example, Andrew, Graham, and Philips 2002; Seidle 2002; Hulchanski 2002). This is now changing. Major research projects, have been launched, such as the one (funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) that focuses on multilevel governance both in Canada and elsewhere. The analysis of “marble cake federalism” and “multilevel governance” is now very much in vogue both in Canada and in other federations (White 2002; Mejer 2000).

The central objective of this chapter is to provide an overview of the nature and determinants of the roles that the Saskatchewan government has performed in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations and the approaches and mechanisms it has used in doing so. It is important to note that this is a general and largely descriptive overview of these roles, approaches, and mechanisms rather than a detailed analysis or evaluation of them. As noted in the concluding section of this paper, a detailed analysis or evaluation should be part of the future research agenda which we hope will be stimulated by the conceptual and empirical components of this paper.

This chapter consists of six major sections. The first provides an overview of a selected set of significant programs and projects that involve federal-municipal-provincial relations. The next three sections provide a conceptualization and an overview of the roles performed by the Saskatchewan government in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations and the approaches and mechanisms it uses in performing these roles. The fifth section gives an overview of the factors that shape the provincial government's decisions regarding these roles, approaches, and mechanisms. The sixth and concluding section provides a summary of the major findings and offers some suggestions for further research.

THE FOCUS OF FEDERAL-MUNICIPAL-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS

In Saskatchewan as in other provinces, federal-municipal-provincial relations are focused on a plethora of policies, programs, and projects. The appendix, "Federal-Municipal-Provincial Collaboration in Saskatchewan: A Sample of Notable Programs and Projects in 2003," provides an overview of several types of programs and projects in the municipal sector that have been the focus of federal-municipal-provincial relations in Saskatchewan in recent years. More specifically, it provides a description of the following: the nature of such programs and projects; which order of government took a lead role in initiating, developing, and implementing them; which order of government contributed to funding them; which order of government was primarily responsible for implementing them; and which provincial department performed a lead role in dealing with them.

From the information contained in the appendix, it is possible to make seven general observations regarding the nature of these programs and projects and the roles and responsibilities of the various orders of government. First, the programs and projects are undertaken in a wide range of policy sectors. This includes minority language, community planning, airports, facilities for movie production, infrastructure, agriculture, university research facilities, culture, heritage, disaster assistance, housing, regional intersectoral planning, environment, emergency preparedness, construction codes, northern development, rural roads for grain transportation, policing, inner-city neighbourhood planning and development, forestry, summer student employment, urban development, and Aboriginal heritage.

Looking at these through a jurisdictional lens, it is apparent that they impinge on areas of federal and provincial jurisdiction as well as being in areas of shared jurisdiction. Moreover, the various programs and projects tend to have what might be termed "plurijurisdictional" characteristics which render them difficult to place in one particular jurisdictional category. Despite their plurijurisdictional nature, it is noteworthy that jurisdictional disputes do not loom large in relation to any of them in Saskatchewan. Invariably they are initiated and implemented on a cordial partnership basis with the consent and support of the various orders of government. The reason for this is that Saskatchewan is one of those provinces which – unlike Quebec, for example – is not excessively jealous of its jurisdictional authority either as a matter of principle or as a matter of strategic positioning in federal-provincial negotiations. Often its financial needs do not afford it the luxury of being excessively jealous of its jurisdictional authority. In this respect, Saskatchewan has much in common with Manitoba and the Atlantic provinces, which find themselves in a comparable political and economic situation within the Canadian federation.

The Saskatchewan government's willingness to see the federal government become actively involved in programs and projects, not only in the municipal

sector but also in other policy sectors, is evident in the principle of “constructive entanglement” among various orders of government, which was articulated by the former premier of Saskatchewan, Roy Romanow, during the negotiations surrounding the Social Union Framework Agreement (Marchildon 1999, 80). Saskatchewan premiers have rarely opposed this principle in a concerted manner. Traditionally, their preference has been to engage, rather than exclude, the federal government in programs and projects, especially where federal dollars have been either promised or anticipated. The federal-provincial negotiations on the Social Union Framework Agreement, in which Saskatchewan’s premier performed a leadership role in mediating a consensus among nine provinces and the federal government, is a case in point (Marchildon and Cotter 2001).

Second, the vast majority of these programs and projects were initiated and developed by the federal government; only a few were initiated and developed by the provincial and municipal governments. The federal government has been proactive in initiating and developing programs and projects within the scope of the municipal sector that it deems to be of national importance. A notable example is the Green Municipal Funds program, designed to support the federal government’s climate change initiative and the Kyoto commitment. The federal government’s tendency to be proactive in such initiatives has been influenced by a desire to work in partnership with the municipal and provincial governments to advance both its own political and policy goals and to some extent also the policy goals of the provincial and municipal governments. The federal government’s political goals include enhancing its legitimacy as an order of government and advancing the partisan political and electoral interests of its party.

Third, the roles performed by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments in the initiation, formulation, and implementation of programs and projects are not necessarily consistent with federal and provincial responsibilities under the constitution. For example, constitutionally, the development and enforcement of the construction codes are clearly the responsibility of provincial and municipal governments. Nevertheless, since 1937 the federal government has initiated and maintained a process of coordinating a national system of building fire, safety, and plumbing codes. This is a case where, at least to date, the provincial and municipal governments have found it prudent and advantageous from a programmatic, financial, and political standpoint to let the federal government assume a lead role and responsibility. Whether they will continue to feel this way in the future is open to question. The reason for this is that the provinces retain the right to adjust national codes to respond to local needs or interests, and at times they have done so. Still, the shared goal is to keep the variations to a minimum in the interest of national consistency. In contemplating any changes from the status quo, the various orders of government should be cognizant that construction and architectural firms prefer

to deal with one set of codes. Moreover, the research and administrative costs for establishing codes is considerably less if the work is coordinated by one order of government.

Fourth, most of the programs and projects are jointly funded by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments and in some cases also by other governmental or non-governmental entities. However, in many instances, if not most, the federal government assumes either all or at least the largest portion of the financial responsibility. Indeed, there is only one initiative among those identified in the appendix that does not entail a substantial federal financial contribution – namely, funding for the operation of regional intersectoral committees. Although these committees include representation from the federal government, they are funded entirely by the provincial government through its interdepartmental Human Services Integration Forum.

Federal funding for various programs and projects is generally provided for specific periods of time. Moreover, there is a preference for project-based funding, particularly in view of the extensive use of Western Economic Diversification as the funding source. The mandate of this agency focuses on project-based funding for a limited time frame which may or may not be renewable, rather than on ongoing long-term funding. The other prevalent mode of federal funding is a program-based rather than a project-based arrangement. But even this tends to be provided for relatively short and fixed periods (for example, ten-year funding for infrastructure funding, three-year funding for a homelessness initiative, six-year funding for the Green Municipal Funds, and five-year funding for the Prairie Grain Roads Program). On more open-ended programs, the federal government usually retains some flexibility to control its spending commitment – for example, adjusting funding availability under the Joint Emergency Preparedness Program or unilaterally deciding on eligibility criteria under the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements. The federal government has also tried to retain some flexibility in the nature and scope of involvement in the management of various programs or projects. For example, it was initially an important partner in the creation of the Wanuskewin Heritage Park in Saskatoon, which focuses on First Nations peoples, and accepted a position on the park's board of directors that was guaranteed by the related provincial legislation. While the federal government has continued to support specific projects at the park, such as providing funding for infrastructure improvements, for many years now it has not responded to requests to name someone to sit on the board as its representative. Such a decision may be based on a belief that appointing representatives to such boards is not always advantageous. Although doing so allows the government to influence management decisions, it also leaves it open to criticism and to political or legal liabilities resulting from any management decisions that are made.

Fifth, the federal government has been very actively involved not only in the initiation, formulation, and prioritization of programs and projects, but

also in the adjudication of proposals submitted pursuant to such programs and projects. This involvement is based on its desire to exert some oversight and control in order to ensure that its policy goals and political interests are advanced. Here, too, the federal government faces a dilemma in that although this involvement gives it greater control, it also leaves it open to some political and legal liabilities.

Sixth, in the recent past the federal government has not been very involved in either the implementation or the evaluation of specific programs and projects; both have been the responsibility of the provincial and municipal governments, as well as other local governmental and non-governmental entities. This is for practical and philosophical reasons. The major practical consideration is the reality that the federal government does not have the requisite administrative infrastructure at the local level to become actively involved in the implementation, evaluation, and termination of specific initiatives. The major philosophical consideration is that the federal government has been influenced by the new public management notion that governments should “steer and not row.” Although it has wanted to ensure that it is involved in “steering programs” and projects at the initiation and formulation stages, it has wanted to limit its involvement in “rowing” at the implementation, evaluation, and termination stages. In the case of evaluation, what we have been witnessing in recent years is an attempt by the federal government to institutionalize program and project evaluation systems as part of a strategic effort to increase the level of accountability and responsibility. By limiting its involvement in the implementation and evaluation of programs and projects, the federal government is able to shelter itself somewhat from any criticisms and political and legal liabilities that emerge.

The provincial government has been influenced by similar practical and philosophical considerations regarding the nature and scope of its involvement in various programs and projects. In recent years, it has been looking at municipalities and various other local governmental and non-governmental agencies to implement and evaluate programs and projects. It justifies this approach on the grounds that it enhances its degree of flexibility and sensitivity in meeting local conditions, needs, and preferences.

Seventh, provincial involvement in these programs and projects is not restricted to the provincial department or agency responsible for municipal affairs. A wide array of provincial departments and agencies have a lead role in various programs and projects, depending on their precise programmatic focus. The number of provincial departments or agencies involved has grown over the years as a result of the expanding number of programs and projects that fit more logically in their respective mandates rather than in the mandate of the department responsible for municipal affairs. An important consequence of this fragmentation is that it creates coordination challenges not only in the provincial bureaucracy but also in the federal-municipal-provincial

coordination bureaucracy. Another consequence is that in order to facilitate the coordination, various types of coordinating mechanisms have to be developed both at the provincial and at the intergovernmental level.

In summary, programs and projects involving federal-municipal-provincial relations are undertaken in a wide range of policy sectors, and the vast majority of them are initiated and developed by the federal government. The alignment of roles among the three orders of government in relation to these programs and projects are not necessarily consistent with the federal and provincial jurisdictional authority, and they generally involve joint funding by all three orders of government. Furthermore, the federal government tends to be involved in the initiation and formulation of these programs and projects and to some extent in the adjudication of proposals concerning them, but not in the implementation and evaluation of specific programs and projects. Finally, provincial involvement in such programs and projects includes many provincial departments and agencies rather than only the provincial department responsible for municipal affairs or the central agency responsible for intergovernmental relations.

PROVINCIAL ROLES IN MANAGING RELATIONS

The programs and projects identified in the appendix reveal that the Government of Saskatchewan performs at least five major types of roles in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations: a monitoring role, an advocacy role, a mediation role, a regulatory role, and a partnership role. The objective in this section is to provide a brief explanation of each of these roles and to give some examples of each.

MONITORING ROLE

The provincial government monitors the relations and any resulting initiatives between the federal and municipal governments in order to ascertain what implications they may have for its own policy goals, its political interests, and the broader public provincial interests. It is likely that most, if not all, federal-municipal relations are monitored by the provincial government. This is particularly true of those related to the initiation, development, funding, and implementation of any program or project that would involve those two orders of government. However, the focus here is on two particular instances of provincial monitoring: (1) when the provincial government is not involved in initiating, developing, funding, and implementing a program or project; (2) when the provincial government may be involved in initiating and developing a program or project but is not involved in funding or implementing it. In both cases, the provincial government is in effect monitoring from

various distances what the other two orders of government are doing. A notable example is the various federal programs related to the federal government's "rural agenda" under the Federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada, which was established in 1998. While some of these programs entail direct provincial participation, others do not. An example of the former is the Prairie Grain Roads Program; examples of the latter are the Agricultural Rural Minority Language Community Planning Initiative and the Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative.

ADVOCACY ROLE

The provincial government, either on its own initiative or at the request of municipal governments, may perform an advocacy role on behalf of its municipal governments vis-à-vis the federal government. There are at least three notable examples of this. One is the initial lobbying for the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program, which the provincial government performed not only in its own interest and on its own behalf but also in the interest and on behalf of the municipal associations and their members, all of whom were very anxious to access federal funds for their transportation infrastructure. Another notable example is the provincial government's support for rural municipalities when the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) was calling for higher compensation for specific land claims. The province had no direct financial obligation with respect to this matter but reluctantly agreed to support the municipalities' arguments, albeit very cautiously. The reason for its caution was that it was trying to maintain a tricky balance of supporting the position of rural municipalities without being pressured by the federal and municipal governments to contribute to the compensation package. By performing this advocacy role, the provincial government was in effect performing a dual role on the issue of compensation for specific land claims because it was also performing a limited mediation role on this particular issue. Another example is the Prairie Grain Roads Program and its predecessor program, the Canada Agri-Infrastructure Program. The provincial government ended up getting a share of the federal funding under this program for secondary provincial highways. The program was the culmination of many years of support to municipalities claiming that the grain handling and transportation changes following the withdrawal of the Crow Freight Rate Benefit were adding significant direct costs to farmers and were increasing financial pressure on municipalities to rebuild and maintain their roads.

MEDIATION ROLE

The provincial government, either on its own initiative or at the request of the federal or the municipal governments, or both, may perform a mediating role

between the two orders of government. There are numerous instances in which the provincial government has done so. In some instances it has been invited or implored to do so. In other cases, it has chosen to do so of its own accord because it feels that it is imperative to prevent or settle some disagreement between those two other orders of government. When it is invited to act as a mediator, the provincial government tries not to become embroiled in issues that it feels have problematical policy or political implications that it could avoid through non-involvement.

There have been several notable examples in the recent past of provincial mediation between the federal and municipal governments. One example is the mediation related to the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements. This program was initiated and developed by the federal government with little formal negotiations with either the provincial or municipal governments. After it created the program, the federal government made some unilateral adjustments to the program that were intended to contain its financial exposure. It was at this point that the Saskatchewan government, along with other provincial governments, became involved in mediating discussions between the federal government and municipal representatives in an effort to establish a more stable, predictable, and durable framework for the program to compensate municipalities for losses suffered as a result of natural disasters. It should be noted that in this case, and others like it, the provincial government was not mediating entirely as an objective and disinterested third party. After all, the level of compensation provided by the federal government has a direct bearing on how much of its own money the provincial government may have to devote for reconstruction in the aftermath of a disaster.

Other examples of provincial mediation include negotiations between the federal, municipal, and Aboriginal governments involving compensation to municipalities for Treaty Land Entitlement and the creation of urban reserves. In both of these cases the provincial government was very reluctant to perform a mediation role. Insofar as it has done so, its role has been very limited, informal, and low profile. In the case of compensation for Treaty Land Entitlement, the negotiations were primarily between the federal government, SARM (which was negotiating on behalf of rural municipalities), and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (which was negotiating on behalf of its member bands, who were signatories to the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement that was concluded during the early 1990s). The negotiations were conducted in a formal process known as the Treaty Land Entitlement Round Table. At issue was how much compensation would be provided to rural municipalities for property taxes that were lost as a result of having land converted to reserve status, on which property taxes per se could not be collected (Mortin 1995, 80). The provincial government tried to avoid becoming involved and performing any role in the negotiations, largely out of fear that it would be called upon by the various parties around the table to make some financial contribution

towards a mutually acceptable financial arrangement. Nevertheless, it was ultimately persuaded to become involved when negotiations reached an impasse and SARM threatened to take the issue to the courts. In an effort to prevent a court challenge, the provincial government agreed to serve either as a mediator or as a facilitator between the municipal and federal government representatives.

While the provincial government performed this role in a very limited and informal manner, apparently it also performed a very limited advocacy role on behalf of SARM by encouraging the federal government to find a mutually acceptable solution. The provincial government was reluctant to perform such an advocacy role in a public manner because it was a very sensitive matter. At issue was not simply how much money municipal governments could exact from the federal government as compensation but how much of the money which the federal government had already committed to the First Nations bands, pursuant to the Treaty Land Entitlement Agreement, would have to be used for compensating municipalities for loss of taxes. The provincial government did not want to be seen as siding with the municipal governments and against the First Nations governments.

Similar dynamics were at work in the provincial government's involvement in the creation of some urban reserves during the past decade – a process in which the federal, municipal, and Aboriginal governments were directly involved. There was strong opposition from the municipal government of Fort Qu'Appelle and, more recently, of North Battleford. In both cases, the provincial government was very unwilling to become involved either in a formal and direct way or in an informal and indirect way. Both publicly and privately, the provincial government's preferred approach was to encourage and implore all parties to be sensible, pragmatic, and fair in their efforts to find a mutually acceptable solution. Its discussions tended to be low profile and informal, largely designed to persuade the federal, municipal, and Aboriginal governments that it would be preferable for them to resolve the matter among themselves without provincial government involvement (Barron and Garcea 1999, 42–5).

REGULATORY ROLE

Pursuant to its constitutional prerogative and political imperatives, the provincial government may establish a regulatory regime for its municipalities through statutory or non-statutory policy instruments. Such a regime might have an effect on program and project matters on which a municipality might negotiate and enter into agreements with the federal government and the means by which it might do so. In performing a regulatory role vis-à-vis municipal governments, the provincial government may also enter into written or unwritten agreements with either the federal government or any other governments for the purpose of clarifying what it does or does not deem acceptable in their relations with its municipal governments.

Historically, there have been both statutory and non-statutory limitations preventing municipal governments in Saskatchewan from entering into negotiations for the purpose of concluding agreements with other orders of government in Canada or abroad without formal provincial approval. However, in some cases the provincial government has given municipal governments the authority to enter into such negotiations and agreements. An example is municipal policing. Under the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act*, the federal government, through the solicitor general, may enter into agreements with any province to contract the RCMP to assist in the administration of justice – which is a provincial responsibility under section 92 of the *Constitution Act* – as well as to provide municipal policing services. Saskatchewan's *Police Act*, which creates the legal framework for policing in the province, specifies that municipalities are responsible for providing adequate law enforcement personnel and facilities needed to maintain a reasonable standard of law and order. Municipalities can meet their policing responsibilities by establishing their own police service – something that is required for all urban municipalities with a population greater than 20,000 – or by entering into agreements with the federal government either directly, as specified under the *Police Act*, or through the provincial government under specific or general agreements to have such service provided by the RCMP. The important point to note regarding this program is that provincial legislation specifically authorizes the municipalities to enter into negotiations and contracts with the federal government. In Saskatchewan, provincial statutes, as well as other types of policy instruments, are generally silent on such matters. Instead, the provincial government tends to rely on conventions, tacit understandings, and periodic ad hoc discussions with municipal associations or with individual municipal governments in establishing what it deems to be appropriate protocols to regulate the relations of municipal governments with the federal government.

PARTNERSHIP ROLE

In performing a partnership role, the provincial government operates as a more or less equal member of a tripartite intergovernmental partnership with the federal government and municipal governments. As a partner, the provincial government may perform any of the roles that are commonly attributed to members of various types of partnerships (Kernaghan 1993, 57–76; Kernaghan, Marson, and Borins 2000, 179–206). These include the following: consultative partnerships, in which all members engage in consultations related to matters of mutual interest or concern, including coordination, as is the case with regional intersectoral committees; contributory partnerships, which entail a sharing of financial support for certain activities or services, as is the case with major project initiatives such as the Canadian Light Source and the Canada-Saskatchewan Film, Video, Production, and Education Centre, which

is better known as the Sound Stage (Saskatchewan, Executive Council 2001); operational partnerships, which entail a sharing of the core management and administrative tasks that must be performed (for example, municipal policing); collaborative partnerships, which entail a sharing of core governance, strategic planning, and various decision-making tasks, as well as financial responsibility between two or more governmental or non-governmental organizations (for example, the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program). Within the context of any of those partnerships, the provincial government has considerable opportunities to influence the nature and scope of federal-municipal-provincial relations.

The decisions of the provincial government to participate or not to participate in various federal-municipal-provincial partnership initiatives and the way it does so are crucial in managing both trilevel federal-municipal-provincial relations and any bilevel federal-municipal relations that may emerge. The consent of the provincial government to participate in, to support, or at least not to object to or impede such federal-municipal intergovernmental partnerships is absolutely essential. Without it, the other two orders of government would run the risk of having their initiative contested in the political or judicial arena, especially in the case of initiatives that impinge on areas of provincial jurisdiction.

There are many examples in which Saskatchewan's provincial government performs a partnership role. Indeed, most programs and projects entail a provincial partnership role. Several notable examples of this role are identified in the appendix. While the provincial government's precise roles and responsibilities in these partnerships vary, they usually entail one of the following: initiating, developing, funding, and implementing programs and projects. For illustrative purposes, it is useful to note some features of the intergovernmental dynamics surrounding the creation and operation of one such partnership. The current Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program is an example of one in which the provincial government and the municipalities were of the same view that federal funding for infrastructure was justified and was essential to ease their financial burden. In 1999, a year before the federal government agreed to renew its involvement in a provincial-municipal infrastructure program, the Saskatchewan government announced that it would contribute \$10 million for such a program for the year 1999–2000. In making this announcement, it expressed support for the municipal call for assistance from other orders of government and urged the federal government to come on board. The federal government did so in 2000, when it announced that it would enter into agreements with the provinces to finance a new national infrastructure program. As with the previous versions of the program, the federal government negotiated the formal agreements with the provincial and territorial governments. The municipalities were not directly involved in the negotiations and

were not signatories to the agreements, notwithstanding the fact that they were expected to contribute to the cost-sharing formula for the portion of the program that would apply to them. The reason why the municipalities were not included in the negotiations was, first, that the federal government saw this program primarily as an employment-creation program and not a municipal program; and, second, all the provinces wished to have the flexibility to determine how much of the funding would be directed to municipal priorities and how much would go to other provincial priorities. In Saskatchewan, at least 80 percent of the federal-provincial funding was to be directed to municipal priorities, with municipalities supplementing this funding to reflect a one-third contribution. In other provinces, the municipal portion was not as high.

Finally, in some instances the provincial government chooses not to be a partner with the federal and municipal governments, but it agrees not to stand in the way of such arrangements. An example is the federal government's Summer Work Experience Program for secondary and postsecondary students. Municipalities are eligible to apply to this program for wage subsidies to hire students during the summer. The Saskatchewan government established its own separate student employment program, for which municipalities are not eligible. Despite requests by the federal government to coordinate the federal and provincial programs and render them more consistent, the provincial government chose to act separately. Moreover, it refused requests by municipal governments to make them eligible for subsidies under the provincial program. In refusing their request, the provincial government encouraged municipal governments to apply for federal wage subsidies. Its rationale for doing so was that if municipal governments accessed federal funds, it would leave more provincial money for subsidizing the wages of organizations that do not qualify for the federal program.

In summary, the provincial government performs at least five different types of roles in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations. These are not mutually exclusive roles and may be performed either concurrently or consecutively in conjunction with a single program or project initiative.

PROVINCIAL APPROACHES IN MANAGING RELATIONS

In examining the approaches which the Government of Saskatchewan used in performing various roles in the context of federal-municipal-provincial relations, the following typology will be useful. It consists of five sets of paired and differentiated approaches:

- bilateral approach v. trilateral approach (McRoberts 1985)
- reactive approach v. proactive approach

- non-intrusive approach v. intrusive approach
- informal approach v. formal approach
- low-profile approach v. high-profile approach.

In proffering some generalizations regarding the Saskatchewan government's various approaches in this matter, a caveat is in order. The following generalizations are based on general tendencies rather than on perfectly consistent behaviour by each of the provincial governments that have been in power in recent years. After all, as noted below, there are some exceptions to the generalizations. Moreover, these generalizations are based largely on our own observations rather than on those of government officials or other academic observers.

The first of these five generalizations is that the provincial government tends to rely much more on a bilateral approach than a trilateral approach in performing various roles, especially its advocacy and mediation roles; it prefers to deal with the federal and municipal governments separately, either concurrently or consecutively. The federal government also seems to prefer bilateral negotiations. The municipal governments are less supportive of this "dual bilateralism." While they value a certain degree of bilateralism when it suits their purposes (either for certain programs or projects or at some stage of a consultation or negotiation process), their preference is generally to be invited to sit at the same table as the federal and provincial governments. In short, except where it suits their purposes, municipalities prefer genuine trilateralism to dual bilateralism with the provincial government serving as the go-between.

Second, the provincial government tends to rely on a reactive rather than a proactive approach in performing its roles in federal-municipal-provincial relations; it tends to respond to federal initiatives related to the municipal sector rather than undertaking its own initiatives and constraining the federal government to respond to them. This approach is a function of two related factors: that the provincial government realizes that it has limited financial resources to undertake many of its own initiatives in the municipal sector; and that it is realistic regarding the extent to which – given its relatively limited financial and political clout within the federation – it can constrain the federal government to respond to its own initiatives.

Third, the provincial government's tendency is to adopt a non-intrusive rather than an intrusive approach in federal-municipal consultations and negotiations. This is particularly true when new initiatives are under consideration. The provincial government seems to be quite content to monitor such interactions from a distance and wait for an invitation from the federal government or municipal governments to become involved. The Saskatchewan government generally does not exhibit the characteristics sometimes ascribed to provincial governments in some other provinces as jealously guarding jurisdiction and being highly sensitive about bilateral federal-municipal

consultations, negotiations, and agreements. This is not to suggest that the Saskatchewan government is not concerned at all. After all, like other provincial governments, it wants to ensure that the federal and municipal governments do not pursue initiatives that are either far removed from provincial priorities and might not advance the provincial interest, or which could impose financial obligations on it. Nevertheless, the Saskatchewan government has been willing to allow municipalities to engage in direct negotiations with the federal government for various programs and projects. Its reason for doing so is largely linked to its own financial and political interests. In the case of its financial interests, it hopes that municipal governments are successful in obtaining federal funding that would reduce the political and financial pressures for the province to fund their respective initiatives. In the case of its political interests, it hopes that by reducing its involvement it will limit the adverse effects of any political fallout. Of course, this is a tricky matter for the provincial government because non-involvement can also leave it open to criticism and the resulting political consequences.

Fourth, the provincial government tends to prefer informal rather than formal approaches in performing various roles. This is particularly true of its monitoring, regulatory, advocacy, and mediation roles. In performing these roles the provincial government tends to eschew formal and institutionalized processes in favour of informal and ad hoc arrangements. This is largely because of its limited financial and human resources to devote to an institutionalization of these processes, rather than because of any philosophical predisposition. Although in recent decades Saskatchewan has followed other provinces in establishing an intergovernmental relations bureaucracy, the result has been a smaller and less resourced bureaucratic infrastructure than that of larger and wealthier provinces, such as Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia, and Alberta (Leeson 1987).

Fifth, the provincial government tends to prefer to use a low-profile approach in performing its roles vis-à-vis the federal government. One gets the distinct impression that it does not like to be seen as taking a strong public stand on any proceedings between the federal and municipal governments. This is equally true during provincial elections and between elections. The Saskatchewan government does not conform to the characteristic ascribed to its counterparts in some other provinces, where “fed-bashing” is an integral part of the strategic political behaviour to curry support with the local electorate. There are exceptions, however, as evidenced by the position taken by the provincial government on the gun registry. On that issue, it sided with Saskatchewan’s municipal leaders against the federal government, and it did so in a public manner. But even on that issue, it articulated its position in a more tempered and lower-profile manner than, for example, the Alberta government. Its decision to be less strident was undoubtedly influenced by the province’s heavy reliance on the federal government for financial transfers

for its volatile farm economy, among other things. Clearly, its financial standing does not allow it to act like Alberta, even when it holds the same view as Alberta.

In summary, this overview on the approaches used by Saskatchewan's provincial government in dealing with federal-municipal-provincial relations reveals that it has tended to rely on bilateral, reactive, non-intrusive, informal, and low-profile approaches. It also reveals that there are some differences in the approaches of the Saskatchewan government and those of larger and wealthier provinces. More detailed comparative research on this matter is required to provide more reliable generalizations regarding the precise nature, scope, and determinants of these differences.

MECHANISMS FOR MANAGING RELATIONS

In managing federal-municipal-provincial relations, governments rely on various types of organizational mechanisms. Two types are generally used in Saskatchewan: intergovernmental mechanisms and provincial mechanisms. Both types are created by the provincial government, either on its own or in consultation with municipal and federal officials, in its efforts to facilitate the management of federal-provincial-municipal relations.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL MECHANISMS

Intergovernmental mechanisms consist of various types of coordinating committees comprising representatives of the various orders of government that are responsible for managing federal-municipal-provincial relations. There are at least two major types of these mechanisms: sector-based mechanisms, which are established to deal with a wide range of issues in the municipal sector that impinge on federal-municipal-provincial relations; and program-based or project-based mechanisms, which are established to deal with intergovernmental relations in connection with individual programs and projects. Each type can take one of two forms, depending on the number of orders of government they involve: a bilevel form, when they involve representatives of any two of the three orders of government; and a trilevel form, when they involve representatives of all three orders of government – federal, provincial, and municipal. A quadralevel form can also exist when, in addition to representatives of the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, they include representatives of Aboriginal governments.

Notable examples of the sector-based intergovernmental mechanisms are two bilevel round tables that have been established to facilitate communication and negotiations between the provincial government and the municipal associations to deal with various types of matters, including those that fall

within the scope of federal-municipal-provincial relations. One of these is the provincial-municipal round table, which consists of representatives of the provincial government, the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA), and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM). The other is the northern provincial-municipal round table, which consists of representatives of the provincial government and Saskatchewan Association of Northern Communities (SANC). SUMA and SARM send only their executive members to their round table meetings, but the northern round table includes representatives from SANC's executive and also from each of the northern municipalities. The extent to which these bilevel round tables are used for dealing with policy and program issues involving the various orders of government is highly variable and depends on the willingness of the provincial and municipal representatives to attend the meetings in order to address issues of interest or importance to them. Political machinations and personal relations have a substantial effect both on the extent to which the round tables are used for managing relations and their efficacy in doing so. The use of these formal provincial-municipal mechanisms is supplemented by informal mechanisms – for example, the most senior elected officials or the most senior appointed officials from both orders of government meet periodically on an ad hoc basis to deal with issues of mutual interest. A notable example of such meetings is when provincial officials meet with the Local Governments Federation, which in addition to SUMA and SARM includes the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA). Its principal focus is on financial issues related to the property tax base, which in Saskatchewan is shared by municipal governments and school boards (Norton 2005, 59–60).

Notable examples of program-based or project-based mechanisms include the various bilevel and trilevel committees involved in the development, funding, or implementation of some of the programs or projects identified in the appendix. This includes the committees established in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Northern Development Accord, the Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement, the Regina Inner City Community Partnership, the National Homelessness Initiative, and the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative. A notable feature of most of these types of committees is that in addition to representatives of the federal, provincial, and municipal orders of government they also involve some representatives of various Aboriginal governments and authorities, as well as various non-governmental community-based organizations that have a stake in various programs and projects.

Participation by representatives of Aboriginal governments on these committees is becoming increasingly common. This is because of the sizable Aboriginal population in Saskatchewan, especially in the north and in such major urban centres such as Saskatoon, Regina, Prince Albert, and North Battleford. Increasingly, all orders of government and the general public have

begun to understand that the “Aboriginalization” of the province’s population is a significant demographic phenomenon. Saskatchewan is a leader among the provinces in the proportion of Aboriginals as a percentage of the total population, and it is likely to continue to be so to an even greater extent in future. Indeed, census data reveal that only Manitoba’s Aboriginal population of 13.6 percent is higher than Saskatchewan’s, which is 13.5 percent. Moreover, all indications are that the proportion of Aboriginal people will increase substantially in future, for the recent population trends are expected not only to persist but to accelerate during the next half-century. Whereas Saskatchewan’s Aboriginal population increased by 17 percent from 1996 to 2001, the non-Aboriginal population decreased by 3.7 percent. This growth rate has led to projections that by 2045 Aboriginals will constitute approximately 25 to 33 percent of the province’s population and possibly an even higher proportion of the population in major urban centres such as Saskatoon (Lindsay, Painter, and Hower 1997, 61; Saskatchewan, Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs 2004). The increasing size of the Aboriginal population, along with the increasing migration to urban communities throughout the province, has heightened the need for all orders of government to deal on a coordinated basis with issues such as literacy, employment, and social services for urban Aboriginals. In Saskatchewan there is a highly developed system of Aboriginal governance at the local, regional, and provincial level. It includes the various orders of Aboriginal government as well as parallel and separate administrative and program-delivery mechanisms. This complex panoply of Aboriginal governments and program delivery mechanisms makes it increasingly difficult for the federal, provincial, and municipal governments to establish either sectoral committees or program-based and project-based committees that do not include representatives of Aboriginal governments and communities.

PROVINCIAL MECHANISMS

During the past decade, the provincial mechanisms for managing federal-municipal-provincial relations have consisted of the provincial government’s line departments and central agencies. In some cases a line department responsible for municipal affairs has taken the lead in managing such relations, and in other cases a central agency responsible for intergovernmental relations has taken the lead. A common practice is for a line department and a central agency to do so on a joint and coordinated basis. As explained below, the growing recognition of the need for a joint and coordinated approach ultimately led the Saskatchewan government to integrate the line department responsible for municipal affairs with the central agency responsible for intergovernmental relations.

The line departments that have had a central role in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations during approximately the past decade have been

those responsible for municipal affairs, namely Municipal Government (1993–98), Municipal Affairs, Culture, and Housing (1998–2001), and Municipal Affairs and Housing (2001–2). The central agencies that have been involved in managing these relations during the same time include the Department of Intergovernmental Relations (pre-1996), the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (1996–97), the Department of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs (1997–2002), the Department of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs (2002–4), and the Department of Government Relations (2004–5).

The year 2002 constitutes an important watershed in the provincial mechanisms which the provincial government uses for managing municipal affairs and federal-provincial-municipal relations. Between 2002 and 2004 responsibility for both of these functions was entrusted to a multifunctional central agency named Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs (GRAA). GRAA was responsible for municipal affairs and also for various types of intergovernmental relations (provincial-municipal, provincial-federal, provincial-Aboriginal, and international). The rationale provided in the annual report for the reorganization was that the “new department will provide the opportunity to strengthen government-to-government relationships with municipal, provincial, federal and Aboriginal governments” (Saskatchewan, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs 2002, 3).

In the fall of 2004, GRAA was split into two separate departments: Government Relations (GR), which continued to be responsible for both municipal affairs and three major sets of intergovernmental relations (interprovincial, federal-provincial, and international); and First Nations and Métis Relations (FNMR), which assumed responsibility for Aboriginal relations, including the provincial government’s relations with First Nations and Métis governments in the province and also its relations with the federal and municipal governments related to First Nations and Métis governance. Ironically, the splitting of GRAA into GR and FNMR has meant that gains in intradepartmental coordination involving municipal governments were offset by the loss of intradepartmental coordination involving First Nations and Métis Relations. Those responsible for the departmental reconfiguration were undoubtedly aware of this trade-off but felt that, on balance, hiving off First Nations and Métis Relations was beneficial in narrowing and focusing the mandate of both departments. The belief was that the restructuring would give “greater attention to the government’s approach to Aboriginal issues” (Saskatchewan 2004). The adverse effect of separating FNMR from GRAA was not as great as it might have been, largely because the personal and professional ties formed among officials who had worked in a single department for two years continued and facilitated coordination after they were reorganized into two departments.

The policy rationale for integrating municipal affairs into GRAA in 2002 and subsequently into GR in 2004 was that there was an increasing overlap of policy and program issues involving municipal governments and other orders

of government (provincial, Aboriginal, and federal) within the province and the federation. In part, however, the integration also attests to an evolution that has been occurring during the past decade in the provincial government's perspective of municipal governments in Saskatchewan. Whereas in the more distant past the provincial government viewed and treated municipal governments as its local administrative units, in recent years it has been viewing and treating them more as relatively autonomous governments. The result is that it has been moving towards a more efficacious "government to government" relationship with them. Precisely how successful this has been is a point of considerable debate among municipal and provincial officials.

For purposes of federal-municipal-provincial relations within the multilevel governance framework, the main advantage envisioned in agglomerating the province's municipal affairs bureaucracy and its intergovernmental relations bureaucracy within one department is increased efficiency and effectiveness. The hope is that the agglomeration will create the organizational proximity needed to ensure that the management of federal-municipal-provincial relations receives greater and quicker attention by provincial experts in intergovernmental relations than was possible under the previous organizational framework. It is also hoped that making one minister and one deputy minister responsible for both municipal affairs and intergovernmental relations will reduce the number of senior provincial officials who, at least initially, would have to be involved in identifying, assessing, and reconciling organizational interests and imperatives related to federal-municipal-provincial relations. The reason for this is that the new organizational structure brings many aspects of federal-municipal-provincial relations squarely within the aegis of one senior cabinet minister and one deputy minister, who are in charge of what is arguably the most important central agency responsible for dealing with issues of multilevel governance not only in the municipal sector but also in other policy sectors. It is still too early to tell whether the benefits envisioned are being realized. The most that can be said at this point is that there are no visible signs that it has created any major problems. Although the new structure has considerable potential to be more efficient and effective in theory, in practice its efficacy for the management of federal-municipal-provincial relations will depend very much on the interests and abilities of the senior elected and appointed provincial officials in that department.

Finally, it should be noted that although the various types of provincial and intergovernmental mechanisms identified above perform important functions in provincial-municipal relations, there is a widespread sentiment among various governmental stakeholders that all of them could be improved to render them more efficacious in dealing with various aspects of federal-municipal-provincial relations.

DETERMINANTS OF PROVINCIAL ROLES, APPROACHES, AND MECHANISMS

Many factors affect the decisions of Saskatchewan's provincial government regarding the roles it performs in federal-municipal-provincial relations and the approaches and mechanisms it uses in performing them. The most significant of these are the following: the provincial government's policy, financial, and political goals; the political and financial resources that it has in advancing these interests; and the normative frameworks related to governance and public management that influence the thinking of its elected and appointed officials.

POLICY, FINANCIAL, AND POLITICAL GOALS

The policy, financial, and political goals of the Saskatchewan government all figure prominently in its decisions regarding what roles it will perform within the context of federal-municipal-provincial relations and what approaches and mechanism it will use in doing so. Its policy goals are related primarily to its own policy agenda and secondarily to items on the policy agendas of the federal and municipal governments that are consonant with its own. Its financial goals are essentially to maximize the level of provincial contributions to various programs and projects by the other two orders of government and to minimize the level of its own contributions whenever possible. Its political goals are to maximize not only its electoral support but also its legitimacy as an order of government vis-à-vis the other orders of government, both of which are essential factors for holding and exercising power. The provincial government's decisions regarding what roles to perform and how to perform them entail complex calculations regarding whether these roles will have a positive or an adverse effect on each of the aforementioned goals. Invariably, the government is willing to perform roles that are likely to contribute to advancing its goals, and it is reluctant to perform those that are likely to have an adverse effect on any of its goals. Its calculations regarding its political goals are heavily influenced by the fact that the municipal sector in Saskatchewan exerts considerable influence on public policy debates and in elections. The major reason for this, of course, is that it has a large membership consisting of community leaders who exercise substantial influence in shaping policy and political debates within their own communities.

FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL RESOURCES

Although the provincial government's goals and interests have been influential in its decisions regarding what roles to perform as well as the approaches and mechanisms to use in performing them, such decisions have also been

heavily influenced by the financial and political resources that it has had at its disposal. Although its financial and political resources permit the Saskatchewan government to perform certain roles and to do so in strategic ways, they also have a constraining effect on what it can do because its resources are relatively limited compared with those of some of its larger and more powerful provincial counterparts. After all, in terms of both its financial resources and its political resources, Saskatchewan is not one of the “big four” provinces (Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Alberta).

Saskatchewan has a much smaller budget and less flexibility in what it can do than any of the big four. Its limited financial resources constrain what it can do on its own, as well as what it can do in partnership with the federal and/or municipal governments. This problem is compounded by the fact that its economy is subject to relatively volatile swings, based on the vagaries of the farm economy and natural resources prices, which affect, among other things, whether it receives equalization payments from the federal government. Its financial capacity and the periodic fluctuations in its farm economy affect the number and type of programs and projects with which it can become involved, especially if they require it to make long-term financial commitments. Its limited financial resources constrain it to be more sensitive to the preferences of the federal government regarding matters such as the choice of programs and projects, the roles and responsibilities of the various orders of government, and the approaches and mechanisms it uses in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations.

Saskatchewan is also not one of the big four in terms of political power. Its relatively small population and small number of federal electoral seats limit its political clout within the federation. This limitation is compounded by the fact that the provincial electorate in Saskatchewan, unlike that in some other small provinces, does not generally engage in strategic voting to curry favour with the party forming the government. The only exception in recent elections was the strong albeit short-lived support for the Mulroney government, which expressed its gratitude just before the 1986 provincial election by providing a \$1 billion farm aid package that benefited a large number of farmers living in various rural and even urban municipalities.

The political clout of the provincial government is also limited with respect to the municipal governments. Despite its constitutionally based jurisdictional primacy over them, the provincial government is not entirely free to do as it wishes vis-à-vis the municipal governments. They are powerful and capable governmental actors in their own right. Consequently, within the context of federal-municipal-provincial relations generally, the provincial government has to take into consideration their policy preferences and policy goals when choosing what roles it performs and the approaches and mechanisms it uses. This is true whether the municipality is large or small. That is because the vast majority of municipalities in Saskatchewan consist of very small communities where people know their municipal politicians personally

and feel a closer relationship with them than with more distant provincial and federal cabinet ministers. Moreover, municipal politicians are usually able to frame policy issues, including those that are addressed in an intergovernmental context, in ways that resonate with the perceptions and preferences of residents living in their communities. During as well as between elections, municipal efforts at “province-bashing” can be as effective as provincial efforts at “fed-bashing.”

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

Another major factor that has had a significant effect on the roles that the provincial government performs in the context of federal-municipal-provincial relations, as well as in other aspects of municipal governance, is the “new public management” philosophy (Tindal and Tindal 2000, 284–94). This is especially true of the part of this philosophy that embodies the following tenets of neoliberalism and neoconservatism: more “limited government” in terms of state involvement in market and non-market matters; “steering rather than rowing” as a governance style; “subsidiarity” in developing and implementing programs and projects; “alternative modes of service delivery” in the production and delivery of various services, including increasing the number and types of “public-private partnerships” for that purpose; and maximizing reliance on “user pay” whenever feasible in funding various programs, projects, and services (Kernaghan, Marson, and Borins 2000).

The Saskatchewan government has not been immune to the effects of some of these tenets. It has followed the example of other governments in limiting the nature and scope of its involvement in various programs and projects and relying increasingly on the municipal governments and the voluntary sector to fill the void either on their own or in partnership with itself and other orders of government. Of course, from the perspective of municipal governments and voluntary sector organizations, this is tantamount to downloading rather than partnering, and they believe it is triggered largely by the concern of the provincial government to deal with its deficit and debt rather than thinking it the optimal way to administer such matters (Colligan-Yano and Norton 1996, 115–42). Regardless of what triggered it, the era of the “partnering state” has taken root in Saskatchewan, where it resonates relatively well with the political culture that has always valued the idea of federal and provincial governments helping local governments and local communities help themselves as they see fit. This is precisely the purpose of the provincial government’s Voluntary Sector Initiative (Saskatchewan 2003). It is also the purpose of the regional intersectoral committees highlighted in the appendix. The Saskatchewan government has been a leader in establishing this particular type of intersectoral coordinating mechanism, whose principal function is two-fold: to coordinate policies and programs among public, private, and non-profit

sectors involved in human services within a given region; and, in some instances, to serve as peer review committees to evaluate program applications for project funding from various agencies within the region.

In recent years the provincial government has become increasingly disposed to use comparable adjudication committees when making project-funding decisions. In the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program, a committee of municipal representatives provides peer review of the funding applications and makes recommendations – which are generally accepted by the federal and provincial governments – on how the limited funds will be allocated to the large number of competing municipal applicants. The underlying strategy of this process is to contain the criticism and disappointment from unsuccessful applicants by pointing to the peer review process. This approach mutes the municipal lobbying organizations – SUMA, SARM, and SANC – which have to support the decisions from the review process and are forced to take a public role in justifying why some municipalities' applications are successful and those of others are not.

SUMMARY AND FURTHER RESEARCH

To reiterate, the central objective of this paper has been to provide a general and preliminary overview of the nature and determinants of the roles which the Saskatchewan government has performed in recent years in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations and the approaches and mechanisms it has used in doing so. This concluding section will summarize the major findings and highlight some areas for further research.

The key findings can be summarized as follows. First, the provincial government performs five major types of role within the context of federal-municipal-provincial relations: monitoring, advocacy, mediation, regulatory, and partnership. Second, the provincial government tends to use bilateral, reactive, non-intrusive, informal, and low-profile approaches in performing its roles. Third, the provincial government tends to use both intergovernmental and provincial mechanisms in managing federal-municipal-provincial relations. The intergovernmental mechanisms generally take the form of bilevel rather than trilevel intergovernmental committees involving representatives of the municipal governments and the federal government. The provincial mechanisms involve both line departments and central agencies, which have been consolidated in recent years to facilitate the management of federal-municipal-provincial relations. Fourth, the provincial government's decisions regarding the roles it performs and the approaches and mechanisms it uses have been influenced by three sets of factors: its policy, financial, and political interests; its financial and political resources; and the extent to which it has subscribed to the tenets of the "new public management" philosophy.

Although this paper has provided some interesting and important insights into Saskatchewan's management of federal-municipal-provincial relations, much remains to be analysed at both the conceptual and the empirical level. At the conceptual level, more work is required in conceptualizing the types of roles performed by the provincial government, the approaches and mechanisms it uses in performing them, and the factors that shape its decisions regarding each of these matters. For that purpose the concepts and models in the extant literature on intergovernmental and interorganizational management and coordination should be consulted (for example, Stein 1989; Rogers and Whetten 1982).

At the empirical level, more descriptive and evaluative work is required on various matters dealt with in this paper. For that purpose detailed case studies should be conducted that focus on the provincial government's management of federal-municipal-provincial relations in conjunction with each major program and project identified in the appendix. Case studies should also be conducted of comparable programs and projects that are prominent on the public policy agenda today and will likely continue to be so – for example, those that deal with immigration and urban Aboriginals. In analysing programs and projects related to urban Aboriginals, the focus should be expanded beyond the trilevel relations involving the federal, municipal, and provincial governments to include the Aboriginal governments.

Furthermore, in conducting the cases studies, attention should be devoted not only to the roles the provincial government performs in managing these relations and the approaches and mechanism it uses for that purpose, but also to at least three other important matters. The first of these is the nature of the bureaucratic politics within the provincial government that affect its management of these relations. Reliance on the bureaucratic politics model, rather than on the unitary actor model, in analysing the provincial government's decisions regarding these relations will produce fuller and more accurate explanations of the causal factors. Second, it is important that the case studies also focus on the effect of the provincial government's management of federal-municipal-provincial relations – how the ways in which it manages them affect not only the nature of intergovernmental dynamics and coordination but also the effective and efficient formulation and implementation of programs and projects. A third important matter that should be the focus of such case studies is the views of federal, provincial, and municipal governmental officials regarding various aspects of federal-municipal-provincial relations in Saskatchewan.

Finally, at the empirical level comparable and ideally comparative case studies should be conducted of federal-municipal-provincial relations in other provinces. The overarching objective of all these case studies should be to find means of improving intergovernmental relations and management in ways that will enhance economic and social development and ultimately the quality of life in local communities.

APPENDIX

Federal-Municipal-Provincial Collaboration in Saskatchewan: A Sample of Notable Programs and Projects in 2003

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy/program initiation and development</i>	<i>Funding agent(s)</i>	<i>Application adjudicator(s)</i>	<i>Administration and delivery</i>	<i>Lead provincial department</i>
Agriculture Rural Minority Language Community Planning Initiative (2003–4)	The purpose of this program is to assist agricultural rural minority-language communities to produce community development plans. The emphasis is on economic diversification and job creation. Municipal governments, among others, are eligible to apply for funding.	Federal government (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and Canadian Heritage)	F	F	O	Provincial Secretary
Airport Capital Assistance Program (1995 to present)	Municipally owned airports can apply for capital funding to undertake safety improvements, asset protection, and operating-cost reduction. This program was created as part of the federal government's National Airports Policy. While Transport Canada fully funds the program in Saskatchewan, it is administered through the provincial Department of Highways and Transportation.	Federal government (Transport Canada)	F	F	P, M	Highways and Transportation
Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program (2000–1 to 2006–7)	At least 80% of the projects approved under this program are sponsored by municipalities. The first priority is for "green infrastructure" (approximately 50% of funding). While the federal government agreed to another version of this program in 2000, the Saskatchewan government initiated a \$10 million one-year provincial-municipal infrastructure program in 1999–2000. Besides assisting municipalities with urgent infrastructure needs, this program demonstrated to the federal government that the provincial and municipal governments place priority on addressing these needs and want federal involvement in a new program.	Federal government (Western Economic Diversification Canada)	F, P, M, O	F, P, M	P, M, O	Government Relations & Aboriginal Affairs

F – federal government and agencies; P – provincial government and agencies; M – municipal government and agencies; O – public, private, and third-sector organizations

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy/program initiation and development</i>	<i>Funding agent(s)</i>	<i>Application adjudicator(s)</i>	<i>Administration and delivery</i>	<i>Lead provincial department</i>
Canada-Saskatchewan Film, Video, and Educational Centre (i.e., Sound Stage)	Federal, provincial, and municipal governments in partnership with the film industry have jointly funded the construction of an \$11.9 million, 7,600 m ² film and video production and training facility in Regina. Opened in 2002, the facility preserved portions of an historic building owned by the Government of Saskatchewan.	Provincial government (Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation)	F, P, M, O	O	O	Saskatchewan Property Management Corporation
Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (2000-1 to 2002-3)	The objective of this program was to enhance the viability of rural communities, with an emphasis on those affected by fundamental changes to the agricultural sector. Eligible recipients of federal funding included rural organizations, municipalities, Aboriginal groups, community-based groups, and educational institutions.	Federal government (Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada)	F, M, O	F	M, O	Monitored by Agriculture and Rural Revitalization
Canadian Light Source	The Canadian Light Source, located at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, is Canada's first synchrotron facility. The federal, Saskatchewan, and Saskatoon governments, as well as universities and industry, are funding the capital costs of the project.	University of Saskatchewan	F, P, M, O	F, P, M, O	O	Industry and Resources
Cultural Capitals of Canada	This program provides annual awards to municipalities to recognize an ongoing commitment to the arts and culture. Municipalities apply to the federal government for the awards and include as part of their application a proposal for celebrating and further developing their community's artistic and cultural identity. ¹	Federal government (Canadian Heritage)	F	F	F	Monitored by Culture, Youth, and Recreation

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<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy/program initiation and development</i>	<i>Funding agent(s)</i>	<i>Application adjudicator(s)</i>	<i>Administration and delivery</i>	<i>Lead provincial department</i>
Communities of Tomorrow Partnership [Centre for Sustainable Infrastructure Research] (2003)	Announced in May 2003, this partnership involves the establishment of a scientific centre in Regina that will undertake research into new technologies pertaining to the impact of urban infrastructure on the environment (e.g., water quality and waste water treatment). The centre will be established through a \$15 million contribution from the federal government and \$5 million each from the Government of Saskatchewan, City of Regina, and University of Regina. The National Research Council will operate the centre.	Federal government (National Research Council)	F, P, M, O	F, P	F	Industry and Resources
Cultural Spaces Canada (2001–2 to 2003–4) ²	This program funds the construction, adaptive use, or renovation of arts and heritage facilities and the acquisition, purchase of specialized equipment, and production of feasibility studies. Its purpose is to improve the physical conditions for artistic creativity and to increase and improve accessibility to the performing arts, media, and visual arts and to museums and heritage facilities.	Federal government (Canadian Heritage)	F	F	P, M, O	Monitored by Culture, Youth, and Recreation
Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (1970 to present)	Under these arrangements, the federal government provides financial assistance to provincial governments, municipalities, and private interests that have suffered uninsurable damage to property due to natural disasters (e.g., floods, ice and wind storms).	Federal government (Office of Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness)	F, P, M, O	F	M, O	Corrections and Public Safety
Green Municipal Funds (2000–7)	The federal government created an endowment in 2000 to encourage municipalities to pursue environmental innovation and to participate in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. (Subsequently, this program became part of the federal government's plan to implement the Kyoto Accord.) The program is managed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and consists of two components: Green Municipal Enabling Fund (providing grants for technical, environmental, and/or economic feasibility studies) and Green Municipal Investment Fund (providing interest-bearing loans and loan guarantees for environmental projects).	Federal government (Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada)	F	F, P, M, O	M	Environment

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy/program initiation and development</i>	<i>Funding agent(s)</i>	<i>Application adjudicator(s)</i>	<i>Administration and delivery</i>	<i>Lead provincial department</i>
Joint Emergency Preparedness Program (ongoing, subject to budgetary approval)	This program provides federal funding to enhance Canada's national emergency response capability. "Earmarked funds" are assigned to each province and territory. The provinces and territories support the evaluation and prioritization of applications but do not make the final decisions on approval (since these depend on national, not regional, priorities and needs). Funding is channeled through the provinces and territories.	Federal government (Office of Critical Infrastructure Protection and Emergency Preparedness)	F	F	P, M, O	Corrections and Public Safety
Model Construction Codes (1937 to present)	The federal government coordinates and facilitates national consensus on the development and updating of national construction codes (e.g., National Building Code, National Fire Code, National Plumbing Code). The purpose of these model codes is to provide the basis for countrywide consistency in standards enforced under provincial and territorial legislation and implemented by municipalities.	Federal government (National Research Council)	F	F, P, O	P, M	Corrections and Public Safety
National Homelessness Initiative and Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative ³	Announced in 1999, the National Homelessness Initiative involves \$753 million of federal funding over three years to existing and new programs to address homelessness issues in Canada. A key element of this funding is the \$305 million Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, which supports local community-based efforts to find local solutions to these issues. It brings together all levels of government as well as non-profit, labour, and community-based organizations.	Federal government (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Human Resources Development Canada)	F, P, M, O	F	P, M, O	Community Resources and Employment
Northern Development Agreement/ Accord (2002 to present)	In 2002 the federal and provincial governments signed the Saskatchewan Northern Development Accord and a \$20 million Canada-Saskatchewan Northern Development Agreement. These apply to the area known as the Northern Administration District of Saskatchewan. The accord is a memorandum of understanding	Provincial government (Northern Affairs) and federal government (Western Economic Diversification)	F, P	F, P, M, O (municipal involvement through Northern Development Board)	F, P, M, O	Northern Affairs

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<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy/program initiation and development</i>	<i>Funding agent(s)</i>	<i>Application adjudicator(s)</i>	<i>Administration and delivery</i>	<i>Lead provincial department</i>
	concerning the development of a strategic framework to guide federal and provincial governments and northern communities to improve the living conditions and enhance the economic opportunities of northerners. The accord calls for the federal and provincial governments to seek advice and recommendations and to work with the Northern Development Board, which consists of representatives from the Prince Albert Grand Council, Meadow Lake Tribal Council, Métis Nation–Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Association of Northern (Municipal) Communities, and the Athabasca First Nation Chiefs. The agreement is administered by a management committee consisting of representatives from the federal and provincial governments and from the Northern Development Board.					
Prairie Grain Roads Program (2001–2 to 2005–6)	Federal cost-shared funding is provided to upgrade municipal grain roads and provincial secondary highways that are deteriorating or have become unsafe due to changing transportation policies and the restructuring of grain-handling systems. Eligible applicants include municipalities, the provincial government, and municipal organizations (SUMA and SARM).	Federal government (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration)	F, P, M	F, P, M	P, M	Highways and Transportation
Municipal Policing (1928 to present)	Under contract with the provincial government, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police serves as Saskatchewan's provincial police. The provincial government requires municipalities with populations greater than 20,000 to have their own municipal police service. Other municipalities enter into agreements – either indirectly through the provincial government or directly – to have the RCMP provide municipal policing.	Provincial government (Saskatchewan Justice)	F, P, M	F, P	P, M	Justice

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy/program initiation and development</i>	<i>Funding agent(s)</i>	<i>Application adjudicator(s)</i>	<i>Administration and delivery</i>	<i>Lead provincial department</i>
Regina Inner-City Community Partnership	A federal-city government initiative to support a consultation process on local priorities within an inner-city community in Regina. The goal is to develop and implement a continuum of activities that will enhance the social and economic components of the neighbourhood. The partnership will bring together the three orders of government, relevant non-governmental organizations, and inner-city residents.	Municipal government (City of Regina)	F, M	F, M, O	P, M, O	Community Resources and Employment
Regional Intersectoral Committees	Established in 1994, the Human Services Integration Forum is a multidepartmental provincial government structure to promote and implement interagency collaboration and integrated planning and delivery of human services. The forum has facilitated the development and provides financial and coordinative support to nine regional intersectoral committees located throughout the province. Each committee consists of representatives from provincial and federal government departments, health districts, school divisions, postsecondary institutions, housing authorities, municipalities, police services, tribal councils, Métis organizations, and some community-based organizations. These committees support community-based planning, sharing of strategies, interagency collaboration and sharing of resources, and coordinated and integrated action for human services. They facilitate community involvement in consultation processes supporting the National Children's Agenda and the provincial government's early childhood development and the School PLUS initiatives.	Provincial government (Human Services Integration Forum supported by eight departments: Learning; Justice; Health; Community Resources and Employment; Corrections and Public Safety; Culture, Youth, and Recreation; Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs; and Executive Council)	P	P	F, P, M, O	Human Services Integration Forum
Rural Community Forest Project (1994 to present)	Villages and towns in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta with populations of less than 5,000 are eligible under this program to receive certain fruit-bearing tree	Federal government (Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration)	F, P, M	F	F, P, M	Saskatchewan Environment

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<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Policy/program initiation and development</i>	<i>Funding agent(s)</i>	<i>Application adjudicator(s)</i>	<i>Administration and delivery</i>	<i>Lead provincial department</i>
	species to enhance the quality of life in these communities and to provide habitat for wildlife. The trees and shrubs must be planted on municipal land. The Saskatchewan government participates in the program by funding the provision of plastic mulch for weed control.					
Summer Work Experience (ongoing as budgetary resources are available)	Municipal governments are eligible to apply for wage subsidies to hire secondary and post-secondary students in career-related summer jobs. The provincial government has a separate student employment program (Centennial Student Employment Program), but municipalities are not eligible.	Federal government (Human Resources Development Canada)	F	F	M, O	Monitored by Public Service Commission and by Culture, Youth, and Recreation
Urban Development Agreements	These agreements involve the federal, provincial and municipal governments. They provide instruments for coordinating the action among orders of government and for providing the seamless delivery of programs and services. They encourage the development of strategic alliances to enhance the economic activity in the seven major cities in western Canada. ⁴	Federal government (Western Economic Diversification Canada)	F, P, M	F, P, M	F, P, M	Government Relations
Wanuskewin Heritage Park	This national historic site, located north of Saskatoon, was the hunting and occasional wintering ground frequented by several Indian tribes of the northern plains for more than 6,000 years. It provides not only historical preservation and interpretation but also a place of spiritual importance for the descendants of the Northern Plains Indians. The park was developed through a partnership involving federal, provincial, municipal, First Nations, university, and other sectors. The Wanuskewin Heritage Park Corporation consists of representatives from Wanuskewin Indian Heritage Inc., the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the City of Saskatoon, the Governments of Canada and Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan, the Meewasin Valley Authority, and the Friends of Wanuskewin.	Provincial government (Culture, Youth, and Recreation)	F, P, M, O	F, P, M, O	O	Culture, Youth, and Recreation

NOTES

- 1 By the end of 2003 Saskatchewan communities had not received funding under this program. In 2003 the City of Regina submitted an application but was unsuccessful. Upon resubmitting its application in 2005, however, it was successful in being designated a “cultural capital” of Canada.
- 2 While Saskatchewan municipalities are eligible for funding, this program has provided support indirectly by funding projects with municipal involvement in a larger organizational structure (e.g., Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Moose Jaw Cultural Centre).
- 3 Most of the funding for projects has been dispersed to community-based organizations. Municipalities have been involved in the development of “community homelessness plans.” These plans have been prepared by steering committees with representatives from federal, provincial, and municipal governments, as well as representatives from local social and private agencies and Aboriginal organizations.
- 4 Whereas urban development agreements for Edmonton, Winnipeg and Vancouver were signed several years earlier, the ones for Saskatoon and Regina were not signed by federal, provincial, and municipal representatives until May 2005. These agreements were signed as a result of the Martin government’s attempts to find ways of enhancing its support among voters either to prevent any confidence votes in the House of Commons or at least to position itself for the next election in case it lost such a vote. For its part, the provincial government had already committed its portion of the funding for the initiative in its March 2005 budget. The Saskatoon and Regina agreements were identical in the amount of money (\$5 million from the federal government and \$2.5 million each from the provincial and municipal governments for a total of \$10 million) and in the time frame (five years) and the six priorities for action which they included:
 - community-based approaches to affordable housing, homelessness, and the renewal of older neighbourhoods;
 - developing cultural and recreational opportunities to enhance the quality of life;
 - supporting environmental protection and climate change solutions;
 - enhancing Aboriginal participation in the economy;
 - promoting innovative initiatives for a positive business climate and enhanced competitiveness; and
 - addressing strategic infrastructure necessary for continued physical, social and economic development.

The lead federal and provincial agencies responsible for negotiating and administering the agreements were the federal department of Western Economic Diversification Canada and Saskatchewan’s Department of Government Relations.

The authors wish to thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable observations and suggestions.

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