THE ABORIGINAL HEALING AND WELLNESS STRATEGY: GOING BACK TO LOOK FORWARD

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'Although the number of Canadians who die prematurely and suffer from poor health is low in comparison to other countries, those who do so tend to belong to specific sub-populations—Aboriginal Peoples, residents of northern and remote communities, and those with low income and education'.

Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, 2008
Indigenous peoples of Canada

Individuals reporting Indigenous identity, by region, 2011
(thousands)

(Statistics Canada, NHS, 2011)
Timeline of policies shaping Indigenous health policy in Canada

- 1867: British North America Act
- 1871-1921: Historic Treaties
- 1876: Indian Act
- 1969-70: White and Red Papers
- 1979: Indian Health Policy
- 1984: Canada Health Act
Policy problem: Jurisdictional confusion

Indigenous peoples & organizations

Provincial government

Federal government
The Aboriginal Healing & Wellness Strategy: Going back in time

Why important?

- First of its kind;
- sustainable partnerships & infrastructure;
- template for indigenous health policy;
- remains ‘the most comprehensive Aboriginal health policy currently in place in Canada’ (Lavoie, 2009, p.7) among a patchwork policy landscape.
Policy question

What factors contributed to the unique development of a provincial Indigenous health policy in Ontario in the 1990’s?
Methods: Explanatory policy analysis

Analytical framework

Kingdon (2003, 2011)

Time & place

Ontario, 1990's

Data

Academic & gray literature
Methods: Kingdon’s multiple streams

Problem stream:
- Indicators;
- focusing events, crises, symbols;
- feedback & problem definition.

Policy stream:
- Policy communities;
- incentives & entrepreneurs;
- survival-feasibility & value acceptability.

Politics stream:
- The national mood;
- political forces;
- government & jurisdiction.

(Kingdon, 2011)
Findings: Problem stream

Problem stream:

1982: Margaret Mitchell
1986: 5 year violence prevention strategy ON
1990: Oka Crisis
1995: Ipperwash Shooting
1996: RCAP + AHP

(Dudziak, 2000; FCAP, 1996; Lavoie, 2009)
Findings: Policy stream

Policy stream:

Consensus

Conditions for partnership

Consultation

FHS + AHP
Findings: Politics stream

Politics stream:

- National visibility of Indigenous communities
- Statement of political relationship
- Political structures and processes
Findings: Coupling of streams

Problem: Jurisdictional gaps

Policy: Process redefinition—given a seat at the table

Politics: Institutional infrastructure created and sustained

Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Healing → Policy

Non-Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Healing → Policy
Implications: Windows of opportunity

- Formal acknowledgement of inherent right to self-government of Indigenous peoples.
- Problem definition for Indigenous issues in tandem with high-prominence issues in the mass publics.
- Beginning of resolution of harmful policy legacies and jurisdictional issues in Indigenous health policy.
- Process of true consensus and epistemological compromise.
- Anticipation and navigation of threats to policy implementation.
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References


