Gerald A. Bierling
Barbara Wake Carroll
Michael Rosenblatt

Movers and stayers: mobility patterns among senior public servants in Canadian provinces

Abstract: There has developed in Canada a well-established literature on bureaucratic élites at the federal level. There has not, however, been a systematic study of bureaucratic élites at the provincial level. While individual scholars have studied particular provincial governments, there have been few studies that covered more than one province. This paper, which analyses a census of assistant deputy ministers and deputy ministers in every Canadian province between 1988 and 1996, considers the mobility of these top two levels of the senior public service. The findings indicate that there has only been a slight decline in the number of senior public servants as governments have downsized. The findings also show that, unlike at the federal level, there is limited mobility among these senior public servants, with roughly one-third of them changing each year. In some provinces, mobility levels increase slightly in the year after an election. Levels of mobility and changes in the number of senior public servants also vary across provinces, but there is no pattern based on the size of the province. Finally, there are important differences in the mobility depending on the type of department. In particular, in departments where there is a core knowledge or skill, mobility levels are much lower than in departments that lack such a core. These findings throw some light on the difficulties provinces may have in solving some of their more intractable policy problems.

Sommaire : Il existe au Canada une bibliographie solidement implantée concernant les élites bureaucratiques au niveau fédéral. Il n'y a pas eu, par contre, d'étude systématique concernant les élites bureaucratiques au palier provincial. Des chercheurs ont analysé un gouvernement provincial à la fois mais peu d'études ont examiné plus d'une province à la fois. Dans cet article, qui analyse un recensement de sous-ministres adjoints et de sous-ministres dans chaque province du Canada entre 1988 et 1996, nous examinons la mobilité des ces deux niveaux supérieurs du fonctionnariat. Face aux réductions d'effectifs gouvernementaux, le déclin du nombre de hauts fonc-

Gerald A. Bierling is an instructor, Department of Political Science, McMaster University, Hamilton. Barbara Wake Carroll is professor, Department of Political Science, McMaster University. Michael Rosenblatt is a doctoral candidate, School of Public Administration, Carleton University, Ottawa. They would like to thank the Journal's editor and anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION / ADMINISTRATION PUBLIQUE DU CANADA
VOLUME 42, NO. 3 (FALL/AUTOMNE), PP. 198–217

tionnaires semble avoir été léger. On constate aussi que, à l'encontre du palier fédéral, il y a une mobilité limitée chez ces derniers, environ un tiers changeant chaque année. Dans certaines provinces, le taux de mobilité augmente légèrement l'année qui suit une élection. Les taux de mobilité et l'évolution du nombre de hauts fonctionnaires varient aussi d'une province à l'autre, mais la taille de la province ne semble pas être un facteur déterminant. Enfin, il y a des écarts de mobilité importants selon le type de ministère. Notamment, les ministères exigeant des connaissances ou des aptitudes particulières ont des taux de mobilité très inférieurs à ceux des autres. Ces constatations mettent en relief les difficultés auxquelles peuvent se heurter les provinces lorsqu'elles essaient de régler certains de leurs problèmes les plus ardus en matière de politiques.

As the Canadian federal government devolves additional policy fields to the provinces, it becomes increasingly important to know more about the policy-making process at the provincial level. But when one looks at the literature on provincial policy-making, there is close to a vacuum. Specific scholars have studied provincial governments, but there has been little written that considers subnational or provincial/state policy-making as a separate field.[1] Historically, since the writings of Max Weber, and in a contemporary context, since the work of Colin Campbell and George Szablowski, and Joel P. Aberbach et al., it has been accepted that senior public servants are important in the policy-making process and, in particular, that career paths and knowledge characteristics are important in affecting policy outcomes.[2] Yet, there has been no systematic study of these élites at the provincial level in Canada.[3]

This paper examines one aspect of the policy-making process, the mobility (movement in and out) of the senior positions in all provincial bureaucracies in Canada between 1988 and 1996. We have chosen to study the mobility of assistant deputy and deputy ministers, because they are the major advisers to politicians about public policy. We will examine the mobility of senior public servants at the provincial level to determine the amount of turnover, paying special attention to the changes in mobility both before and after elections. We expected to find a change in patterns of mobility in the deputy and assistant deputy minister ranks after an election, particularly those patterns that resulted from a change in the governing party, taking into account that mobility includes individuals who choose or who are forced to leave the civil service. We will also examine movement in and out of the senior ranks in each department, expecting that departments with a high degree of technical complexity will have a lower mobility rate than departments with less technical complexity.

Our findings indicate that even though most governments have downsized during the period in question, the number of senior public servants has declined only slightly. We also find that, unlike at the federal level, mobility is limited among these senior public servants, with roughly one-

third of them changing each year. In some provinces, the level of mobility increases slightly following an election. Mobility levels and changes in the number of senior public servants also vary across provinces. However, there is no mobility pattern based on the size of the province. Finally, there are important differences in mobility depending on the type of department. In particular, in departments where there is a core knowledge or skill, mobility levels are much lower than in departments where such core is absent. Our findings shed light on the problems provinces may have in solving some of their more intractable policy issues.

Background

We wanted to see if the results of studies of senior public servants at the federal level are comparable to these of senior public servants at the provincial level. Research has shown that the level of mobility into and out of the senior civil service at the federal level in Canada is not a function of partisan politics. When considering the federal public service since Confederation, Jacques Bourgault and Stéphane Dion discovered that "it is immediately obvious that there have been no purges of the ranks of Deputy Ministers."[4] This is in spite of the fact that there may be many valid reasons for the newly elected government to clean house. Speaking of the federal government, the authors note that "[t]he incentive to politicize high-ranking positions is stronger than ever during transition in power. The new government finds itself face to face with a senior public service that only yesterday worked for the opposition. Tension is high, distrust is widespread."[5] In terms of elections, they noted that "taken as a whole, the twelve political transitions have not increased the number of departures and appointments of Deputy Ministers, but the number of transfers has almost tripled" and that changes in political party have had little effect on the tenure of deputy ministers.[6] Thus, at the federal level, the impact of elections on senior civil servants seems to be that some may be forced to move to different departments, as new "rising stars" take positions in key departments. We want to determine if the same non-partisan movement can be observed in senior provincial civil servants, especially after elections that produce a change in the governing party.

The pattern of general mobility in the senior provincial public service is unclear. There have been some sporadic, non-comparable studies of provincial civil services. A recent Privy Council Office study of decision-making processes in provincial governments indicated that while careers used to be fostered within one department, in at least two provinces (Nova Scotia and Manitoba), cross-fertilization is being encouraged.[7] Thus, there might be more movement for career development rather than for political purposes. There may also be differences in élite mobility in different provinces. We expect that provinces with a larger civil service will have more mobility across departments than provinces with a relatively small civil service.

At the provincial level, the extent to which elections have an impact on senior appointments is also unclear. Because of both their administrative and policy advisory importance, we are interested in only the senior bureaucracy, the Order-in-Council appointments that, to a newly elected government, are highly visible symbols of their predecessors. All of the provinces share "service at pleasure," meaning that a new government can appoint, reassign and remove deputy and assistant deputy ministers at will.[8] Because provincial governments are smaller than the federal government, in the absence of large ministerial staffs, senior civil servants would also tend to play a larger political role when there were no major differences between political parties. This could mean that one would expect major changes in the senior public service when there was a change in the political party in power that has an agenda notably different from the previous party.[9] In a recent edited volume on managing government transitions, many of the authors would seem to agree that with re-elected governments there is little change in the senior bureaucracy. When there is a change in government, even though the senior civil service represents stability in the face of change, the new governing party is likely to make substantial changes in the senior bureaucracy. The authors suggest that this is because the new government wants its own "team," the members of which share the ideology and agenda of the political party, or because the incoming government perceives the bureaucracy to be politicized or too powerful. While offering interesting insights, these studies remain snapshots of various provincial changes and were not systematic in their comparisons.[10]

We are also interested in observing if specific departments have higher (or lower) turnover rates than others. Many studies of public bureaucracies have demonstrated relationships between aspects of the backgrounds and career paths of senior civil servants and differences in their attitudes, preferences and decisions.[11] J.E. Kingdom notes that it is important to know the career paths of senior civil servants because of the influence they have on the policy-making process.[12] Aberbach et al. also demonstrated that the cross-national differences in the educational backgrounds and career paths of bureaucratic élites in Western democracies affected both their attitudes and their influence on the overall policy process.[13] This might be particularly evident in departments – such as highways, finance and treasury – that require extensive but specific knowledge. A number of academics and practitioners have argued that the increasing levels of mobility among Canadian, New Zealand and Australian civil servants have impeded their ability to provide substantive policy advice in complex technical areas.[14]

The nature of departments such as highways, finance and treasury tend to produce senior public servants with extensive background in the substantive yet specific policy areas. This would be represented by individuals who worked their way to the top of the provincial departmental ladder without

necessarily possessing extensive experience in management and "process" skills – which is evident among the higher echelons of the federal public service. Barbara Wake Carroll and David E. Garkut define "functional determinism" as the "degree to which there is specialized organization-specific, knowledge or technological skill 'in use' within a department."[15] This can also refer to a widely held dominant ideology about the way things should be done. The examples they give are of diplomats who tend to act in a similar fashion across countries and over time and of those bureaucrats in central agencies who are involved with fiscal and economic policy and who act as "guardians" of the public purse.[16] Carroll and Garkut's findings indicate that functional determinism is almost as important as national culture in determining demographic characteristics, education and, in particular, mobility patterns of the bureaucratic élites of national governments over time. This is a pattern that has held consistently over more than twenty years; indeed, over half of the senior public servants they studied had been educated in a field relevant to their department.

From primarily anecdotal evidence, it would seem that this pattern might be even stronger at the provincial level. Carroll and David Siegel, in their recent study of field-level civil servants, note that there was perceived to be greater longevity and continuity among provincial senior civil servants than there was at the federal level, with a larger proportion of provincial civil servants knowing or having contact with the individuals at the senior ranks.[17] This sense of intimacy was stronger among the smaller provinces. Thus, we would expect senior provincial civil servants to have longer tenure in departments that have a high level of functional determinism.

There are some arguments, however, against lower rates of change or mobility at the provincial level. Graham White suggests that "for a variety of reasons significant interchanges of high-level officials characterize provincial bureaucracies. Provinces often have several Deputy Ministers with extensive experience at senior levels in other provincial bureaucracies (or in Ottawa)."[18] In examining our data, we expect to find that departments such as Solicitor General, Highways and Finance, which have a strong technical core, will have lower rates of mobility than other less functionally specific departments. In these cases, there may be mobility across provincial governments, but our study did not allow us to consider this.

Methodology

The aim of this paper, then, is to provide an analysis of empirical data on the mobility or pattern of change and movement across departments of deputy and assistant deputy ministers in the Canadian provinces. We used the *Corpus Almanac & Canadian Sourcebook* (all years) to compile the data set because it has a consistent format and was available for the entire period. The census of these years provided us with 5,466 cases: 3,837 at the assistant deputy

minister level, and 1,629 at the deputy minister level. The variables included in the analysis were name, rank, department, year of appointment if after 1988, province, and whether there had been an election in the current or previous year.

A case was an individual at the assistant deputy or deputy minister rank. All of the cases were re-coded to reflect whether or not these individuals were "new" at their position. Since the data collection began with 1988 as the base year, we could not determine if deputy and assistant deputy ministers were new for that year. So, for the purpose of creating a mobility variable, all 636 cases in 1988 were coded as missing. From 1989 onwards we were then able to code, by examining the previous years' information, whether or not the individual was an incumbent official. If the official was not a "stayer" (incumbent), he or she was coded as new, a "mover." This gives us a measure of mobility because we can determine who moved from one position to another. In the analysis, the rate of mobility is the percentage of cases that were movers relative to all cases within that rank, in that year, in that province.

We wanted to use the data set to measure the differences in mobility patterns for all provinces, but specifically to see if there are differences between the provinces with large populations and those with small populations. We defined the large-population provinces as Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta and the small-population provinces as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. When calculating correlations by size of province, however, the provinces were each considered separately in ranked order rather than as a simple dichotomy of large and small.

We were also interested in determining if there are differences in mobility in different functional departments. The original 5,466 cases broke into over 200 different department titles, as names of departments were changed and functions merged over the years. These titles were then re-coded to represent sixteen different generic department titles. These were Natural Resource Development, Agriculture, Citizenship and Culture (this included Immigration and Aboriginal Affairs), Social Services, Health, Consumer Affairs, Correctional Services, Attorney General and Solicitor General, Trade, Commerce and Economic Development, Employment and Labour, Finance, Municipal Affairs, Supply and Services (including Public Works), Highways, Education and Housing. It should be noted that all provinces did not have all departments. Similarly, when a function did not have either a minister or a deputy minister it was not included. It was assumed that the function was included with some other department and was not analysed separately.

The sixteen generic departments were further re-coded to represent the extent to which they represented high, medium or low functional deter-

minism. Functional determinism is the extent to which there is a strong identity with a particular kind of education or technology associated with the department. Highways, for example, is considered to have high functional determinism, because it is a department that is strongly associated with engineering. Similarly, finance and treasury functions are strongly associated with economics. The expectation was that there would be lower levels of mobility among the departments with high levels of functional determinism.[19]

In order to measure the effect of elections on the mobility of senior élites, we noted the election years for each province and then compared mobility in the years before or in an election and in the year after the election. These data points were used to isolate the mobility (or stability) of the senior public service before and after elections. It was important to allow for the changes that might occur in the year after the election. Change could be achieved by a "new" official starting in any particular portfolio. Examining more than one year after the election might however confuse natural with politically motivated attrition.

One of the limitations of our approach is that we may overstate the impact of elections. Recently, in Ontario, for example there have been three high-profile changes.[20] There was no election in Ontario during 1998, yet there appeared to be a higher than usual turnover in senior officials. Speaking of Michael Gourley, a former deputy minister of finance in Ontario, columnist Richard Mackie notes that "[h]is departure is the latest in a steady exodus of Deputy Ministers from the public service over the past three years that has seen about two dozen of the province's top bureaucrats fired or depart voluntarily since the Tories won election in June, 1995."[21]

A methodological concern is that the timing of printing of the volume used for the data may also alter the results slightly. The book is printed in the fall of the previous year and the data probably collected during the spring or summer. Due to the confusion that might result from this year shift, we decided to use the same year as the publication was dated. Thus we used the 1997 book (published in 1996) for 1996 data, producing a time lag in each case.

Findings

Table 1 gives a breakdown of the total numbers of deputy and assistant deputy ministers in each province by year. As would be expected, the larger provinces generally have more senior officials than do the smaller provinces. Overall, there is little change in the total numbers at both levels until the latter half of the period being examined. As Table 1 indicates, from 1988 to 1991 the total number of deputy ministers remained relatively constant. The downsizing and restructuring that took place within governments was not felt as strongly at senior levels; until the mid-1990s, the number of deputy

Table 1. *Senior Public Servants by Province, 1988–1996*

Province	*Rank*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*% Change*	*Average*
Alberta	DM	23	22	22	21	22	21	14	14	15	–35	19.3
	ADM	67	70	69	75	83	76	65	53	48	–28	67.3
	Total	90	92	91	96	105	97	79	67	63	–30	86.7
British Columbia	DM	15	17	17	21	16	16	19	20	19	27	17.8
	ADM	50	52	53	50	60	65	53	63	65	30	56.8
	Total	65	69	70	71	76	81	72	83	84	29	74.6
Manitoba	DM	23	20	17	19	19	19	20	19	18	–22	19.3
	ADM	38	37	33	41	38	41	43	40	35	–8	38.4
	Total	61	57	50	60	57	60	63	59	53	–13	57.8
New Brunswick	DM	16	18	19	19	18	20	17	17	17	6	17.9
	ADM	29	33	34	34	31	32	32	34	32	10	32.3
	Total	45	51	53	53	49	52	49	51	49	9	50.2
Newfoundland	DM	17	20	11	13	13	14	14	13	13	–24	14.2
	ADM	39	46	35	43	35	37	39	41	41	5	39.6
	Total	56	66	46	56	48	51	53	54	54	–4	53.8
Nova Scotia	DM	21	21	21	19	19	17	18	17	17	–19	18.9
	ADM	3	2	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	–67	1.9
	Total	24	23	23	21	21	17	18	18	18	–25	20.3
Ontario	DM	28	27	27	27	26	27	19	19	16	–43	24.0
	ADM	69	65	67	70	82	89	84	88	86	25	77.8
	Total	97	92	94	97	108	116	103	107	102	5	101.8

Table 1. *Senior Public Servants by Province, 1988–1996 (Concluded)*

Province	*Rank*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*% Change*	*Average*
PEI	DM	12	12	13	13	12	13	7	7	9	–25	10.9
	ADM	2	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	–100	1.8
	Total	14	14	15	15	13	13	7	7	9	–36	11.9
Quebec	DM	23	22	23	22	23	23	23	17	17	–26	21.4
	ADM	79	77	80	84	89	86	88	79	71	–10	81.4
	Total	102	99	103	106	112	109	111	96	88	–14	102.9
Saskatchewan	DM	18	19	20	16	28	15	13	13	13	–28	17.2
	ADM	27	29	29	24	44	27	32	31	29	7	30.2
	Total	45	48	49	40	72	42	45	44	42	–7	47.4
National Totals	DM	196	198	190	190	196	185	164	156	154	–21	181.0
	ADM	403	413	404	425	465	453	436	430	408	1	426.3
	Total	599	611	594	615	661	638	600	586	562	–6	607.3

Note: ADM = assistant deputy ministers; DM = deputy ministers

ministers did not change by more than four. However, by 1994 some effects of restructuring and downsizing can be observed, as all provinces reduced the total number of deputy ministers. The largest absolute decreases were in Ontario, in which the total number decreased by twelve, and Alberta and Newfoundland, which decreased by eight and seven. The largest decreases in percentage terms were in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, where the complement of deputy ministers declined by roughly one-quarter in the latter two provinces and almost one-half in Ontario. In only two provinces (British Columbia and New Brunswick) did the number of deputy ministers increase from the start of the period to the end, by four and one deputy ministers, respectively.

While there was an overall reduction in the total number of deputy ministers, the same is not true at the assistant deputy minister level. The decline, if any, occurs only in the last two years under examination. There was in fact a slight increase in the average number of assistant deputy ministers. Five of the provinces increased the number of assistant deputy ministers, which more than offset the decline seen in the remaining provinces.

During the period of our study, all of the provincial governments were involved in restructuring consistent with the pattern of budget reductions in the provinces found by Michael Atkinson and Gerald Bierling, and with Ronald Moe's analysis of the pattern of reform in the United States.[22] In half of the provinces (British Columbia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Ontario and Saskatchewan), the number of assistant deputy ministers increased. British Columbia witnessed the largest increase (thirty per cent), with Ontario following close behind (twenty-five per cent). Even in those provinces where decreases occurred, the percentage decline in assistant deputy ministers generally was not as large as the percentage decline in deputy ministers. The two exceptions to this are Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, where there were very few assistant deputy ministers to begin with (three and two, respectively). This may reflect the relatively small size of departments in these provinces, where a deputy minister alone can fulfil the senior management and policy functions. It also highlights how with small numbers, very small personnel changes produce very high percentage changes.

Overall, there was a decline in the number of deputy ministers, which may be a result of all of the provincial governments being involved in some form of downsizing or administrative reform. However, they were not quite as enthusiastic at trimming all levels of senior bureaucrats, especially the assistant deputy level.

In 1988 and in 1996, there was a strong relationship between provincial population and size of senior bureaucracy. As Table 2 illustrates, in Quebec, Alberta, Manitoba and Newfoundland the size of the senior bureaucracy is large relative to provincial population, while Nova Scotia and British

Table 2. *Number of Senior Public Servants by Size of Province*

Province	*1988*	*1996*	*% Change*
Ontario	97	102	+5
Quebec	102	88	-14
British Columbia	65	84	+29
Alberta	90	63	-30
Manitoba	61	53	-13
Saskatchewan	45	42	-7
Nova Scotia	24	18	-25
Newfoundland	56	54	-4
New Brunswick	45	49	+9
Prince Edward Island	14	9	-36
Spearman's Rho	.90*	.87*	

*Correlations significant at $\alpha = .01$

Columbia seemed to have relatively low numbers. By the last year for which data were available, the picture had changed somewhat. Ontario increased the total number of senior officials, as did British Columbia and New Brunswick. However, the correlation between population and the size of the senior public service remains high, with a Spearman's Rho of 0.9 in 1988 and 0.87 in 1996. These high correlation levels become particularly notable when we compare them with the correlation among mobility and provincial population and the size of bureaucracy.

To begin looking at mobility it would be useful to consider the variation in the numbers of movers and stayers over the years. Table 3 gives a summary of mobility trends by classification and by year. The overall trend can be characterized as being stable. But it varies widely from year to year. In 1990, only fifteen per cent of deputy ministers were new, while in 1994 it was nearly one-half. At the assistant deputy minister level, the range is not as high, but there is still a high variability. The high level of turnover in some years may be what is sometimes referred to as a "generational" effect. Senior public servants have a tendency to be quite homogeneous by age and length of service. As a result, there are cadres who are hired and who rise together and who also tend to retire in waves.[23] This may be particularly true in the mid-1990s, since many of the cohort who were hired in the mid-1960s as governments grew would be at the end of their career and eligible for early retirement. There is not, however, a trend to less turnover as is the case at the federal level. From 1989 to 1991, thirty per cent of senior officials were new. In the subsequent years the proportion actually rose to thirty-three per cent. Generally, there is greater mobility at the assistant deputy minister level, perhaps reflecting that this is the career pinnacle for most civil servants who achieve this rank.

Table 3. *Movers by Classification and Year*

		1989	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*Total*
DM	%	30.8	15.3	25.9	34.7	28.3	45.7	26.9	34.6	30.0
	#	61	29	49	67	52	74	42	53	427
ADM	%	43.4	24.6	30.9	37.9	31.1	37.6	29.7	23.1	32.4
	#	178	99	131	173	139	163	127	94	1104
All Officials	%	39.3	21.6	29.4	37.0	30.3	39.8	28.9	26.3	31.7
	#	239	128	180	240	191	237	169	147	1531

Note: ADM = assistant deputy ministers; DM = deputy minister

Mobility patterns and election effects

Table 4 gives turnover rates per province for the period, at both the assistant deputy and deputy minister level, with differences between small and large provinces given at the bottom. It shows that there were 1,531 turnovers during the period of the study, 1,104 changes in assistant deputy minister, and 427 changes at the deputy minister level between 1988 and the end of 1996. On average in any year, 31.7 per cent of the senior public-service positions were held by someone other than the incumbent in the previous year, with the level for assistant deputy ministers at 32.4 per cent being slightly higher than that of the deputy ministers at thirty per cent. Three provinces stand out as having higher turnover rates among senior officials – Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Over the time-period under study, almost forty per cent of deputy and assistant deputy ministers were new in these provinces. This compares with the overall average, which was just under thirty-two per cent. Nova Scotia and Alberta had the lowest percentage of new officials – roughly twenty-two per cent and twenty-five per cent, respectively. On average, the turnover rates at both levels are higher for large provinces than for small provinces, although this seems to mask a slightly different phenomenon. The correlation between (Spearman's R) size of province and mobility is only 0.47, and the correlation between mobility and the size of the bureaucracy is only 0.36. Our main interest here, however, is whether or not there are any election effects on turnover rates. That is, are there higher turnover rates of senior officials after elections?

The last columns in Table 4 compare turnover rates in the years before and during an election to the years after elections. Overall there is not a large difference in the total number of changes in the election/pre-election years and the post-election years. In the former there were a total of 705 changes, which is an average between the two years of 352, while in post-election years the total number of changes is 346. The other 480 changes (the 1,531

Table 4. *Turnover Rates – Percentage of Senior Public Servants New to Position, by Electoral Cycle*

Province	*Overall rates*			*Election/Pre-election year rates*			*Post-election year rates*		
	All	*ADM*	*DM*	*All*	*ADM*	*DM*	*All*	*ADM*	*DM*
Alberta	*26.2*	*28.3*	*18.7*	*28.0*	*30.0*	*21.3*	*25.9*	*29.0*	*14.3*
	178	150	28	99	82	17	43	38	5
British Columbia	*39.3*	*39.2*	*39.6*	*30.3*	*32.2*	*24.7*	*44.6*	*44.8*	*43.8*
	235	178	57	93	74	19	33	26	7
Manitoba	*22.4*	*23.4*	*20.5*	*23.1*	*22.9*	*23.7*	*21.2*	*22.4*	*18.9*
	103	72	31	53	35	18	24	17	7
New Brunswick	*25.4*	*26.4*	*23.4*	*21.5*	*24.8*	*15.3*	*27.6*	*25.4*	*31.4*
	103	69	34	44	33	11	27	16	11
Newfoundland	*28.7*	*29.0*	*27.9*	*28.9*	*29.0*	*28.8*	*31.3*	*31.1*	*32.0*
	123	92	31	79	58	21	31	23	8
Nova Scotia	*27.2*	*20.0*	*27.7*	*34.2*	*50.0*	*33.3*	*24.4*	*0.0*	*25.6*
	43	2	41	13	1	12	10	0	10
Ontario	*38.5*	*39.4*	*35.6*	*36.5*	*39.6*	*26.1*	*35.2*	*31.4*	*48.8*
	314	247	67	144	120	24	70	49	21
PEI	*32.3*	*28.6*	*32.6*	*28.6*	*33.3*	*28.3*	*40.9*	*0.0*	*45.0*
	30	2	28	16	1	15	9	0	9
Quebec	*32.6*	*31.2*	*38.1*	*34.7*	*32.4*	*43.3*	*33.7*	*34.0*	*32.5*
	268	204	64	110	81	29	67	54	13

Table 4. *Turnover Rates – Percentage of Senior Public Servants New to Position, by Electoral Cycle (Concluded)*

Province	*Overall rates*			*Election/Pre-election year rates*			*Post-election year rates*		
	All	*ADM*	*DM*	*All*	*ADM*	*DM*	*All*	*ADM*	*DM*
Saskatchewan	*35.8*	*36.7*	*34.3*	*30.3*	*33.6*	*24.2*	*30.2*	*26.5*	*36.8*
	134	88	46	54	39	15	32	18	14
National totals	*31.7*	*32.4*	*30.0*	*30.0*	*31.5*	*26.3*	*31.0*	*30.5*	*32.0*
	1531	1104	427	705	524	181	346	241	105
Small provinces	*27.9*	*28.4*	*27.2*	*26.5*	*27.5*	*24.7*	*27.8*	*26.0*	*30.4*
	536	325	211	259	167	92	133	74	59
Large provinces	*34.1*	*34.4*	*33.2*	*32.5*	*33.8*	*28.2*	*33.4*	*33.1*	*34.3*
	995	779	216	446	357	89	213	167	46

Notes: 1. ADM = assistant deputy ministers; DM = deputy ministers
2. Items in italics are percentages; items in regular text are observed cases.
3. Large provinces are Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec.

total minus the election 705 and 346 election changes) took place in the middle years of the various governments' mandate. We have noted that overall rates (found in the first column) were highest in Saskatchewan, Ontario and British Columbia. These are also the three provinces where the party in power changed. The pre- and post-election pattern in these provinces, however, is not the same. In British Columbia, it was clearly a post-election effect, with high levels of change at both levels of the organization. This is consistent with John Langford's contention that the senior levels of the bureaucracy in British Columbia are highly politicized.[24] In Saskatchewan, there was little difference, although more deputy ministers changed after the election than before. In Ontario the post-election rate actually fell, although the election produced a change in political party in power. There was also a high rate of change in deputy ministers. This reflects Richard Loreto's point that the deputy minister level in Ontario had become politicized, with many deputy ministers coming from outside rather than following the normal civil-service career path.[25]

Of the other seven provinces, the turnover rate for all senior officials is higher in post-election years for only three provinces. In the other four – Manitoba, Alberta, Nova Scotia and Quebec – it fell, yet two of those provinces had changes in government. Clearly there is not a strong pattern of either "bringing in a new broom" or retaining institutional memory after elections regardless of whether there is a change in government.

Table 5 presents the mobility patterns broken down by departmental function. It can be seen that our expectations about variations by department were supported, although in some cases the differences are not large. The overall mobility rate for departments with low functionalism is thirty-five per cent, with medium levels it is thirty-two per cent, and with high levels of functionalism it is twenty-eight per cent. Thus, in departments where it could be considered necessary for the senior public service to have a detailed, technical knowledge of the department's expertise there are lower levels of turnover. There appears to be an assumption that those without a specific functional knowledge can run a department of social services, for example; but in a department like highways, someone is needed who knows the department and who is an engineer. This finding is consistent with Carroll's longitudinal, cross-national study at the national level.[26]

Levels of functional determinism, however, should not be confused with policy importance. Thus, departments that do not have a clearly dominant function (which requires a high degree of technical competence in the specific area of responsibility) may be handicapped because their senior public servants are changed more often. The election effect is also weaker in the highly functionally deterministic departments. It is also possible that the highly specific function leaves less room for new policy directions, with governments therefore less inclined to move new individuals into these areas.

Table 5. *Turnover Rates – Percentage of Senior Public Servants New to Position, by Department Function*

Function	*Overall rates*			*Election/Pre-election year rates*			*Post-election year rates*		
	All	*ADM*	*DM*	*All*	*ADM*	*DM*	*All*	*ADM*	*DM*
Low	*34.6*	*35.3*	*33.0*	*34.1*	*36.4*	*29.4*	*32.0*	*32.9*	*30.1*
	401	275	126	197	142	55	82	57	25
Medium	*32.3*	*33.4*	*29.6*	*29.8*	*31.0*	*26.7*	*32.2*	*32.5*	*31.5*
	790	581	209	352	262	90	187	135	52
High	*27.7*	*27.8*	*27.2*	*26.3*	*28.0*	*22.0*	*27.4*	*24.4*	*35.0*
	340	248	92	156	120	36	77	49	28
Totals	*31.7*	*32.4*	*30.0*	*30.0*	*31.5*	*26.3*	*31.0*	*30.5*	*32.0*
	1531	1104	427	705	524	181	346	241	105

Notes: 1. ADM = assistant deputy ministers; DM = deputy ministers
2. Items in italics are percentages; items in regular text are observed cases.

There is almost no difference in the pattern between the rank of assistant deputy minister and deputy minister with respect to function. The average levels of mobility were lower in non-election years, with assistant deputy ministers having a higher level of mobility than deputy ministers – a pattern consistent with that shown in Table 3. This may reflect the career development of assistant deputy ministers who are being promoted to deputy minister in another department. If they stay within the same department, however, it is not considered to be a move. The low level of mobility among deputy ministers in departments with high functionalism may be a further indication that when officials in these departments reach the level of deputy minister, they remain there until retirement. We had some concern that cases in which the assistant deputy minister was promoted to deputy minister within the same department could distort our findings as they would be considered movers. In fact, there were fewer than ten cases of this occurring over the more than 1,500 moves and nearly 6,000 cases. This in itself might be a subject for further research.

When the post-election results are considered, the pattern is not as clear. In this case, deputy ministers have a lower level of mobility in the departments with low and medium functionalism and higher levels for those with high functionalism. The higher levels of mobility at the assistant deputy minister level may reflect a desire on the part of a newer government to tap the expertise of senior bureaucrats who are capable but who might be perceived as being less "tainted" by even a slight bias towards the previous government. The slightly higher level of mobility among deputy ministers in the high functional category may be less a matter of the degree of functionalism and more that these are also often areas in which governments have developed policy agendas. Indeed this may be the basis on which they are elected. A party, for example, that has campaigned for a shift in economic policy or health policy might be inclined if only as a symbolic action to change the deputy minister of the department as one of its first acts.

Conclusions

The purpose of this paper was to provide some comparative analysis of senior public service mobility at the provincial level, an area that has been largely overlooked in the public administration literature in Canada. Our results indicate that there has been only a slight decline in numbers of deputy and assistant deputy ministers as governments have downsized, with the decreases that did occur tending to take place only in the mid- to late 1990s. Interestingly, the main findings of our study were that there was a relatively high level of mobility in the senior provincial civil service, with nearly one-third of the positions having a new incumbent each year.[27] When we compared these results across provinces, there was little difference in the rates of mobility between provinces as a function of size of province. While we

expected large changes in mobility as a result of elections, we found there is an increase in mobility after elections but the pattern is not consistent.

Finally, the degree of mobility seems to run across departments in a manner consistent with the degree of functional determinism within the departments. Senior public servants have much lower turnover rates in the departments with high functional determinism and higher rates in those with low functional determinism. The departments that lack this determinism, such as social services and manpower training, also represent some of the more intractable or "evil" policy areas.[28] It may be that problems in dealing with these areas related in some way to the levels of mobility associated with the senior public servants in these departments. To the extent that policy capacity is a function of experience in that policy area, there is also a high level of policy capacity. This is encouraging when one considers the extent to which policy is being devolved to the provincial level. What is somewhat disquieting is the extent to which new governments have change-overs in their senior public service, which may represent a loss of institutional memory at a critical period. While size to some degree affects mobility, elections, changes in political party, and functional determinism are not the only factors that produce differences between movers and stayers.

This paper has looked at only a very narrow aspect of the characteristics of the senior public service at the provincial level. Some directions for future research would be to carry out a more sophisticated analysis of this data set looking at the relationship between the degree of competitiveness in the provincial party system, difference in political party, and post-election changes or simply using some control variables. We have speculated on some aspects of these factors but did not analyse them. It would also be possible to compare more directly the changes within each year of a government's mandate by differences in political party and function. Another would be to measure longitudinal changes in functional determinism by looking at educational patterns both in the type and amount of post-secondary education and length of time in positions to consider how these may have changed with the extensive reorganization and downsizing in the 1990s. The last time this was looked at, at the federal level there was no difference in the amount or type of education between the two levels, but there was a clear trend towards a more "generalist" business-oriented education. There had been a clear move back to having senior civil servants serving a department to improve policy capacity and institutional memory.[29] The authors would be happy to make the data set available to other researchers for further analysis.

Notes

1 See, for example, David J. Bellamy, Jon H. Pammett and Donald C. Rowat, eds., *The Provincial Political Systems* (Toronto: Methuen, 1976); Rand Dyck, *Provincial Politics in Canada*, 2nd edition (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1991); Martin Robin, ed., *Canadian Provincial Poli-*

tics, 2nd edition (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1978); Hugh Thorburn, ed., *Party Politics in Canada*, 6th edition (Scarborough, Ont.: Prentice-Hall, 1991); and Evert A. Linquist and Karen B. Murray, "A Reconnaissance of Canadian Administrative Reform During the Early 1990s," in Chris Dunn, ed., *Provinces: Canadian Provincial Politics* (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1996).

2 Joel D. Aberbach, Robert D. Putnam and Bert A. Rockman, *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981); Colin Campbell and George Szablowski, *The Super-Bureaucrats: Structure and Behaviour in Central Agencies* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976); Ezra N. Suleiman, ed., *Bureaucrats and Policy-Making* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984).

3 This research was undertaken because a student (Melanie Walsh) in a class, after a discussion of bureaucratic élites in Canada, asked: "If the federal government is devolving responsibility to the provinces, what is the policy capacity of provincial bureaucratic élites?"

4 Jacques Bourgault and Stéphane Dion, "Governments come and go, but what of senior civil servants? Canadian deputy ministers and transitions in power (1867–1987)," *Governance* 2, no. 2 (April 1989), p. 130.

5 Ibid., p. 125.

6 Ibid., pp. 130 and 145.

7 Canada, Privy Council Office, *Decision Making Processes and Central Agencies in Canada: Federal, Provincial and Territorial Practices* (Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services, 1998).

8 For the slight variations between provinces, see William A.W. Nielson, ed., *Getting the Pink Slip: Severances and Firings in the Senior Public Service* (Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1990).

9 For a discussion of provincial institutions, see Graham White, "Provinces and Territories: Characteristics, Roles and Responsibilities," in Jacques Bourgault, Maurice Demers and Cynthia Williams, eds., *Public Administration and Public Management: Experiences in Canada* (Quebec: Les Publications du Québec, 1997); and Graham White, "Big is different from little: on taking size seriously in the analysis of governmental institutions," CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 33, no. 4 (Winter 1990), pp. 526–50.

10 Donald J. Savoie, ed., "Introduction," *Taking Power: Managing Government Transitions*. Monographs on Canadian Public Administration – No. 14 (Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1993), p. 3; Howard Pauley and C. Lloyd Brown-John, "The New Democrats in Manitoba," in Ibid., p. 179; Evert Lindquist, "Focusing on the Essentials," in Ibid., p. 32; C. Lloyd Brown-John, "Assuming Command," in Ibid., p. 64. See also, the chapters on British Columbia by John Langford ("Quasi-Crimes and Eager Beavers: Public Sector Ethics in British Columbia") and on Ontario by Ken Kernaghan ("Rules are Not Enough: Ethics, Politics, and Public Service in Ontario") in John W. Langford and Allan Tupper, eds., *Corruption, Character and Conduct: Essays on Canadian Government Ethics* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press Canada, 1994), pp. 20–41 and pp. 174–96, respectively.

11 See, for example, Norman Bell, "Professional values and organizational decision making," *Administration and Society* 17, no. 1 (May 1985), pp. 21–60; Arnold D. Meltsner, *Policy Analysts in a Bureaucracy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); and, more recently, Michael Pusey, *Economic Regulation in Canberra* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

12 J. E. Kingdom, "Introduction," in J. E. Kingdom, ed., *The Civil Service in Liberal Democracies: An Introductory Survey* (London: Routledge, 1990).

13 Aberbach et al., *Bureaucrats and Politicians in Western Democracies*.

14 See, for example, Barbara Wake Carroll, "The structure of the Canadian federal bureaucratic elite: some evidence of change," CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 34, no. 2 (Summer 1991), pp. 359–72; Barbara Wake Carroll and David E. Garkut, "Is there an empirical trend

towards 'managerialism'?" CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION 39, no. 4 (Winter 1996), pp. 535–53; R. J. Gregory, "The attitudes of senior public servants in Australia and New Zealand: administrative reform and technocratic consequences," *Governance* 4, no. 3 (July 1991), pp. 295–331; Gordon Osbaldeston, *Keeping Deputy Ministers Accountable* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1989); and Pusey, *Economic Rationalism in Canberra*.

15 Carroll and Garkut, "Is there an empirical trend towards 'managerialism'?" CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, p. 538.

16 Ibid.

17 Barbara Wake Carroll and David Siegel, *Service in the Field: The World of Front Line Public Servants* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1999), Chapter 6.

18 White, "Big is different from little," CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, p. 175.

19 The classification of functional determinism was based on one of the author's extensive research in analysing government departments and organizations based on this criterion. For a listing of the actual classifications please contact the authors.

20 See Richard Mackie "Province losing senior bureaucrat, deputy finance minister joins civil-service exodus to private sector," *The Globe and Mail* (Toronto) 20 May 1998, p. A2; Natalie Southworth, "Former police chief takes on new job," *The Spectator* (Hamilton) 14 July 1998, p. A2; and Lee Prokaska "Deluge of enquiries about the region's top bureaucratic job," *The Spectator* (Hamilton) 14 July 1998, p. A3.

21 Mackie, "Province losing senior bureaucrat," *Globe and Mail*.

22 See Michael M. Atkinson and Gerald Bierling, "Is there convergence in provincial spending priorities?" *Canadian Public Policy* 24, no. 1 (March 1998), pp. 71–90; and Ronald C. Moe, "The reinventing government exercise: misinterpreting the problem, misjudging the consequences," *Public Administration Review* 54, no. 2 (March/April 1994), pp. 111–22. The Gore report recommended reducing by half the number of middle-level career bureaucrats but did not recommend reducing the size of the political-appointee senior class at all.

23 Barbara Wake Carroll, "Bureaucratic Elites: Changes in Career Paths Over Time," in Moshe Maor and Jan-Erik Lane, eds., *Comparative Public Administration. Vol. II, International Library of Politics and Comparative Government* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 1998).

24 Langford, "Quasi-Crimes and Eager Beavers," in Langford and Tupper, *Corruption, Character and Conduct*.

25 Richard Loreto "Changes in the Ontario Government following the NDP Takeover." Paper presented to the Hamilton Regional Group of IPAC, November 1991.

26 Carroll "Bureaucratic Elite," in Maor and Lane, *Comparative Public Administration*.

27 The nature of the source of the data set did not allow us to consider cases in which there had been more than one person in the position within a one-year period.

28 See Michael Harmon and Richard Myer, *Organization Theory for Public Administration* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1986) for a discussion of the characteristics of such policy areas.

29 Carroll and Garkut, "Is there an empirical trend towards 'managerialism'?" CANADIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.