

Going with the Flow: Neoliberalism and Cultural Policy in Manitoba and Saskatchewan



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Outline of presentation

- What has been the overall impact of neoliberalism in a cultural context?
- What has been the overall impact of neoliberalism in the Western Canadian political context?
- How has this ideological “tide” affected the development of cultural policies in Manitoba and Saskatchewan?

Neoliberalism and cultural policy

- Changes in global trade governance
- Policy emphasis on market and consumer-based aspects of the cultural industries
- Impact of digital communications technologies
- Publicly funded culture and social spaces as “feeders” of commercial activity

Neoliberalism in the Western Canadian political context

- Battle of the paradigms
- Rise of the Reform Party
- Transformation of social democratic parties in Manitoba and Saskatchewan
- The Western dilemma

Neoliberalism and cultural policies in Manitoba

- Tensions between centre and hinterland
- Partnerships with federal and municipal governments
- Cultural industries development initiatives – 1987 to 2005
- Heritage and tourism initiatives – 1999-2002
- Visual arts and crafts initiatives – 1996-1998
- Cultural human resources development initiatives– 1997-2003
- Community development initiatives - ongoing

Neoliberalism and cultural policies in Saskatchewan

- Adult education and recreation roots
- Tensions between professional and community-based cultural organizations
- Cultural industries development initiatives – 1988-2007
- Cultural human resource development initiatives – 1994-2006
- Community development initiatives - ongoing

Manitoba per capita cultural expenditures (\$) 1985-2004

Jurisdiction	1985-86	1995-96	2003-04
Federal	72.36	54.22	56.89
Provincial	72.77	69.60	74.77
Municipal	30.77	41.75	44.67

Saskatchewan per capita cultural expenditures – 1985-2004

Jurisdiction	1985-86	1990-96	2003-04
Federal	52.44	39.53	35.36
Provincial	59.53	58.51	68.17
Municipal	25.96	50.21	57.86

Cultural policy impacts

- Western Canada as a “receiver” of federal political and economic decisions
- Manitoba’s ideological shift to mixed model “Third Way” policies
- Saskatchewan’s “decentralization” of cultural policy

Conclusions – “Going with the Flow”

- Persistence of traditional cultural policies
- Relative funding stability at provincial level
- Philosophy of “pragmatic idealism”