



Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy >

Volume 35, 2019 - Issue 1: SI: Recent Social Policy in Canada and the United States

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Federalism and the politics of the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans

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Pages 25-40 | Received 25 Jan 2018, Accepted 16 Aug 2018, Published online: 06 Oct 2018

Download citation <https://doi.org/10.1080/21699763.2018.1526698>



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ABSTRACT

Drawing on the literature on federalism and public policy, the present article explores the recent politics of two highly-similar and closely integrated Canadian public pension programs created in the mid-1960s: the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and the Quebec Pension Plan (QPP). This article argues that the parallel evolution of CPP/QPP can be understood by examining how the unique jurisdictional arrangements for the CPP/QPP interacted with other factors to generate by these linked programs have led to the emergence of specific federalism policy dynamics, while muting or foreclosing other potential policy dynamics. As shown, governments have engaged in a process of 'collusive benchmarking' that has limited the scope of the available policy options. Differing demographic trends in Quebec and the 'Rest of Canada' have strained but also reinforced this policymaking dynamic in recent years. Simultaneously,

intergovernmental race to the top dynamics have facilitated the recent push for both CPP and, later, QPP expansion.

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Acknowledgement

A previous version of this paper was presented in March 2018 at the Toronto Public Policy and Governance Workshop (University of Toronto). The authors thank the participants, as well as Rachel Hatcher, Patrik Marier, Alex Waddan, and the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions. Daniel Béland acknowledges support from the Canada Research Chairs Program.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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