

A Comparative Analysis of Post-secondary Education Policies of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec

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Introduction

Objective of the presentation: compare post-secondary higher education policies of British Columbia, Ontario and Quebec

Context of the research: research project on higher education policies of American and Mexican states and Canadian provinces and the federal policies of the three countries

Project: initiated in 1999 under the leadership of the *Alliance for International Higher Education Policy Studies*; directed by Professor Richard Richardson, New York University; funded by the Ford Foundation; three research teams (American, Canadian and Mexican)



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Methodology

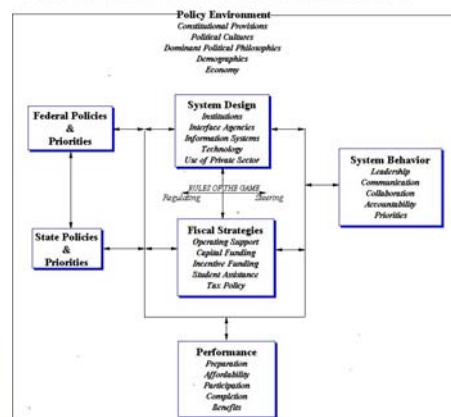
Case studies of higher education policies of states and provinces and of federal policies of the three countries

Content analysis: laws, regulations, policy statements, reports of committees and boards, statistical reports, websites, etc.

Semi-structured interviews with leaders of higher education

Analytical Framework

FIGURE 1: Linking State and Federal Policies to Higher Education Performance



Plan

1. **Structure** of the systems of post-secondary education
2. **Priorities** of the systems and their implementation
3. **Provincial political parties** and higher education policies

To what extent are the three systems of higher education different from the viewpoint of their structure, priorities and ways to implement them?

To what extent are they converging on some aspects?

To what extent the political environment, especially the provincial political parties, have an impact on the priorities and their implementation?



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1. Structure of the three Systems

in the three systems

- two sectors: college, university
- universities have a larger degree of autonomy
- but differences in the articulation of the two sectors



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Quebec

Two sectors structurally complementary, not parallel. Diploma of college studies required to enter university.

College sector

Collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel (Cégep): public institutions. Two types of program: pre-university and technical. Comprehensive approach: courses in general subjects common to both pre-university and technical program. Private colleges: subject to the same rules as Cégep for the programs.

Universities

Only universities are authorized to confer grades.



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Ontario

Two sectors are parallel.

College sector

- Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) (public)
- Career colleges (private)
- Institutes of Technology and Advanced Learning (ITAL)

Universities

Only universities are authorized to confer grades except ITALS in some applied fields.



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British Columbia

The lines of demarcation between the two sectors are not as clear as in Ontario and Quebec.

- Colleges: vocational programs
- University Colleges authorized to confer B.A and M.A
- Institutes authorized to confer grades in technology
- Universities authorized to confer the three grades

The two sectors are more structurally integrated in Quebec than in Ontario and British Columbia. In order to facilitate the transition from college to university, two agencies:

- Council on Admissions and Transfer (British Columbia)
- College University Consortium Council (Ontario)



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2. Priorities and their Implementation

Five priorities of the three systems

(1) Accessibility; (2) Accountability; (3) Strengthening of the links between programs and the labor market; (4) Development of 'useful and relevant research'; (5) Marketization (introduction of market mechanisms into the system in order to bring in more competition and to de-regulate the system)

The three systems are converging on the four first priorities. However marketization is not a declared priority in Quebec in spite of the presence of some elements of this process.

There are differences and similitude in the implementation of the priorities.



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Examples of differences and similitude

Accessibility

a priority in the three provinces since the sixties

- expansion of traditional universities
- creation of new universities
- creation of new types of post-secondary institutions

but different ways of implementing this priority in Quebec

- tuition-free college education
- loans and bursaries program: most generous in Canada
- freezing of university tuition fees: lowest in Canada



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Examples of differences and similitude

Development of useful and relevant research

in Quebec

creation of three independent government research funding agencies

creation of not-for-profit organization to promote marketing of the research findings

creation of College centers for technology transfer affiliated with Cegeps and linked to a specific field of their career training expertise



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Examples of differences and similitude

Marketization

in Ontario and British Columbia

de-regulation of tuition fees

law to authorize at certain conditions the creation of private universities in the case of British Columbia, universities of other provinces or states to confer grades in order to increase the competition



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3. Political Parties and Policies

The three provinces have been governed by different political parties over the last thirty years. Greater variations of higher education policies according to political parties in power in British Columbia and Ontario. Greater continuity of policies in Quebec: system design not altered in any major way. Higher education policies part of a major education reform inspired by a nationalist ideology: consensus on this reform as part of a nation building process. Consultation approach over the system's highlights. Many permanent advisory agencies and bodies: venues for collaboration where points of convergence would appear and a consensus be shaped beyond political party leanings and lobby interests. Continuity does not mean absence of changes and tensions.



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Conclusion

The research has shown **differences and convergences**.

- structure
- priorities and ways to implement them
- influence of the political parties on policies

One of the major stake: regulation of the systems by state or market forces

For access to the three Canadian case studies:

www.nyu.edu/iesp/aiheps/research.html

