

## Book Review of "International Education as Public Policy in Canada"

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# BOOK REVIEW

## INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AS PUBLIC POLICY IN CANADA

REVIEWED BY

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Tamtik, Merli, Trilokekar, Roopa Desai and Jones, Glen A. (Eds.) (2020). *International Education as Public Policy in Canada*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. Pages: 439. Price: 39.95 CAD (paperback), 130.00 CAD (hard cover).

This award-winning volume (CBIE Catalyst prize, 2020) provides a panoramic overview of international education policies across Canada's provinces and territories, with rich historical detail on how they emerged, largely at the provincial or local level, and how they have interfaced with federal government policy in a context where education is constitutionally outside of federal jurisdiction. A number of contributors have used theories of multi-level governance (MLG) to analyse the tensions between policies of international education at the provincial/territorial level and federal policies relating to immigration, economic development and international trade. Some have adopted critical theory to demonstrate how increasing pressures for competition in a global knowledge economy have resulted in a lessening concern for the public good and a privatization tendency in public education at both secondary and tertiary levels. Most soul searching are the chapters that deal with views from the Inuit in Nunavut and Indigenous peoples in many parts of Canada. The demand put forth in the early nineties by Kirkness and Barnhardt for the four Rs of Respect, Reciprocity, Relevance and Responsibility runs through the volume as a passionate thread calling for a deep-level re-thinking of many aspects of international education policy.

In the Introduction, the three editors, Tamtik, Trilokekar and Jones, note how the complex intersection between higher education and foreign affairs, immigration, research, citizenship and economic development

make it difficult to identify a clear public policy, given the fact that higher education is under provincial jurisdiction. Section One includes four chapters on international education policy at the federal level, with Chapter One providing a historical overview of the Chretien, Martin and Harper administrations and the first explicit federal policy in 2014 oriented towards the economic benefit of increasing numbers of international students. Chapter Two deepens the historical analysis, while Chapter Three documents the development of connections between international education and immigration, showing the early historical roots in the development of immigration policy. Chapter Four then considers federal research policy and internationalization, showing how few mechanisms there are for the rhetoric of international collaboration to gain material support.

Section Two includes nine chapters which constitute the heart of the volume. These chapters are all based on substantive local research and give fascinating analyses and insights into the distinctive approaches to the internationalization of higher education in eight Canadian provinces. The chapter on Quebec traces the development of its policy from 1965, and the ways in which it enabled the province to develop intergovernmental agreements with France and other foreign countries, and also take the lead in establishing a global association of francophone universities. Provinces such as Alberta, Manitoba and Nova Scotia were proactive in international education policy from a fairly early period, while for

provinces such as Newfoundland and Labrador, and also Prince Edward Island, higher institutions took the lead in situations where attracting international students as potential immigrants was of key importance. Finally, the chapter on British Columbia focuses on the public good, and uses critical theory to expose the ways in which fees charged to international students at school as well as tertiary level are being used in a kind of privatization of public education, which results in increasing inequity rather than public benefit.

The chapter on Nunavut elaborates on the multiple challenges of this Indigenous territory, which gained autonomous status in 1993, and focuses first on inward internationalization, a curriculum that preserves the Inuit language and cultural heritage. Its outward reach is largely to the Arctic Council, an international, intergovernmental forum quite distinct from the nation state and thus facing challenges in terms of international relations. This chapter connects well with Chapter Seventeen in Section Three of the book, "Across the Divide," which is co-authored by an Indigenous scholar and places internationalization in relation to indigenization. Attention is given here to a 2009 Accord agreed on by the Association of Canadian Deans of Education requiring each teacher education student to develop competency regarding Indigenous education. In 2014 the Association agreed on an accord on internationalization of education, calling for social justice, equity, reciprocity, sustainability, intercultural awareness and ethical engagement, with the acknowledgement that this was stimulated by the indigenization movement. The commitment was to moving internationalization from a tool of the oppressor to a tool of decolonization.

Other chapters in Section Three deal critically with various forms of inequity in international education policy. Chapter 14 considers non-governmental actors at the national level, which are shown to be serving federal pressures for competition in a global knowledge economy, while Chapter 15 identifies policy networks as assemblages that again are drawn into service of a federal policy orientation toward global economic competition. Chapter 16 deals with media in Ontario, and maps media coverage around three commonly appearing themes – the economic benefits of international education, managing risks of international education, and Canada as a gateway to a world of intercultural learning.

The three editors of this volume, who are also authors of several of the chapters, should be congratulated

for bringing together a remarkable group of contributors from across the country and creating space for diverse perspectives from different communities to be heard. The analyses used exemplify a number of distinctive theoretical frames, such as multi-level governance, academic capitalism, controversy mapping, policy network assemblages and wholistic Indigenous perspectives. Most important of all, the book opens up a positive vision of how international education policy could be shaped to serve the public good, make possible genuine intercultural understanding at a deep level and put Indigenous perspectives and decolonisation at its core.