

Pan-Canadian Perspectives on Teacher Education: The State of the Art in Comparative Research

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This text proposes a comparative analysis of the inter-provincial developments of the professionalization of teacher education in Canada, and focuses on two issues: governance of teacher education and the development of new training programs. More specifically, based on a literature review, we analyse how current comparative research brings an understanding of the professionalization of teaching in Canada and we argue the need for more comparative studies in this matter.

Ce texte propose une analyse comparative interprovinciale des évolutions de la professionnalisation de la formation des enseignants au Canada selon deux enjeux : la gouvernance de la formation des enseignants et la mise en place des nouveaux programmes universitaires. Plus spécifiquement, nous étudions, à travers une revue de la documentation, de quelle manière la recherche comparative actuelle permet de mieux comprendre le mouvement de professionnalisation au Canada. Nous argumentons enfin de l'importance de réaliser davantage d'études comparatives dans ce sujet.

Introduction

This paper focuses on the inter-provincial developments of the professionalization of teacher education in Canada. More specifically, it intends to study, through a literature review, how comparative research conducted in Canada allows an understanding of the changes brought about on teacher education after a professionalization movement initiated across Canada in the early 1990s.

Indeed, since the 1990s, education systems in Europe and North America have experienced a series of important reforms in terms of organizations, actors, ideologies, and practices. One of the main vectors of these reforms is the idea of the “professionalization” of teaching and of teacher education (Carbonneau & Tardif, 2002). Yet “professionalization” is a contested topic and its meaning varies according to different ideological goals that drive it, resulting in contrasting translations into policies and training programs. This means the professionalization of teacher education fluctuates under the combined effects of provincial contexts, policy choices, as well as universities’ resources and limitations (Wentzel & Malet, 2010).

Furthermore, the concepts of “profession” and “professionalization” are better understood in light of a specific field of sociology: “the sociology of professions.” Depending on the sociological

approach (Functionalism, Interactionism, or Conflict Theories—including Weberian and Marxist traditions), the definitions of these concepts may differ in many aspects, including the place of theoretical knowledge in the profession, the importance of university training, professional autonomy, the evaluation of conduct (deontology, ethics), the recognition and social status of the profession, as well as its governance. That being said, if we conceptualize the “professionalization” concept in a more simplistic way, it can be understood as the historical process that allows an occupational group to become a profession, mostly according to the established professional model of medicine or law.

In this paper, we discuss the professionalization concept according to ideologies promoted by the North American professionalization movement through the many publications that have been striving for a new approach to teacher education, including: university training of longer duration; a stronger knowledge base for teaching and teacher education; new programs focused on the complexities of teaching and the diversity of urban schools; school/university partnerships; the formation of “reflective practitioners”; and the undertaking of a rigorous and dynamic research agenda, focusing on education, on teacher education and on assessment, as well as on monitoring strategies (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Fullan, Galluzzo, Morris & Watson, 1998; Wideen & Lemma, 1999).

These important changes in the conceptualization of teacher education in Canada are observable in reform documents published by the governments of several Canadian provinces, both in terms of institutional changes in university research, as well as in the governance of the profession. However, several researchers have discussed the challenges of the professionalization of teacher education in Canada. For example, Hall and Schulz (2003) declared some contradictions existing between the “professionalism” advocated in training programs and the “professionalism” future teachers face in schools during their practical training. The authors noted that the teacher educators viewed teaching in holistic ways, with a belief in the teacher as knower, thinker, researcher, and change agent, but these beliefs were diminished because of the tensions encountered within the academy and those coming from the numerous educational policies that have already transformed schooling.

Scholars have also discussed the university-school partnership that is still fragile (Acker, 1997; Crocker & Dibbon, 2008; Laferrière, Sheehan & Russell, 2003); the lower status of education compared to academic research in other fields (Laferrière et al., 2003); the difficulties encountered by teachers in their work (Kamansi et al., 2008; Tardif, 2012); and conflicts faced by provincial governments with teacher organizations, due to teacher evaluations and standards of practice:

Some provinces took direct action to change the status of teaching by introducing teaching tests (as in Ontario) or compulsory recertification (also in Ontario), or by removing school principals from the teachers’ organization (Ontario and BC). Canadian teachers found the 1990s a discouraging decade in which they felt undermined by governments. (Levin, 2005, p. 66)

In such manner, we observe that the trends for “professionalizing” teacher education in Canada are not without tensions, challenges, and obstacles. Indeed, the professionalization of teaching and teacher education seems to be moving forward in some respects, but in other respects seems rather to be moving backwards. Some speak about contradictory developments “professionalizing” and “de-professionalizing” teaching (Maroy & Cattonar, 2002). Some argue that teaching is in the process of “de-professionalization” as a result of recent educational

reforms, while proponents of reform want to characterize this process as a “re-professionalization” of teaching, more in line with current educational needs (Whitty, 2000). Finally, some would report on trends of “deregulation” of teacher education (Grimmett, Young & Lessard, 2012).

Thus, we consider it relevant to discuss inter-provincial developments on the professionalization of teacher education, specifically according to the governance of teacher education and the development of new training programs. In particular, we are interested in knowing in what way comparative research allows us to understand these dynamics in the Canadian context. How to understand this professionalization movement in Canada? What is the current state of comparative research on teacher education in Canada? What comparative studies have been conducted regarding policies that govern the teaching profession and education programs in Canada? What comparative research has been done specifically on approaches, structures, and content of teacher education programs among Canadian provinces? These are all questions this paper will attempt to answer.

We initially present contextual elements that characterize teacher education in Canada; then, we present a literature review of the comparative research that has been conducted on the governance of teacher education in Canada, as well as the characteristics of the training programs. At the same time, we discuss the current state of this field of research by describing the major Canada-wide trends that can be drawn by this.

The Context of Teacher Education in Canada

Canada has a particular educational system in that it does not have one system, but rather thirteen or one for each of the three territories and ten provinces. Thus, since the British North America Act (BNA) came into effect in 1867, when Canada was constituted as a federation of provinces, each of them became autonomous regarding educational policy (art. 93). Each province is responsible for its own educational system, and teacher education differs by province, as it is designed according to the specific realities and requirements of each educational system, as well as the socio-cultural reality of each province (Tardif, 2011).

Moreover, as said by Levin (2005), the provinces tend to oscillate between having a ministry/department responsible for all education and having a department/separate department for a combination of post-secondary education, adult education, and continued education. At one point, some provinces may combine two ministries of education in one, or separate one in two. Thus, across Canada, provincial governments set regulations for teacher certification, while universities agree with this regulation for training programs (Wilson, 2003). That being said, taking into account the interaction between the government, the teaching profession, and the universities as a central dynamic in the governance of teacher education, Atkinson et al. (2008) point out that since 1980 various provinces have evolved in very different directions in the relative authority of each of these players.

Hence, there would be only one common aspect of teacher education among Canadian provinces, in that all teacher education programs are now university programs with a bachelor’s degree in education (B.Ed.) or its equivalent as basic training (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008). Some universities do offer master’s degree programs in teacher education that usually respond to particular needs in recruiting new teachers, for example, for students who already have university training.

The Accord on Initial Teacher Education (2006) signed by the Association of Canadian

Deans of Education (ACDE) is to be “a strong framework of normative principles for initial teacher education” (p. 1). Some faculties would have used this agreement as a basis for the fundamental principles in their own context, but for some other faculties, it would be only a document to be used optionally (Van Nuland, 2011). That being said, Crocker and Dibbon (2008) believe this agreement would indicate a first effort by a representative body, at a national level, to develop a set of principles on which an initial training program for teachers could be built. It would be a large scale and innovative initiative, according to these authors, which could ultimately lead to a more coherent system than that which currently exists. In this regard, Kitchen (2009) adds:

While principles signed by academic deans cannot transform teacher education, they help establish a context in which teacher education reform by dedicated teacher educators can transform practices and programs. This pan-Canadian accord may offer opportunities to develop a pan-Canadian teacher education agenda. (p. 6)

However, as explained by Hirschorn, Kristmanson, and Sears (2013), there is no common framework to guide teacher education in Canada. And, even if they are not proposing a single model among provinces, these authors see this lack of consensus as problematic, showing the need for a national conversation regarding teacher education:

Some may argue this lack of any national focus and discussion in teacher education is not a problem in a country where education is constitutionally a provincial responsibility, but we do not agree. Neither do the Canadian Deans of Education who, in their General Accord (ACDE 2005a), identify establishing a national conversation around public education generally and initial teacher education in particular as central to their mandate. (p. 80)

These researchers add, citing Sears, Clarke, and Hughes (1999), that Canada would be considered “the most decentralized western democracy” in the field of education:

among the OECD’s member states, Canada stood alone. Every other nation, including those which, like Canada, are structured as federations had devised a vehicle for articulating, debating, and adopting national policies and for coordinating education research. (Robertson, 2006, as cited in Hirschorn et al., 2013, p. 79)

Thus, despite the efforts of the ACDE and the proposals of some researchers, and even though for fifty years it has been necessary for teachers in all Canadian provinces to complete their education at the university level, in spite of this common obligation, teacher education is far from presenting a consistent face across Canada, and few instances allow a mutual understanding of teacher education. Indeed, in addition to provincial differences in laws for teacher certification, Canadian universities have also had real autonomy in the concrete organization of training programs, resulting in differences between universities within a province (Tardif, 2011).

Moreover, since 1995, a nationwide initiative, the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), allows qualified workers in one province to have similar employment opportunities in another province. According to several researchers, this would be a factor that adds to the complexity of the context of teacher education in Canada (Henley & Young, 2009; Van Nuland, 2011): teacher education differs by province, but job opportunities should be similar across the country.

According to Van Nuland (2011), the AIT agreement, as well as the numerous differences among the training programs in Canada, brings a number of concerns for the teaching profession:

With AIT now in force, teachers of both longer and shorter programmes are considered equal regarding qualifications to teach in Canada ... This agreement has already caused two faculties of education to change their programmes for fear that not changing would have an impact on enrolment, since other faculties have a shorter programme length....With this agreement in place, teacher candidates “shopping” for shorter education programmes can continue since all jurisdictions must honour the certificate acquired. (Van Nuland, 2011, p. 418)

According to Henley and Young (2009) the AIT agreement would be problematic for the professionalization of teachers. They explain that this agreement could bring an approach based upon a model of training—this means based on explicit occupational standards and competencies—as opposed to an approach on education. By focusing on occupational standards and competencies, but not on the way those are obtained, Henley and Young (2009) think that the AIT agreement would lead to lowering the status of the profession by creating alternative training pathways located outside of the university. Grimmett, Young, and Lessard (2012) agree with these assumptions because they see the AIT as a “hidden” form of deregulation, which in its pressure for harmonization of requirements for certification and entry into education, negatively affects the professional status of teaching in the country.

Overall, this socio-political context in which teacher education in Canada finds itself makes a comparative analysis of teacher education relevant. What is the current scenario of teacher education in Canada? Have any comparative studies been performed in order to comprehensively understand the way teachers are trained in Canada?

The Methodology of the Study

For this study, we did a literature review of three types of documents: articles published in scientific journals, books and book chapters, and research reports. We do not claim a complete understanding on the subject. Based on the typology of Bruce (2001), we chose our sources based on “relevance” and “exclusion.” In regard to the first characteristic, relevance, we searched for documents related to the topic of teacher education in Canada, and we wanted to focus especially (without limiting ourselves) on comparative studies. We were interested in two significant issues among the studies reviewed: works on reforms, changes, governance, and professionalization of teacher education in Canada; and works relating more specifically to the initial training programs in education (institutions, structures, contents). In this literature review, we noticed there is a lack of comparative empirical research on the subject.

In regard to exclusion, we have not taken into account the works that focus on teacher education in only one Canadian province, with the exception of Wilson (2003) because of the relevance of its content for discussion. We also excluded the papers on very specific topics in teacher education, such as multiculturalism, inclusion, ICT, etc. Finally, as noted by Kitchen and Russell (2012), several publications relating to teacher education in Canada are difficult to identify as they are often published in American or international journals.

Thus, we have used as an essential tool for our research, the Internet, through search engines like Google and Google Scholar and databases such as ERIC, Web of Science, ERUDIT,

CAIRN, EBSCO, and ProQuest. In addition, we have accessed library catalogs (Université de Montréal, Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec). Keywords most used to carry out our research were: Teacher Education Canada; Teacher Training Canada; Teacher Professionalization Canada; Teacher Education Reform Canada; Teacher Education Comparison Canada. Tables 1 and 2 show the 30 papers selected for our analysis.

Also, we must emphasize the efforts currently conducted by the Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE) to encourage dialogue between scholars across Canada for teacher education. In this regard, for example, a Handbook of Teacher Education was published in 2015 with the main objective being to report about the current research in teacher education in Canada. Although the publications of CATE are not necessarily comparative studies on the area, some chapters of the Handbook provide inter-provincial comparative perspectives, such as teacher education in western Canada (Nickel O'Connor & Falkenberg, 2015); teacher education in the Atlantic region (Hirschhorn & MacDonald, 2015); a brief history of initial teacher education in Quebec and Ontario (Smyth & Hamel, 2015); or research on the governance of

Table 1:

Published Works on Reforms, Changes, Governance, and Professionalization of Teacher Education in Canada

Author	Year	Type		
		Book/ Book chapter	Article	Report
Acker	1997		X	
Chan, Fisher & Rubenson	2007	X		
Cole	2000		X	
Connelly & Clandinin	2004	X		
D'Arrioso & Lessard	2007			X
Grimmett	2008a	X		
Grimmett	2008b	X		
Grimmett	2009	X		
Hall & Schulz	2003		X	
Henley & Young	2009		X	
Kitchen	2009		X	
Laferrrière, Sheehan, & Russell	2003	X		
Levin	2005	X		
Sheehan & Fullan	1995	X		
Thomas & Kane	2015	X		
Walker & von Bergmann	2013		X	
Young & Boyd	2010	X		
Young & Grimmett	2015	X		
Young, Hall, & Clarke	2007	X		
Total number of documents:		18		

Table 2:

Published Works on Teacher Education Programs in Canada: Training Approach, Institutions, Structures, and Contents

Author	Year	Type		
		Book/ Book chapter	Article	Report
Crocker & Dibbon	2008			X
Epp & Epp	2000			X
Gambhir, Broad, Evans, & Gaskell	2008			X
Guo & Pungur	2008		X	
Hirschhorn & MacDonald	2015	X		
Killoran & Parekh	2011		X	
Li	1999		X	
Nickel, O'Connor & Falkenberg	2015	X		
Phillips	2002			X
Poth	2013		X	
Van Nuland	2011		X	
Wilson	2003		N/A	
Total number of documents:		12		

Table 3:

The Works Published by the Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE)

Author	Year	Type		
		Book/ Book chapter	Article	Report
Carter, Prendergast & Belliveau (Eds.)	2015	X		
Christou & Bullock (Eds.)	2013	X		
Falkenberg & Smits (Eds.) (2 volumes)	2010	X		
Falkenberg & Smits (Eds.) (2 volumes)	2011	X		
Kitchen & Russell (Eds.)	2012	X		
Maynes & Hatt (Eds.)	2015	X		
Pitt (Ed.)	2009	X		
Thomas & Hirschhorn (Eds.)	2015	X		
Thomas (Ed)	2014	X		
Thomas (Ed)	2013	X		
Total number of documents:		10		

initial teacher education in Canada (Young & Grimmert, 2015). Table 3 shows the 10 works published by CATE that were consulted.

Finally, we based the following analysis on the 30 documents presented in Tables 1 and 2, which include two particular issues: 1) governance of teacher education in Canadian provinces; and, 2) the characteristics of teacher education programs (training approach, structure, and content).

Comparative Research on Teacher Education in Canada

The Governance of Teacher Education in Canadian Provinces

According to some approaches of the sociology of professions, and more specifically according to the neo-Weberian approach, the State plays an important role in the dynamics concerning an occupational group gaining status as a profession. In the case of the teaching profession in Canada, some scholars have discussed the role of the State and its relation with universities and professional bodies to understand the professionalization of teaching among provinces.

For example Grimmet (2008a, 2008b), Young and Boyd (2010), and Young et al. (2007), have established three types of governance in the Canadian provinces that differentiate the role of universities, government, and professional bodies, and their autonomy: *political governance* refers to a governance rather framed by government agencies (the departments of education, for example); *institutional governance* that is present where the institutions have the most power to determine what teachers should teach and how, and who can be a teacher (universities and faculties of education); and finally, *professional governance*, where professional bodies, like a College of Teachers, govern the training and certification of teachers (Gideonse, 1993, as cited in Young & Boyd, 2010). In a later chapter, Young and Grimmett (2015) add that the historical transitions of governance of teacher education in Canada have ensured that today the teacher certification remains in the hands of provincial governments, and the organization of training programs (admission, contents, trainers, etc.) is provided by the universities under a certain institutional autonomy.

In the specific case of Ontario and British Columbia, Grimmett (2008a, 2008b) has divided governance of teacher education in three chronological phases, from political governance, to institutional governance, eventually leading to professional governance. Then, Grimmett (2009) compared the professional governance in these two provinces (Ontario and British Columbia) with political governance in Quebec and institutional governance in Manitoba.

For their part, the analysis made by Chan, Fisher, and Rubenson (2007) identifies two types of governance in the provinces: the vertical logic (centralization, making decisions from top to bottom) and horizontal logic (decentralization, decision making from the bottom up). The researchers identified the vertical logic in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec, while Saskatchewan has established a more horizontal logic based on consultation and cooperation for establishing the fiscal and educational policies to manage its educational systems. The latter province finally created a professional body in 2015, the Saskatchewan Professional Teachers Regulatory Board—SPTRB, through which the government granted the teachers of this province “the privilege of becoming a self-regulating profession” (SPTRB, n. d.).

Walker and von Bergmann (2013) found, in turn, three governance approaches to teacher education: self-regulation (Ontario and British Columbia, before the abolition of the British Columbia College of Teachers); government regulation (Alberta); minimal regulation of the government (Manitoba). And they point out trends of deregulation and professionalization. To better interpret these trends, they have presented four categories:

Alberta: *Accountability* with the role of “Chief Financial Officer” because it has set up many high standards for teachers and several standardized tests in schools. The union membership is optional.

British Columbia: *Negotiation*² with the role of *politician*, negotiating with many factions and agendas, for example, between a strong union (British Columbia Teachers’ Federation—BCTF), the professional body, and other organizations (universities, school boards).

Manitoba: *Laissez-faire* with a *donor* approach, establishing optional standardized tests, with great investment in education, and promoting change rather than reforms. Indeed, Levin (2005) also noted Manitoba’s moderate reforms of the educational system, in comparison with the rest of Canada, with respect to budget cuts, restrictions vis-à-vis teachers, authority centralization, as well as standardized testing.

Ontario: *Management*; the approach of this province is that of a corporate executive, with the management of various agencies and reforms. The province supports professional governance, and greater diversity among institutions and private schools. Moreover, according to Walker and von Bergmann (2013), Ontario is the only province to have a quality assurance board of higher education, the *Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO)*. Teacher education programs are reviewed through this council and institutions receive funding to conduct research based on the evidence.

That being said, in regard to the establishment of professional governance in Ontario and British Columbia, according to Grimmett (2008a, 2008b), this establishment was “ironic” in that “the shift toward professional control through the articulation of standards was born in a policy context of deregulation” (p. 33). Professional colleges saw themselves engaged in the professionalization agenda and created quality control systems of teacher education programs. However, these control systems have been perceived by teacher trainers as being centred on the bureaucratic facets of the regulatory function of the training, instead of promoting professional learning:

Consequently, we have reached a situation in which many university teacher educators in Ontario and British Columbia, rightly or wrongly, interpret attempts at program enhancement by professional bodies as preoccupation with minutiae, or worse, over-regulation. So, in a policy context emphasizing deregulation, professionalization has, in some instances, come to be seen as over-regulation. (Grimmett, 2008a, p. 33)

And as explained by Young and Grimmett (2015), the establishment of the Colleges of Teachers in Ontario and British Columbia has brought about tensions between colleges and provincial governments, between colleges and universities, and within the profession related to membership and representation.

Thus, according to Grimmett (2009), professional self-regulatory organizations like the College of Teachers in these two provinces have inherited their purpose from a context of neoliberal policies, and their power is not their own because it is delegated by governments. So, the potential is always there for so-called independent professional bodies to become the means by which the government guidelines are more readily accepted. The public is losing confidence in these organizations because they are perceived as working for their own institutional interest by encouraging bureaucratic expansionism.

As claimed by Chan et al. (2007), the values of New Public Management, such as accountability, have become dominant, first in Alberta and then in Ontario, Manitoba, Nova

Scotia, New Brunswick, and British Columbia. These values are also visible, although in a less dominant manner, in the rest of Atlantic Canada, and more recently in Quebec. Saskatchewan is the province that has expressed more resistance to these approaches. As for Alberta, it represents to Chan et al. (2007) the basic discourse model for accountability across Canada.

In the same vein, and according to the analysis of Walker and von Bergmann (2013), one can notice, in Canada, standardization trends (Alberta), centralization (Ontario) and decentralization (Manitoba), professionalization (with professional bodies), deprofessionalization (with the growth of private and independent schools that do not require teaching certificates), and also increased regulation (through governments and professional bodies, except for Manitoba).

Regarding an inter-provincial analysis, Walker and von Bergmann (2013) explain that until the 2000s, the provinces worked almost completely independently of each other on educational reforms. According to the authors, this began to change in 2006 when Alberta and British Columbia created the Trade, Investment, and Labor Mobility Agreement (TILMA), that allowed the recognition of teacher qualifications and therefore teachers' mobility between the two provinces. Finally, the AIT agreement that allows inter-provincial mobility of teachers across Canada brings concerns over the provincial regulation and certification, especially taking into account the local context in the organization of training programs (Killoran & Parekh, 2011).


To sum up, following this review of the literature about the governance of teacher education in Canada, we find that several studies have an inter-provincial comparative perspective to understand the issue, although these studies are mostly focused on Canada's largest provinces. Indeed, only Chan et al. (2007) have conducted an analysis of the ten provinces and three territories. In Table 4, we make a summary of this issue in six provinces.

Thus, it comes out of this analysis that the theoretical framework proposed by Grimmet (2008a, 2008b), Young and Boyd (2010), and Young et al. (2007) (political governance, institutional governance, and professional governance), allows for the understanding of

Table 4.

Governance of Teacher Education in Six Provinces

	Alberta	Ontario	British-Columbia	Quebec	Manitoba	Saskatchewan
Governance	Political governance	Professional governance	Professional governance ↓ Political governance	Political governance	Institutional governance	Political governance ↓ Professional governance
Values of New Public Management	Accountability Standardization	Centralization Management	Regulation	Regulation	Decentralization	Professionalization



different structures of inter-provincial governance, but trends are not the same, and they should be watched more closely. According to the studies reviewed, the values of New Public Management and neoliberalization policies are also essential to the understanding of the panorama of teacher education in Canadian provinces. Furthermore, D'Arrioso and Lessard (2007) argue that the role played by inter-provincial and regional associations, and by federations and think tanks is also important to take into consideration when analyzing educational policies on a pan-Canadian level, especially regarding the research results published by these organizations or the political models promoted to resolve educational problems in the country. So, as they noted, the performance indicators or best practices based on research have become essential elements to judge a certain pan-Canadian convergence in educational policy.

In the field of teacher education, the values of New Public Management and neoliberal policies are stronger or more visible in some provinces than in others, most of these values being stronger in Alberta and Ontario, and then having an increasing influence on the organization of programs and on the autonomy of universities in British Columbia and Quebec. British Columbia is a special case, because this province has grown from professional to political governance. However, in this case, as in the case of Ontario, one must ask if this professional governance actually existed as the professional structures were created and imposed by the State, despite the will of the teachers. Basu (2004) has in fact characterized Ontario's College of Teachers as a "Quango." The Quasi Autonomous Non-Governmental Organisations, or Quangos, are types of independent agencies established by the government that act as regulatory bodies, to allow the implementation and legitimization of policies tied to ideologies and practices of the neoliberal state.

Quangos could be understood through Johnson's (1972) concept of "corporate protection." In his Marxist approach to professions, Johnson used this concept to explain a form of professionalism in which a relative autonomy is given to professions by "State corporatism," through which the government uses old forms of professionalization (colleges, fraternities, professional associations) and ideological statements (mission, vocation, public service) to ensure its control is reproduced by professional groups. Professions recognized by associations or professional colleges therefore fulfill the reproductive role of government control. Thus, in the case of Ontario, governance could be interpreted as "corporatism" (Johnson, 1972) rather than "professional." In fact, as argued by Young and Grimmett (2015), "the Canadian literature on colleges of teachers points to the complexities associated with a professional model of governance for teacher education" (p. 137).

The case of Manitoba and Saskatchewan stand out from the national trend. We can see in these two provinces that neoliberal policies affected governance structures less, and universities retain some autonomy compared to other provinces, with minimal regulation by the government. Saskatchewan should be analyzed closely in the near future, with the recent creation of a professional college that would give teaching the status of a self-regulated profession.

Moreover, and more generally, changes and political reforms of teacher education in Canada were put forward in a professionalizing vision of training. However, these changes have not happened without encountering several challenges from the Canadian educational and academic contexts. Acker (1997) has taken notice that since the 1990s, political and economic changes have brought difficulties within education faculties, including pay cuts, departmental restructuring, and a lower status of the endeavor of teacher training within education faculties, which was also highlighted by Laferrière et al. (2003). Cole (2000), for her part, analyzed

several obstacles she identified in Canadian education faculties and departments regarding reform efforts, converging with those presented by Nolan (1985, as cited in Cole, 2000): lack of time, varying degrees of commitment on the part of the staff, lack of rewards at the university level, the isolationist tradition of university culture, and the lack of discussion and confrontation on program development issues.

And Kitchen (2009) views the absence of a professional development culture in Canadian education faculties as problematic:

there has been little systematic effort to link faculty development to the improvement of teacher education programs. Indeed the individualistic culture of the academy makes this particularly challenging. Clinical faculty with experience in schools are often receptive to professional development opportunities yet few are afforded them due to the short-term nature of their contracts. Education professors, who must divide their time between scholarship and teaching, often lack the time or commitment to be part of the kinds of collaborative faculty development activities that have been demonstrated to be effective. This makes systematic professional development, which is difficult in schools, seem doubly challenging in education faculties. (p. 9)

Van Nuland (2011) argues that the education faculties across the country must still meet several new expectations in a difficult context for the teaching profession:

certification standards and competencies which are provincially administered, and the Federal Government's 2009 "work mobility" legislation mandating that qualified workers be given access to comparable employment opportunities anywhere in Canada ... Accepting students into programmes when few teaching positions are available, diversification of teacher education programmes, the urban-rural divide, the theory-practice divide and accessibility to teacher education programmes. (p. 415)

Finally, Thomas and Kane (2015) argue that teacher education in Canada is undergoing constant restructuring, but they question the improvements that restructuring could bring to educational programs. Indeed, Connelly and Clandinin (2004), who compared British Columbia and Ontario, concluded that there is a lot of debate on the issue but little action and not much actual progress. Thus, since the 1990s, the changes and institutional reforms of teacher education in Canada have been put forward in a professionalizing vision of training, but we have to wonder if these reform changes have actually managed to penetrate teacher education programs. In the following section, we focus on comparative research in Canada that deals with teacher education programs.

Teacher Education Programs

With the professionalization movement, teacher education programs in Canada (and in most western societies) now propose to form "professional teachers." They subscribe mainly to a training based on a "reflexive vision" that alternates between theory and practice (Tardif, 2011). This training objective fits in a paradigm of "professional growth" (Gambhir, Broad, Evans & Gaskell, 2008) or "continuum of training" (Tardif, Lessard, & Gauthier, 1998) where the initial training programs are seen as a first step in a longer professional learning process that takes into consideration the steps before and after training at the university:

Initial teacher education programs in Canada tend to be viewed as a first, foundational stage in this professional development process. They are expected to provide an introduction to critical knowledge bases, skills, and practices that assist prospective teachers to develop a fundamental understanding of high quality student and teacher learning and performance. (Gambhir et al., 2008, p. 6)

In this way, the prospect of initial teacher education in Canada has grown from a traditional perspective, based on the transmission of knowledge, to a more holistic approach, of social constructivist learning, focused on individual development while promoting knowledge and understanding of education in a broader context: “Teacher education pedagogy builds on this broader perspective of the “whole teacher” and emphasizes reflective practice, critical inquiry and the engagement of candidates in learning communities” (Gambhir et al., 2008, p. 17).

Laferrière et al. (2003) noticed a tendency in many teacher education programs in Canada to include the statement “to become a reflective practitioner” in training objectives. However, they explain that this still faces some challenges in the implementation of programs, especially because of the traditional training practices that are still rooted among educators and students, as well as the difficult articulation between theory and practice: “the habit of being lectured to and of lecturing is deeply rooted in the experience of all” (p. 46). Russell et al. (2013) added:

We see several major issues that contribute to a lack of change in the traditional approaches of teacher education programs and also to resistance to implementing the principles of a reflective practicum (Schön, 1987). We consider them here in an attempt to make explicit what is often unexamined, in hopes of stimulating a Canadian dialogue on these epistemological issues. (p. 31)

In this sense, several authors (Lemisko, 2013; Crocker & Dibbon, 2008; Tardif, 2011; Gambhir, et al., 2008) agree on the fact that there is currently a trend in teacher education programs in Canada to form “teaching professionals” in the perspective of Schön’s (1987) “reflexive practice.” Furthermore, due to the cultural complexity and diversity present in Canadian society, there are also concerns regarding issues of equity and social justice in education programs. These issues aside, it is difficult to perceive a more specific common vision and goals of training throughout Canadian provinces because of a lack of studies on the subject. According to Crocker and Dibbon (2008), despite these common issues found by the researchers, “a striking feature of the mission statements is that their greatest commonality is their diversity” (p. 27). This being said, several researchers took an interest in analyzing the structures of teacher education programs in Canada. We present these structures in the following section.

Training structures. In Canada, the most evident difference among teacher education programs can be between two types of structures: concurrent (or integrated) and consecutive (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008; Epp & Epp, 2000; Phillips, 2002), or even between four types of structures: concurrent, consecutive, graduate, and sole degree model (Gambhir et al., 2008). According to the typology presented by Gambhir et al. (2008), in the concurrent structure, two types of education called “disciplinary” and “professional” are carried out in parallel throughout the program. Students finish with two bachelor’s degrees (in education—B.Ed., and another discipline) following a program lasting three to five years. In the consecutive structure, students enter the teaching program after obtaining a degree in another discipline (B.A. or B.Sc.), to study for two or three terms, or two years, depending on the university, in a teacher education program, where they take courses in professional training. This allows teachers to obtain as well, at the end of their program, two bachelor’s degrees (B.Sc. or B.A. and B.Ed.). In the graduate

model, teaching candidates complete a master's degree (e.g. Arts, Education, Child Study) after a bachelor's degree. And in a sole degree model, candidates earn a B.Ed. degree over three or four years, and they are not required to have a second undergraduate degree. The sole degree model, which is a balance of subject specific and education focused courses, is the model that exists currently in Quebec.

Therefore, what training structure is the most common in Canada? Quebec's case is a particular one because in this province teacher education programs seem quite unified in comparison with those in most other provinces.³ In other provinces, the situation is not as homogeneous. For example, in Ontario, the training system allows prospective teachers to take different routes of access to the profession. This is the same case for British Columbia, where consecutive programs are most common, but where universities also offer comprehensive, integrated undergraduate programs that take up to four or five years: "There are wide differences across programs—across the integrated programs, across the after-degree programs—and there are significantly more options available for after-degree programs as compared to integrated programs" (Nickel, O'Connor & Falkenberg, 2015, p. 44). In the case of Alberta, universities and colleges can offer teacher education programs of varying structures and lengths. In Saskatchewan, candidates can choose between a degree program of four years, a consecutive two-year program, or a combined program of five years. In Manitoba, the consecutive structure (two years) is the most common, but two universities also offer concurrent programs of five years (Nickel, O'Connor & Falkenberg, 2015). The same happens in the Atlantic provinces (New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland and Labrador), whose training programs have both structures (consecutive and concurrent) with varying lengths, from 11 months, to two years, or four to five years, with a predominance of the consecutive structure (Hirschhorn & MacDonald, 2015).

Whatever the trend in the provinces, Tardif (2011) and Crocker and Dibbon (2008) agree that the double degree programs offer graduates some advantages in terms of early career earnings, thanks to the fact that teachers receive two diplomas at the end of their training. So, if their professional education can be sometimes shorter in comparison to sole degree models, their university education has a longer duration. For Wilson (2003), consecutive programs have other advantages: they provide a solid basis for studies in education, increased knowledge of the content of school subjects, they allow mature and experienced people to be introduced into teaching, and increase the pool of candidates since, through this route, many enter teaching as a second or third career. However, according to some researchers (Ontario College of Teachers, 2006; Russell, McPherson & Martin, 2001, as cited in Gambhir, et al., 2008), one of the challenges of consecutive programs is the intensity of the courses and internships in shorter programs; they feel more time is needed for the development of knowledge and pedagogical skills than that which can be allocated as part of a short program.

Now, according to Li (1999), Crocker and Dibbon (2008), and Darling-Hammond (2006), there would be no significant differences between graduates of any training structure, whether in terms of the sense of preparation for teaching and classroom performance of the teachers, level of satisfaction, or quality of the program. According to Darling-Hammond (2006), debates on teacher education are much more about the training structures, but few discussions would focus on what is inside the "black box": the contents, the practical experiences, their articulation, etc. In fact, the important features of the training programs must be observed inside. The analysis of the external structures of training therefore remains superficial. Following this, we must rather ask: what knowledge and skills are teachers supposed to have

acquired once their training is completed? Are there variations among the provinces regarding this aspect?

The contents of the training. Crocker and Dibbon (2008) examined the levels and types of specialization, as well as the contents of the programs in Canada. The most striking difference in the training programs was related to the educational level in which teachers wish to work: primary or secondary. Programs aimed at primary school tend to include a wider professional component and are designed to prepare generalist teachers. Programs for high school are more focused on specializing in certain subjects. Moreover, there are also special education programs in Aboriginal education, teaching English or French as a second language, physical education, music, mathematics, or the sciences (Crocker & Dibbon, 2008).

Crocker and Dibbon (2008) exposed 18 content areas that enable us to observe, in general, the contents of the Canadian teacher education programs: provincial curriculum, learning theories, subject-specific teaching methods, general teaching methods, educational assessment, classroom management, child and adolescent development, diversity, student motivation, historical and philosophical foundations of education, ethical and moral issues, teaching children with disabilities or special needs, legal issues/school law, sociology of education, computer technology, conflict resolution, dealing with parents or community, school and school system structure and administration. Furthermore, and taking into account the changing demographics of Canada, special attention has been paid to inclusive practices in programs in recent decades (Calder Stegemann, 2013; Conle et al., 2000; Coelho, 2004; Memon, 2013; Solomon, 1997; Wane 2003, as cited in Gambhir, et al., 2008). Regarding the area of educational assessment, Poth (2013), who studied programs in western Canada, has noticed a shift towards a learning-focused assessment culture—rather than the culture of testing—that has also influenced important changes in teacher education programs.

That being said, studies such as the one from Crocker and Dibbon (2008) or that of Guo and Pungur (2008) (the latter study analyzing only University of British Columbia and University of Alberta) do not allow for the understanding of inter-provincial differences in program content. The study by Crocker and Dibbon (2008), apart from showing the differences between Quebec and the rest of Canada within three areas (provincial curriculum, assessment, and classroom management), provides little or no light on the differences between provinces in terms of training contents.

Are there substantial inter-provincial differences between the contents of teacher education? According to Killoran and Parekh (2011), even with provincial variations, certain key expectations for teacher training programs would be present in all programs across the country; and according to Gambhir et al. (2008) there is indeed a degree of consistency concerning the emphasis on programs in Canada:

A survey of programs across the country and regulatory literature indicate that there is a level of consistency in the programmatic emphases of initial teacher education programs in Canada, which have been derived from research on the knowledge-base of effective practitioners (p. 15)

Wilson (2003) explains that despite the absence of a national direction for teacher education in Canada, as well as some differences in the certification process, the diversity among institutions, and the differences in structures, it remains a fundamental consensus in the curriculum of teacher education programs. And this knowledge base would, in substance, be identifiable in the curriculum of integrated and consecutive programs:

All programs include knowledge about who is to be taught (learners), what is to be taught (subject matter and curriculum), how to teach (principles and practice of teaching), where the teaching takes place (context), and why teach (foundations of teaching). (Wilson, 2003, p. 4)

Thus, looking at the approaches, structures, and content of teacher education at the interprovincial level in Canada, we find the most important differences regarding the structure (concurrent, consecutive, graduate, or sole degree models), as well as pathways and levels of training. In regard to the content of teacher education in Canada, we find, according to some researchers, some cross-country convergence in terms of the knowledge base required for teachers. However, these arguments are not based on identifiable empirical data in their work, and comparisons between provinces are not shown.

Conclusion

It is clear from previous analysis that across Canada, as in many other countries, teacher education has been characterized by a trend towards professionalization of teaching that addresses both teacher education as well as the basic knowledge and skills that may direct their future practice and their professional identity (Chan et al., 2007).

Current research on teacher education in Canada allows us to understand the reforms that have taken place in the training programs since the 1990s. This research also allows an understanding of current methods of governance of teacher education in most Canadian provinces. Current research also highlights Canada's training approaches and structures from a global point of view. That being said, few studies provide a comprehensive and comparative understanding of how teachers are trained in Canada. Thus, several documents show professionalizing trends that have penetrated educational policies and teacher education among Canadian provinces, but it is still unclear whether professionalizing reforms of the past 25 years have managed to integrate the institutions and teacher training programs (Tardif, 2011).

Furthermore, in opposition to Gambhir et al. (2008) and Wilson (2003), we do not believe there is a fundamental consensus in the curriculum of teacher education programs in Canada. The differences can be seen superficially among the various kinds of structures that exist in Canada's teacher education (i.e. concurrent, consecutive, graduate, or sole degree model) each structure meaning different contents in pre-service education. Indeed, some structures will allow teachers to have a longer professional training in education (sole degree model), meaning more professional pedagogical skills, but less disciplinary knowledge, versus a combination of academic and professional education (concurrent, consecutive, graduate models), meaning more disciplinary and academic knowledge, but maybe fewer professional pedagogical skills or less practical training.

So, if we are not proposing a "one size fits all" model of teacher professionalization among Canadian provinces, we believe inter-provincial differences require a better understanding: a four-year pre-service university training for teachers in Quebec will not be the same as a four-year pre-service university training in Ontario or in British Columbia. Understanding teacher education in Canada from a comparative point of view is needed if provinces want to continue encouraging teacher mobility around the country, as they want to respond at the same time to local needs regarding teacher education.

There is still much to be done in terms of a more specific analysis of teacher education in

Canada. As Russell et al. (2013) pointed out, structures have been stable over decades, despite vast evidence indicating that beginning teachers continue to report feeling unprepared for the early years of their careers. In addition, there is a lack of consensus among the faculty and training programs in Canada, which would result in fragmented training programs, with a lack of coordination and a lack of consistency:

Perhaps the most serious result of a lack of consensus and common culture is the incoherent, segmented nature of most preservice teacher education programs, which suffer from the absence of a common set of purposes and a common body of knowledge. (Kagan, 1990, p. 49, as cited in Russell & McPherson, 2001, p. 7)

Where are we 25 years after the professionalization of teaching began in Canada? What do we know about the knowledge base for teacher education in this country? What about the conceptual design of “professional” teacher education in Canada? What are the contents of the training programs that respond to this conception? These are all questions that are still waiting to be addressed.

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Notes

- 1 This literature review, as part of my doctoral research, was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
- 2 Here, British Columbia is characterized as Negotiation by Walker and von Bergmann because it was analyzed for the period between 2000-2010, before the abolition of the College of Teachers.
- 3 A trend that began to change in 2006 with master's degrees qualifications and new gateways to the profession.

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