

Socially Constructed Teacher Professionalism: An Historical Analysis of Teacher Education Reform Policies of Canadian Case

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Abstract

Employing comparative historical method, this study provides an account of reforms and policies in teacher education from 1970s to the present in Alberta, Canada. In particular, this article tracks how teacher professionalism has been conceptualized and enacts over different historical periods in Alberta, and reveals that teacher professionalism, as a socially constructed concept, has taken on different interpretations from “de-professionalism” to “re-professionalism” in Canada historical contexts. Alberta’s teacher education policy has been usually used as a dynamic instrument to shape the paradigms of the concept of teacher professionalism. This analysis has also supported the claim that government-led teacher education reform has been accorded the key political significance in Canada. As a whole, the teacher education reform in Alberta area provides a useful concrete understanding and offers international lessons outside of Canada in how historical context influences the reform of teacher professional development.

Keywords: teacher education reform, teacher professionalism, teacher professional development, Alberta, Canada

1. Introduction

In the past several decades, education has become the primary reform topic in many countries, with serious international or regional competition in the era of globalization. In this process, the most important role belongs to teachers (Barış & Hasan, 2019). International policies and practices in educational reform have focused on the importance of teacher professionalism and lifelong professional development for teachers to improve students’ achievement. However, in different historical development situations, the understanding of teacher professionalism is different. According to the social and economic development and the practical problems of education, different countries and regions have great differences in educational policies to promote teacher professionalization. In this way, why are the concepts and systems of teacher professionalism different in the perspective of global comparison? How is a country’s or region’s teacher professional development policy influenced by international educational ideas and other national policies? The historical review of these issues will help us to explore the institutional factors (especially political model of teacher education governance) that affect the improvement of teachers’ quality from the comparison of global education policies and find a more effective practice path to promote teachers’ professional development.

1.1 The Concept of “Teacher professionalism”

Since 1970s, teacher professionalism and teacher professional development have become a vibrant field in international teacher education reform, and extensive research has been conducted on this subject across different countries over the last three decades. Accordingly, abundant literature has addressed teacher professionalism, the professional development of teachers and the components of meaningful professional development experiences for teachers (e.g., Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Guskey & Huberman, 1995; Danielson, 1996; Johnson & Golombek, 2002).

As a matter of fact, “teacher professionalism” and “teacher professional development” are two different concepts. Teacher professionalism mainly emphasizes the improvement of teachers’ group and external professionalism, while teachers’ professional development is the improvement of teachers’ individual and internal professionalism. Teacher professional development is widely considered one of the most effective and prospective strategies for

successful education reform and the most important factor contributing to students' success in school (Guskey, 2000). In addition, teacher professionalism embodies more of the change of an educational thought and an educational system. The teacher's professional development includes a process of teacher's growth and practice. However, in a broad sense, the concept of teacher professionalism and teacher professional development are interlinked, including the preparation of pre-service teachers and the continued education of in-service teachers. In particular, the two terms emphasize that teachers are able to use their professional expertise and judgment when instructing students, rather than being explicitly directed "how" to teach by political educational governance (Call, 2018).

1.2 Reconsideration of International Movements to Professionalize Teachers

Some research, however, has focused on the failure of teacher professional development in some educational reform practices and policy agendas (Corcoran, 1995; Guskey, 1986; Guskey & Huberman, 1995). Additionally, pessimistic arguments have been advanced regarding the negative impacts of teacher professional development on action plans and programs (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 1996). One of the possible reasons for invalid and ineffective teacher professional development practices is the lack of consensus about a clear and precise understanding of teacher professionalism and teacher professional development. Teacher professionalism is a complicated concept that is defined by various stakeholders. Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) distinguished among six different models to define professionalism, which demonstrates the different perspectives on the nature of teacher professionalism. As Kelchtermans (2004) stated, it is important to answer the key question of what type of professionalism continuous professional development should produce. In general, teacher professional development includes not only individual knowledge, skills and emotional development content but also the extent to which these components are obtained and which factors influence the professional development and professionalism of teachers. In fact, different people, different social groups, and different institutions during different social and historical development periods have had different conceptual frameworks of teacher professionalism. Hargreaves (2000) conceptualized the development of teacher professionalism as passing through four historical phases in many countries. Previous studies of particular countries have argued that teachers' conceptions of professionalism were undergoing reconstruction and were shaped by past and present ideology, policy and practice and displayed multiple and situational dimensions (Webb et al., 2004).

Apart from these researches above, recent the article highlights the ideational factors underpinning the movements to professionalize teachers in the United-States and in France. It demonstrates that the deep driving force behind these movements is neither the modernization of schooling, nor the professional interests of teacher educators, but the politico-cultural hold of a philosophical paradigm that met the values and ideals of education and political systems' actors (Bulle, 2020).

1.3 Challenges of Governmental Professionalism for Teachers

To respond to the challenges of globalization and an increasingly competitive economy, many national governments, especially in the Asia-Pacific and European regions, have considered the improvement of teaching qualities an essential component of their educational policy agendas (Nairz-Wirth & Feldmann, 2019). Related international education reforms (e.g., educational accountability, quality assurance reviews, school-based management, and marketization) have occurred in the past two decades that have influenced the outcomes of teacher professional development in the era of globalization (Cheng, 2009). These political factors, including legislation and associated policies developed by national and state national governments governing teacher educational reform, have been an increasingly compelling topic in research on the development of teacher professionalism (Furlong, 2005; Beck, 2008) and teacher education.

Unfortunately, these seemingly positive international teacher education reforms, marked by terms such as "individualized professionalism", "managed professionalism" or "governmental professionalism", have a somewhat negative influence on teacher professional development practices in many countries or areas. This has caused a great deal of concern, especially with regard to the extreme competition deriving from market forces, close control from accountability measures, and the deprofessionalization of teachers' work through excessive management and monitoring (Cheng, 2006, 2009). This frustrating evidence impels us to explore the global issue of the central tension caused by a mandated regulated model that is informed by the pursuit of market competition and based on active political engagement, which has given rise to fierce debates on how to implement and support teacher professional development. As some researchers have noted, there is a distinct lack of empirical evidence to suggest that reform efforts focusing on "professional development" have had any meaningful success beyond the possibility of providing short-term political gains for those under pressure to demonstrate that concerns about schooling are being addressed (Levin, 2010b; Tatto, 2006, etc.). As Levin (2010a) noted,

While it is easy for government policy edicts to manipulate certain structural aspects of the education system, there is considerable research evidence now on many of these efforts and, to sum up many studies in a few words, it is hard to find much evidence of sustained improvement in outcomes resulting from these efforts. (p. 740)

Therefore, to understand the nature of teacher professionalism and outline the policy trend of international teacher education reform, the related discussion must be placed within the wider social and geographical context based on historical empirical exploration. Based on materials collected from Alberta provincial policy documents on teacher education reform in Canada, this study examines different historical periods of teacher education reform in Alberta and traces the evolution of the concept of teacher professionalism and strategies for teacher professional development in Canadian historical contexts. This analysis is an attempt to provide implications for the development of agendas and action plans for teacher education reform outside of Canada.

1.4 Problem Statement

Considering the different perspectives on teacher professional development, it is necessary to analyze these factors in detail within schools and in broad social, political, economic and global contexts. This critical historical examination of the relation between efforts toward worldwide teacher professional development reforms and the underlying social political-economic forces in which they manifest can provide international lessons on how historical context influences strategies for teacher professional development. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to inspire people to think deeply about how the broader social changes in politics, economy and culture in other countries or regions affect the professionalization of teachers and the actors. How to understand the relation between the governance of teacher education and teacher professionalism? Meanwhile, the major mission of the article will help more people further understand the paradoxical teacher education reform outcome being teaching autonomy in terms of social construction.

2. Methods

As mentioned above, based on the policies of some countries and regions around the reform of teacher education, this study analyzes the understanding and reform practice of the concept and system of teacher professionalism in different countries. For this purpose, this study selects Canada as a case study, focusing on the historical development of Alberta's understanding and policy practice around the nature of teacher professionalism. This paper analyzes the teacher education acts, policy texts and analysis report of Alberta province in Canada for decades by using the content analysis method. These policy related reports mainly come from the data and reports obtained by the Ministry of Education of Canada, Albert provincial government, Alberta provincial department of education, Alberta teachers association and some schools.

3. The Context of Teacher Education Reform in the Province of Alberta

Canada has enjoyed an excellent international reputation among the various educational systems in the world. According to a report by the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education, Canadian youths are well equipped with the foundational skills that are essential for full participation in modern society (Brochu et al., 2013). Historically, teacher education, which has existed in Canada for more than a century (Connelly & Clandinin, 2004), has been viewed as playing a critical role in student learning and in the implementation of the policies of provincial governments (Gambhir, Broad, Evans, & Gaskell, 2008).

3.1 Superior Educational Performance in Alberta

Because education is a provincial responsibility that is not under the jurisdiction of the federal government, teacher education in the ten provinces and three territories has been diverse. One Canadian province, Alberta, has performed particularly well on these international measures of education reform for more than a decade. In 2007, based on the results of the OECD's PISA, the school system in Alberta was identified as one of the world's ten best-performing school systems by the renowned international consulting group McKinsey & Company in 2007 (Barber & Mourshed, 2007). The consultants studied these systems in detail and determined how Alberta developed its high level of performance. The study indicated that teacher professional development was clearly associated with school effectiveness (Cheng, 2009). Since the early 1970s, nearly every educational reform document from the government in Alberta has included a requirement for changes to teacher education. Teachers are consistently at the center of educational reform in this province.

However, this success has not attracted much attention at home or abroad (Hargreaves, 2012). Wideen and Holborn (1986) identified a need for more research on teacher education practices and programs for a better understanding of the context of teacher education in Canada. Current literature on teacher education reform has tended to use broad strokes to discuss the changing nature of teacher professionalism. The purpose of this study is to examine the

case of one jurisdiction, Alberta, to determine the extent to which regional differences contribute to or contradict general worldwide trends.

3.2 Government-Led Teacher Education Reform in Alberta

When utilizing professionalism as a key sensitizing concept to examine how the historical context of teacher education policies in the province of Alberta impacts strategies for teacher professional development, we should note that the history of teaching in Canada has been profoundly influenced by the changeable roles of the Canadian government. Historically, the government was considered an active and important way to realize social objectives in Canada (Levin, 2001).

Alberta has increasingly achieved educational success over several decades with the same political party in power within the government. As Levin noted, Alberta has the most active ministry of education in the country with regard to interventions in local education reform (Levin, 2001), including teacher preparation. In the province of Alberta, education policy is established by the Ministry of Alberta Education. Alberta Education provides direction and support to school jurisdictions by establishing the managerial and financial framework and by establishing instructional policies, programs, and evaluation strategies (McEwen, 1995). Institutions of higher education and professional organization, as part of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), have also played indispensable roles in changing teacher professionalism. In particular, the ATA maintains active interest and a position of leadership in the enhancement of teaching as a profession. To trace the historical international lessons of the development of teacher education reform policies since the 1970s in Alberta, this paper analyzes how the provincial government has affected the discourse on teacher professionalism in social historical transformation.

4. Teacher Education Reform in Alberta During the 1970s-80s

4.1 The Worth Report and the Harder Report

A major political and economic change took place in the 1970s in Alberta. In 1971, the Progressive Conservative Party won the election, which gradually shifted Alberta from an agricultural base to an industrial base. This shift was particularly driven by oil exploration and extraction. The economic situation in Alberta improved as oil prices quadrupled because of the OPEC oil embargo in 1973. People expressed their confidence in the potential for education to improve society. This perspective was first shared in "*A Choice of Futures: Report of the Commission on Educational Planning*" (also known as "the Worth Report") in 1972. This report examined two potential societies for Albertans to choose: a person-centered society or a second-stage industrial society (ATA, 2002). Another report, "the Harder Report", which was published by Alberta Education in 1977, exemplified a return to a more traditional approach to education (Taylor, 2001). McIntosh and Hodysh (1992) noted the following:

The report, with its emphasis on the value of economic productivity, could also be characterized as a conservative backlash (p. 2)

Stimulated by these two reports, Alberta Education paid more attention to the qualities of teachers and their professional features. As a result, most Alberta teachers were required to obtain a degree in 1972. That degree was supposed to be a four-year Bachelor of Education degree, which included an extended practicum, to obtain an initial certification (Keeler, 1973).

During the 1980s, Alberta's provincial revenues fell along with the declining price of oil. A fiscal constraint on education began, resulting in strikes by teachers in Calgary seeking better working conditions in 1980. A much worse situation was the decrease in confidence in school education and teachers, which exemplified some employers' dissatisfaction with the skills of high school graduates. Therefore, the government began to consider reinstating the grade 12 diploma examination and a long-term effort to evaluate teachers (ATA, 2002). At the same time, in the early 1980s, teacher education in North America came under increased scrutiny. The dominating reform idea of teaching as a profession had been adopted in Canada from the United States, which prompted many reform efforts by teacher educators and teacher education faculties in Canada. This has been noted by Cole (2000):

In Canada, since the late 1980s, nearly every education reform document has involved a call for changes to teacher education. (p. 139)

4.2 Technical Rationality-Oriented Professionalism in the 1970s-80s

During the 1970s-80s, Alberta Education required teachers in Alberta to possess a high degree justified by expertise. Because of the lack of public support, criticism of teaching as a profession led to significant reform efforts in Alberta. American teacher education programs and teacher professional discourses also influenced the definition of teacher professionalism. Meanwhile, the policy environment in some provinces in Canada changed

dramatically. One of the teacher education reforms in the 1980s was that all teachers entering preservice programs were required to have an appropriate undergraduate degree, and teacher education became a postgraduate experience (Chan, Fisher, & Rubenson, 2007). Most of these discourses were also incorporated into the reform of the teacher education policy. Teacher education reform and policy focused on definite professional knowledge and skills education. Therefore, some main faculties of education in Alberta adjusted their teacher preparation programs. In particular, the practicum portion of the programs was extended and improved (ATA, 2002).

All teacher education programs have been changed, reflecting the requirements of the government and in response to the political and financial constraints in Alberta during the 1970s-80s. We argue that in Alberta, the governance and supervision of teaching and initial teacher education have mainly been administered by raising the standards for teacher training and quality control through standards for training and practice. At the turn of the 1980s, provincial teacher preparation had begun to enter a kind of “regulated market”. The nature of professionalism was challenged by government attempts to operate school systems within tight fiscal frameworks (Chan, Fisher, & Rubenson, 2007). This type of “regulated” professionalism was dominated by a technical rationality and academic orientation, which held that teaching knowledge and skills were important for the improvement of teaching qualities. The governance of teacher professional development concerns ensured that teachers performed effectively to achieve the planned goals of knowledge delivery in classrooms.

5. Teacher Education Reform in Alberta During the 1990s

5.1 Neoliberalism Ideology and the Klein Revolution

Neoliberalism is a form of economic liberalism, which has played an increasingly important role in international economic policy since the 1970s. The new liberalism thought strengthens the collective control of the society, the power has already flowed from the educators to the government, and the educators are facing more structural restrictions. Teacher education has been widely influenced by neoliberalism, such as commercialization of teacher education, the reduction of public financial support and the strengthening of accountability mechanism. As Alberta entered the early 1990s, the fiscal constraints continued. At the same time, a large number of western reforms on “governance”, “new public management” and “neoliberalism” spread widely and were introduced into Alberta. This shift emphasized governmental financial constraints and market liberalism. Accordingly, the government in Alberta embarked on severe cutbacks in public expenditures, including public education.

In 1992, Ralph Klein became leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and Premier in Alberta, which led to many political and economic changes in the so-called “Klein Revolution”. The new political environment also contextualized the educational policy narrative for Alberta and teacher education policy, which involved a series of major policy changes introduced by the Ministry of Education:

- *Vision for the Nineties: A Plan for Action* (1991). This document emphasized a results-based provincial curriculum, basic skills, a reduction of the dropout rate, the integration of students with special needs into regular classrooms, the encouragement of science programs to foster higher achievement and scientific careers, and partnerships with business and industry that highlighted science and technology.
- *Tough Choices* (1993) examined fiscal challenges in education.
- *Measuring up* (1993) and *Meeting the Challenge* (1993). These provincial accountability documents required the Departments of Education in universities to ensure that educational goals were met and addressed how the ministry would comply with the goals of the government.
- *Accountability in Education* (1995) was released as a policy framework on accountability.

In 1994, a 12 percent cut in education was announced. This reduction was to be implemented over a four-year period (1993-1997), which greatly affected the governance of teachers in the province of Alberta.

5.2 Accountability Discourse and Deprofessionalism in the 1990s

In the circumstances described above, some documents about teacher education were developed to emphasize teachers’ qualities to satisfy stakeholders with regard to educational services, including educational processes and outcomes. Teachers were supposed to be accountable to the school and the public.

In 1994, according to Bill 19, the School Amendment Act revised teacher certification requirements, complaint handling, disciplinary action, and guidelines for professional conduct (Chan, Fisher, & Rubenson, 2007). All the teacher education policy changes reflected the Department of Education’s effort to ensure that educational goals were consistent with the accountability discourse. In particular, teachers and the teaching profession were directly affected by two documents in 1996, the *Teaching Profession Amendment Act* (1996) and *An Integrated Framework to Enhance the Quality of Teaching in Alberta* (1996), which outlined a number of strategies that would affect

teachers and their professionalization:

- Updating teacher preparation and teacher certification requirements to reflect the most current understanding of effective teaching;
- Establishing competencies for beginning and experienced teachers;
- Developing a coordinated approach to deliver professional development opportunities for teachers (Alberta Learning, 1996).

Guided by the teacher education policy documents, teacher education programs and teacher evaluation policies were reviewed and revised by each school board and university. The provincial education department continued to enforce teacher education reform to promote measurable teacher accountability.

The 1997 Ministerial Order brought the issue of standards into the discussion on teacher certification and implemented the Teaching Quality Standard to guide professional learning in Alberta. The Teaching Quality Standard (Alberta Education, 1997) outlines the knowledge, skills, and attributes that teachers are expected to possess, both as novice teachers and as permanently certificated experienced teachers.

In 1998, the Department of Education rewrote the document *Practice Review of Teachers Regulation* by the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards (COATS). In the same year, the ministry, led by the province's minister of education, proposed another teacher education reform agenda in the form of ministerial orders to guide professional learning in Alberta. The key policy idea for teacher education reform was to establish a set of frameworks to link teaching standards to the knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers and teaching practices (*Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation policy 2.1.5*, 1998). The policy required teachers to engage in a continuous process of developing their knowledge, skills and attributes to meet or exceed the teaching requirements. All teachers were expected to possess these skills and were subject to evaluation procedures as required for specific purposes. All teachers employed by school divisions had to complete an Annual Teacher Professional Growth Plan each school year.

Based on the Alberta teacher education policies in the 1990s described above, particularly those related to the promotion of teachers' specialized intensive motions and measures in the framework of teacher professionalism, we argue that the Alberta government enforced seemingly different teacher education policy frameworks and inconsistent practices from other regions and countries. These policies mainly aimed to enhance the trend in teachers' professional autonomy. However, the Alberta government strengthened a government-led deprofessionalization trend. This was primarily related to the province's politically "right wing" ideology, which emphasized fiscal constraints and administrative management performance and accountability as priority values of the policy. As Chan et al. (2007) stated, "Alberta has moved to the 'right' politically since the early 1990s, and this was the beginning of a strong trend towards deprofessionalization".

Thus, a series of public education reform initiatives were established, demonstrating that the provincial government had become increasingly "hostile" to professional teachers and refused to consider the views of and concerns about teachers. The specific performance of teacher professionalization was confronted with severe financial challenges from the government, including forcing teachers to participate in extracurricular activities, changing class sizes, and reducing teacher training time (Chan, Fisher, & Rubenson, 2007).

These government policies were politically controlled or supervised by the government with the "New Management" ideology reflected in the field of teacher education, which emphasized clear performance standards, product control, fine hierarchy levels, and market-oriented operation mechanisms. Under these conditions, teacher education reform and policy gained the character of a regulated and supervised model based on socio-political-economic demand. In addition, education reforms were implemented in pursuit of market competition and the maximum economic benefit. Therefore, policy agendas and initiatives in teacher education governance neglected teachers' abilities of reflection and critical thinking. Related policies about teacher education did not comply with the core of teachers' professional autonomy. This type of reform and policy making by the Alberta government was very similar to the British government's policy of teacher education reform, which was established during the first two terms of the New Labor government (Furlong, 2005). This resulted in some negative effects. A series of teacher education measures from the government undermined the core values of teachers as professionals who should enjoy legitimate professional autonomy (Beck, 2008).

These reforms attracted many professional and academic responses in Alberta. Teachers showed their dissatisfaction with the government's teacher education policy in strikes in January 2002 to demand that the government increase education funding and address issues of class size, pension liability, and working conditions. In addition to the responses from teachers, research also paid more attention to the implementation of related

supervision policies across Alberta that mandated teacher professional development, such as the teacher professional growth plans (TPGPs). Research conducted by Fenwick (2001) at the University of Alberta draws upon the findings of a qualitative study in which teachers were interviewed three years after these policies were implemented:

The policy promotes teacher self-direction while potentially undercutting professional empowerment through increased surveillance; Professional growth plans appear to honor and liberate individual teachers' ways of knowing while potentially narrowing teacher learning to a technician model..... (pp. 401-424)

Similarly, the ATA, as the professional organization for teachers in the province, recognized the potential risk of these policies and argued,

Exercising professional judgment in diagnosing and responding to student learning needs and in assessing their progress is central to what it means to be a teacher in Alberta. Therefore, teachers have a professional responsibility to keep abreast of new developments in education and to develop their professional practice (Crow, 2010, p. 31).

6. Teacher Education Reform in Alberta in the New Century

6.1 Globalization and Shaping the Future for Students with Special Needs in Alberta

In the current millennium, the political, economic, and population landscapes have changed considerably. In the context of changeable globalization, education is intended to facilitate the sustainable development of students and society. The Commission on Education in Alberta recognized potential risks to Alberta's economy, including an insufficient supply of well-educated and highly skilled people to meet social needs, particularly as Alberta's economy has become more diversified and knowledge-based (Alberta's Commission on Learning, 2003).

In response to these significant challenges resulting from the development of globalization, most Albertans began to consider where the province and society were headed and how they could ensure that their education system was as responsive as possible. The key challenge was to ensure that Alberta's children and youth were well prepared for their futures. Against this background, views on special education policies, programs, and services were outlined, as exemplified in the report *Shaping the Future for Students with Special Needs: A Review of Special Education in Alberta—Final Report* by Minister Oberg in November 2000. This report identified key issues and made specific recommendations for the delivery of quality programs for students with special needs at the provincial level. In addition, the Alberta Learning Business Plan for 2002-2005 stressed a system that is "responsible, flexible, accessible, and affordable" (Chan, Fisher, & Rubenson, 2007).

6.2 Sharing the Responsibility Within a Culture of Learning and Reprofessionalism

In the new development era, how governance measures of teachers can empower them to facilitate students' new learning and sustainable development becomes the focus of teacher education reform. To realize these goals, Alberta's educational institutes began to examine the educational system and offer practical recommendations to improve teacher professionalism. A report, *Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds: Report and Recommendations*, in October 2009 outlined numerous suggestions for the dramatic reform of teacher development:

- Improve teacher preparation programs and experiences for beginning teachers;
- Establish a permanent mechanism for ensuring closer linkages among faculties of education, superintendents, teachers and Alberta Learning;
- Require school jurisdictions to adapt the first-year experience and provide effective coaching for beginning teachers;
- Develop and implement comprehensive professional development plans for every school jurisdiction and every school;
- Require all teachers to have targeted annual professional development plans that are directly linked to their schools' improvement plans;
- Ensure that policies and regulations for supervising and evaluating teachers are well understood and effectively implemented;
- Replace the current Board of Reference process with an arbitration process that is consistent with models in place for employees who have the right to bargain collectively in the province (Every Child Learns, Every Child Succeeds, p. 46).

These reform policies clearly demonstrate the Commission on Education in Alberta's emphasis on the importance

of teacher professionalism, indicating that preservice education programs and ongoing professional development activities provide teachers with policy support. This view is also embodied in the report released by Alberta's Commission on Learning in 2003, which notes that teaching is a difficult and consuming but ultimately rewarding profession. Teaching well requires intelligence, dedication, insight and collaboration.

Although the Educational Committee's report was based on a vision of Alberta's future provincial population change, political, economic and social development transformation, and students' individual physical and psychological needs, it presented an urgent call for specific multidimensional and high-qualified teachers. Thus, it is not sufficient that the promotion of social development, with each child moving toward success, relies only on the impetus of the professionalization development of teachers themselves.

Government bodies have gradually reconsidered the importance of the renewal of teacher professionalism. To further promote the quality of teacher professionalization and improve teacher preparation, the educational institutes have considered how teacher education reform and policies affect teachers' development in Alberta. By request from the Ministry of Education, in September 2010, *A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions* was developed by a provincial working group of education partners committed to realizing positive change in Alberta's schools and classrooms. The provincial education partnership working group report was based on the shared belief that successful implementation requires the coordinated, collaborative, and comprehensive efforts of education partners working together toward a shared vision of learning success for all students. It demands that all education stakeholders share the responsibility for supporting the implementation within a culture of learning (ATA, 2009).

To some extent, this signals a shift in teacher education development and policy discourse in the province. A new collaborative teacher professionalization policy pattern has been formed that includes the Ministry of Education, faculties of education, the ATA, and other key stakeholders in Alberta.

7. Conclusion of the Study

According to the historical document analysis, the core concept of "teacher professionalism" related to teacher reform policies in Alberta has been redefined by educationalists and reformers. Based on the historical teacher education reform experiences of Alberta, this review provides educators, policy makers, and scholars with a typology of the evolution of teacher professionalism in the policy context of tremendous challenges of international competition, regional development in educational reforms to develop agendas and action plans for teacher professional development in Canada and beyond.

7.1 Shift of Teacher Professionalism as a Socially Constructed Concept

In this paper, we argue that the government bodies that dominated teacher education in Alberta "molded" or "forged" teacher professionalism paradigms and discourses to enhance regional educational quality. Correspondingly, teacher professionalism, as a socially constructed concept, has taken on different interpretations, from traditional "technical rationality-oriented professionalism" during the 1970s-80s to "deprofessionalism" during the 1990s to "reprofessionalism" in different historical contexts in Alberta with the changes in Alberta's social political, economic, cultural and educational reform contexts. This study also provides empirical evidence for earlier studies that have concluded that the concept of teacher professionalism is best viewed as a social construction (Webb et al., 2004; Furlong, 2005).

Obviously, population, global and local development, and resource provision, along with the impacts of globalization, advances in technology, and international and regional competition, have greatly influenced the evolution of teacher professionalism (Cheng, 2009).

Before the 1990s, basic education systems were successfully expanded to meet the needs of national economic development efforts across countries. Teacher professional development often involved a top-down approach that emphasized central planning and tended to be technical (Cheng, 2009). During this period, the main feature of teacher professionalism was a kind of technical rationality. Therefore, the teacher's role was mainly to instruct or deliver knowledge (Cheng, 2006). Most related teacher education reforms in Alberta indicated an active response to the question of how teachers perform effectively to achieve planned goals of knowledge delivery in classrooms.

During the 1990s, foundational concepts of neoliberalism, including deregulation, privatization, and limiting the government's role in social funding, were introduced into educational reforms. The market-driven approach required enhanced competition and increased effectiveness in teacher professional development. During this stage, it is hot debated that to what extent and how the complex politics of professional practice, especially under the context of the increased pressures teacher educational policy for accountability (Ben & Anderson, 2007) in Canada and beyond, exert its influences on teacher professional development and students' learning needs. Giles and

Hargreaves (2006) argued that accountability pressures led public education systems to narrowly focus on improving standardized measures of learning rather than supporting broader conceptions of learning. Teachers lost their ability to self-define their professionalism. They did not have their own voices in terms of these related policy impacts. Thus, teacher professionalism moved into a so-called “deprofessionalism” stage (Beck, 2008). In China, teacher deprofessionalism in Hong Kong and Shanghai is also obviously increasing. Lai and Lo (2005) noted,

Teachers’ work in Hong Kong was being increasingly mediated by influences from the emerging market of schooling, whereas the work of Shanghai teachers was still monitored by the state. Whether teachers were able to have their own interpretation of “professionalism”, like those in Hong Kong, or whether they closely followed the official interpretation of “professionalism” in state rhetoric, like those in Shanghai, teacher professionalism in both cities can be viewed as “confined professionalism”. (p. 63)

In the new century, the rapid globalization in education stimulates the reflection on approaches to teacher professional development. Teachers are expected to facilitate students’ multiple and sustainable development (Cheng, 2006, 2009) which requires a new paradigm shift in teacher professional development. A new teacher professionalism paradigm along with external requirements may lead to a professional co-culture that involves good colleagues and special disciplinary knowledge within the present teacher education policy framework of “reprofessionalism” (Helsby, 2000). According to Chan et al. (2007), the teacher education reform policy environment in Alberta has changed. Partnerships and collaborations have become the heart of Alberta’s implementation of high-quality professional learning (Crow, 2010). All stakeholders have a shared responsibility to support teacher professional development in Alberta in the new century following the key policy *A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions*.

According to this historical analysis of Alberta, teacher professionalism is the product of social and political reforms. Traditionally, some research has employed teacher culture and life-long learning perspectives in the discussion of teacher professional development. However, researchers are now more concerned with stronger external political power. For example, the recent accountability system in Western countries has placed teachers in more complicated and challenging situations in the era of globalization. Although some countries or regions have taken measures to reinforce the positive roles of teachers in the process of reforming teacher professionalism, a major debate on the deprofessionalization or reprofessionalization of teachers will continue in classrooms and in the area of school reform. There is an urgent need to examine how to improve teachers’ professional autonomy and to enlarge their professional space throughout the world. Additionally, requirements for further theoretical and professional research should be identified to explore the role of wider social contextual factors, such as the government, the market and technology, on teacher professional development. As Cheng (2009) argued, a new paradigm of teacher education and professional development should be formed based on four key features, including a holistic approach to teacher management, a framework for life-long and sustainable teacher education and professional development, multiple stakeholders and the development of local and international alliances, and synergy between various initiatives in teacher management and teacher education. In all, when changes in the development of international teacher education policy are examined, it is necessary to consider the tremendous impacts of international competition, regional development, and globalization on teacher professionalism.

7.2 Strategies for Teacher Education Reform with Dynamic Policy Instruments

As an important Canadian province, Alberta’s teacher education policy has been used as a dynamic instrument to promote and deepen the understanding of teacher professional development and the quality of teachers since the 1970s.

As a special mechanism that translates substantive policy goals into concrete actions (McDonnell & Elmore, 1987), these policy instruments involve mandates, inducements, capacity building, system changes and ideas. They have not only shaped professional paradigms and discourses but have also enhanced the quality of regional educational development and its international reputation. Notably, the Alberta provincial government has reasserted its authority over teacher preparation through a series of policy instruments. Essential elements of educational governance include funding, regulation, and delivery (Young & Boyd, 2010). In Alberta, government-based multipronged initiatives are often referred to as implementation, awareness, or information sessions (Connelly & Clandinin, 2004). More than 30 years ago, Hrabi (1976) revealed substantial changes in the role of the Department of Education in teacher education in Alberta based on internal and external environmental influences (Hrabi, 1976, pp. 53-54), which include the following:

- Agreement with universities. By means of an agreement with the boards of governors of universities in Alberta, the department provides teacher training. Government support for these universities enables them to carry out the terms of the agreement.

- Financial support. The main dimension of the role of the Department of Education is the provision of financial support. Accompanying the transfer of the responsibility for teacher education to the boards of governors of universities is the responsibility to provide the boards of governors with the resources to carry out the mandate.
- Teacher certificate requirement. The Department of Education has a direct role in teacher education to the extent that teacher certification requirements influence preservice education programs through the adoption of guidelines and the number of years of teacher training required for certification, which is equivalent to a semester of field experiences.
- School curricula on teacher education programs. The Minister of Education continues to prescribe courses of study and programs of study for pupils and to approve any substantial modifications in such programs of study, such as the introduction of early childhood services programs, the decision in the early 1960s to add a substantial component of vocational education to the Alberta high school curriculum, the social studies program and the French program. Curriculum changes have an indirect influence on specific programs in the faculties of education.
- In-service education. The department provides human and material resources to assist in in-service education necessitated by curriculum changes.
- Direct financial support to teachers. There is a direct influence on the vocational teacher supply through the Student Finance Board.
- Involvement with other agencies. The Department of Education has membership in some professional organizations to provide the opportunity for direct input into the policy-making practices of these organizations.

Although some roles that the Department of Education has played in Albertan teacher education have changed a great deal (particularly the fact that universities fall under the Department of Enterprise and Advanced Education rather than the Department of Education), the provincial government, utilizing various policy instruments, still asserts its authority over teacher education reform.

Arnold et al. (1977) discussed the framework of the rigorous and continuing exercise of quality control in teacher education reform. Individual measures of quality control can be exercised at eight critical points in teachers' preparation and practice. This paper shows that the key governance domains in Canada include almost every aspect of teacher education, such as admission, professional education, examination, curriculum, accreditation, monitoring and practical training. As teacher management and quality control policies have developed since the 1970s, there has been a shift from a static and mechanical framework toward a more dynamic and positive pattern. This has effectively driven teacher professional development and schooling in this province to become more successful and diverse. Different countries or regions may face different historical and contextual constraints in quality control in teacher education. Alberta may provide useful lessons for future teacher management and quality control in teacher education in different countries or areas.

7.3 Implications for the Relation Between the Governance of Teacher Education and Teacher Professionalism

Habermas (1987) discussed two medium-steered systems in modern society: a government administrative system steered by state power and a market economic system steered by money. Teacher education policy models have been deeply shaped by these two systems in some Western developed countries. How to address the central tension between a regulated model formed by the pursuit of market competition and a professional model based on teacher reflection and critical thinking is a difficult global question. Teacher professionalization reflects a complete change in and transformation of the teacher training and management pattern. The evolution of teacher professionalism in one particular geographic area, Alberta, provides a concrete understanding of this debate.

Research shows that there have been different political, institutional, and professional models for the governance of initial teacher preparation in Canada and other countries, which produce tensions due to distinct interests and jurisdictional claims about teacher preparation (Young & Boyd, 2010). From the historical analysis, it is obvious that government-led teacher education reform in Alberta has been accorded key political significance since the 1970s. Most provincial governments in Canada, which possess formal constitutional authority over educational policy, have focused on the reform of teacher preparation and teacher professional development as an essential component of educational policy agendas. This political governance approach to teacher education is widespread in some countries and areas. As the political mode of the governance of teacher education, the state is the major funder, regulator, and provider of educational services (Young & Boyd, 2010). It is important for teacher management to enhance teacher management policy, improve the status of teachers, and bring diverse resources to

professional development and teacher education by adopting a holistic approach and integrating multiple stakeholders.

However, there are two sides to this coin. Negative effects of governmental-led professional development for teachers have appeared in some provinces and territories across the country and abroad. The policy domains, including accountability, standards and performativity, have added a heavy burden to teacher professional development and narrowed the nature of teacher professionalism (Day & Sachs, 2004). The model of political governance for teacher education is associated with related political and economic interests and structures. Furthermore, business management patterns and managerialism theories have affected the market for teachers' professional development. Teacher professional development must meet the demands of the growing standard system and government accountability (Grundy & Robinson, 2004). Hardy and Wagga (2009) concluded that evidence indicates the existence of a complex relationship between more systemic accountability and profession-oriented approaches to teacher professional development in Canada. Arguments premised on more general tension between these factors continue to be significant. In the context of the intervention of government power in teacher education, teachers themselves seem to have lost their way, feel confused, and are indifferent under these educational reform policies.

Fortunately, Alberta's political model of teacher education governance in promoting teacher professionalism has begun to shift. It has been recognized that it is necessary to break down the traditional model of relying on a single internal training for teacher training, teacher qualification and the teacher performance evaluation framework by abolishing the dependence on external standards. Achieving professional autonomy for teacher development has gradually become the main focus of teacher education reform. The stakeholders in charge of teacher education policy in this province have come to understand that teacher professional development must establish a set of new cooperative systems for the promotion of teachers' professional learning and realize that continuous lifelong learning for teacher professional development is critical.

As society changes swiftly, particularly with regard to globalization influences on different social spheres and education, these contextual forces further complicate the governance landscape of teacher education in Alberta. In other provinces in Canada, such as Ontario, a variety of factors, including provincial legislation and associated policies for educational reform, have influenced professional development (Hardy & Wagga, 2009). Global educational policies have become similar under the forces of policy diffusion and policy learning. In addition to the international context, it is clear that political, social and economic factors have influenced teacher education reform and its policy contents in Alberta. The evolution of the teacher professionalism discourse has developed through the influence of politics, economics, culture, and society in Canada and beyond. It is time to select a new model of teacher professionalism and abandon either-or choice dilemmas between political regulation by the government and teachers' autonomous development.

For regions and countries beyond Canada, the experiences in Alberta can provide a mirror to reflect the reform process of teacher education. The governance of teacher education policy implementation has generally shifted from traditional approaches that emphasize standardization, centralization, maintenance, and control to a new approach that involves diversification, decentralization, development, and personal initiative (Cheng, 2009). As the case of Alberta in Canada illustrates, policy considerations related to teacher education reform are becoming more complex. How to explain and develop local teacher professionalism, how to strengthen and control the quality of teaching, and how to address the impacts of political reforms and the market management of the governance of teachers in a context of major social political changes and reforms in the region are significant issues in the future development of international teacher education.

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