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## Editorial Introduction

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## Introduction

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This special issue of *Canadian and International Education* deals with the current changes in the global policy discourses and their effects on the restructuring of education at various local sites. Educational systems in many advanced industrial nations have been experiencing significant changes. The pace and substance of these changes have generated great interest and discussions (Ball, 1993, 1994 ; Dale, 1997; Taylor et al, 1997). Reforms in governance, management, cuts to education budgets, privatization, and more control over curriculum design and content are common elements of these changes. The hegemonic discourses and perspectives around these reforms are justified by the process of globalization, which claims to require restructuring of the education system in order to make the nation-state more competitive in the face of the changes in the world capitalist order. Globalization is thus used as a legitimizing discourse that makes the policy changes in education self-evident, necessary, and leaves the current education system with no other alternatives (Bourdieu, 1998). Educational globalization, then, is an attempt to create global policies around education that makes the movement of labour around the globe easier. Educational globalization, however, does not always lead to policy uniformity and homogeneity:

rather there are tensions within globalization processes that serve both to concentrate and differentiate the policy agenda. Nor is it argued that globalization implies the surrendering of national sovereignty. However, the increasing polycentric nature of governance and hence of policymaking is recognized. (Taylor & Henry, 2000, p. 488)

Thus, it is important to discuss globalization not in a deterministic way in which there is no space for resistance, contestation and difference. On the contrary, there is a need to look at globalization both as an impetus for homogeneity and at the same time a stimulus for the production of difference. This conceptualization of globalization is significant in that it allows the local to resist, alter and reinterpret global policies based on the histories of local situations. It is true that the reform package that is introduced in many advanced capitalist societies shares similarities which could be connected to global and market mechanisms. Still, there are differences in the implementation of such policies at the local levels that cannot be ignored and which must be examined carefully.

The macro level analysis of educational reform (Apple, 1993, 2000; Burbules & Torres, 2000, Torres, 2000), although politically significant, does not provide much analysis of their impact at the level of practice. As Ball argued, "Any decent theory of educational policy must attend to the working of the state. But any decent theory of education policy must not be limited to the state control perspective." He argued that policies are shaped at the local level of practice:

Policy is both text and action, words and deeds, it is what is enacted as well as what is intended. Policies are always incomplete as far as they relate to map on the "wild confusion" of local practice. Policies are crude and simple. Practice is sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable. Policy as practice is "created" in the trialectic of dominance, resistance, and chaos/freedom. Thus policy is not simple asymmetry of power. Control [or dominance] can never be totally secured, in part because of agency. It will be open to erosion and undercutting by action, embodied agency of those people who are its object (Ball, 1994, p. 10-11).

Contributors to this special issue of the journal deal with diverse issues in regards to changes of educational policy. Kari Dehli's paper "Parental involvement and neo-liberal government: Critical analyses of contemporary education reforms" focuses on the changes concerning parental involvement. She discusses the policy shift in Ontario for increasing the role of parents in the governance of education and looks for analytic approaches in order to understand the changes of policy.

Dehli's work helps us understand this shift, given her active participation and observation in local policy-making and also by her incorporation of the work of scholars in critical policy studies and feminist political theory.

By using the concept of governmentality advanced by Michel Foucault, Dehli argues that this new neo-liberal governmentality "seems to operate 'at a distance' to shape the horizons of meaning, identification and action of individuals and communities, in such a way that the local, the community and the individual replace 'the social' as key sites, targets and instruments of contemporary governance." She concludes that to understand the neo-liberal governmentality there is a need for an eclectic and multi-dimensional analysis rather than a dogmatic adherence to just one perspective.

Yvette Daniel and Alison Griffith's paper "Institutional Change and the Principals in an Era of Educational Reform" examines the role of school principals in the restructuring and reconfiguration of the educational system. The authors contend that research on the principalship must address the institutional basis of current changes in order to provide a tool for principals to critically reshape the goals of education. By drawing on the work of the critical policy studies and feminist scholars, Daniel and Griffith claim that critical struggles are taking place in most western societies to address the dramatic changes in education that are reorganizing the work of school principals. They argue that institutional issues are missing in current educational reform and initiatives and that issues of equity and diversity are either subsumed under issues of "vision" and the "real world perspective", or absent. They suggest that successful educational change is possible if school principals and administrators develop a critical perspective that would enable them to implement educational initiatives in relation to institutional issues present in current restructuring of education.

Janice Wallace's paper "Educational *purposes economicus*: Globalization and the reshaping of educational purpose in three Canadian provinces" focuses on how discourses of globalization are affecting the purpose of education in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. She argues that despite the different political history of these three provinces, they did not escape the seduction and the rhetoric of globalization. Wallace further asserts that "the mantra of global competitiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability- was repeated over and over in each province to justify swift and deep cuts to corporate and personal taxes, massive reductions in education and

health budgets, and the elimination of employment equity policies.” She concludes that current changes in the education system have shifted the purpose of education away from preparation for democratic citizenship and moved it to economic productivity and competitive globalized capitalism.

Marlene Schellenberg’s paper “ Globalization and Citizenship Education: Implications for the Nation State” discusses the role of globalizing agencies such as The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Commission (EC), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), in changing the place of citizenship education in most democratic nations around the world. Drawing on Fairclough’s methodology of critical discourse analysis, Schellenberg examines the language of policy documents in Spain and Manitoba in Canada and concludes that there is a relationship between the influence of globalizing agencies on policy making and the diminishing presence of citizenship education.

Adam Davidson-Harden’s paper “Neoliberal Elements of Restructuring Through the Ontario College of Teachers: Exemplifying Centralized Marketization” is a case study of the governance of teacher education in Ontario. Davidson-Harden claims that the restructuring of teacher governance through the establishment of the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) has been characterized, on the one hand, by a strong centralized government, and on the other hand, facilitated by the neoliberal policy trends. It has provided a context for government-led marketization of important aspects of Ontario’s teacher governance framework. By using the example of the Professional learning Plan (PLP), Davidson-Harden asserts that the government introduced a system of quasi-marketized in-service teacher education provision in Ontario.

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