



The Development of Postsecondary Education Systems in Canada: A Comparison between British Columbia, Ontario, and Québec, 1980-2010

Donald Fisher, Kjell Rubenson, Theresa Shanahan, Claude Trottier

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Significant public investment and increased access to higher education lead to economic development - governments across the political and ideological spectrum believe this and have designed and implemented policy based on this understanding. The Development of Postsecondary Education Systems in Canada examines how these policies affect the structure and performance of postsecondary education. This comprehensive study compares the evolution and outcomes of higher education policy in British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec over the past three decades. The authors begin with an understanding that in order to explain the role of postsecondary education in society, they must locate systemic change. Drawing on documentary analysis and interviews, the focus is on how policy priorities are reflected in "system" behaviours: performance, funding arrangements, design, and structural components. Current theories about the liberal-democratic state, academic capitalism, and marketization inform discussions of the changing role of higher education in a globalized knowledge society. The book presents policy and education as a multidimensional exchange between the postsecondary community, policy makers, and the behaviour and performance of educational systems and concludes that higher education is a key actor in the restructuring of the state. The Development of Postsecondary Education Systems in Canada shows how higher education policy has been driven by a changing political and economic imperative and examines the contradictions and unintended consequences of education policy. Contributors include Jean Bernatchez (Université du Québec à Rimouski), Robert Clift (PhD candidate, University of British Columbia), Donald Fisher (University of British Columbia), Glen A. Jones (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto), Jacy Lee (McMaster University), Madeleine MacIvor (University of British Columbia), John Meredith (independent consultant), Kjell Rubenson (University of British Columbia), Theresa Shanahan (York University), and Claude Trottier (emeritus, Université Laval).

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