

There are few who could argue with his point that there are serious problems that must be addressed in teaching and teacher education. Even if one disagrees with his particular analysis of the problems, one must agree that the present general lack of trust in the system of which he speaks could result in a backlash of managerial and regulative initiatives by governments. This will please few of those involved in education. As educators, we need to pay attention to the problems. And, lest there are those who think Wilson is merely speaking of problems in Great Britain, a preface written by Don Gutteridge and Geoffrey Milburn places the problems firmly in the Canadian and North American context.

Wilson's closing words attest to his passionate concern for education:

I hope that what I say will be useful, and in some of it may even be right; but it is much more important that philosophers and others more able than myself take these problems seriously. For the urgency and complexity of the problems are surely undeniable, and my own solutions of comparatively little account. My chief hope is that other writers will take the former to heart, and improve on the latter. (p. 164)

Goedegebuure, L., Kaiser, F., Maassen, P., Meek, L., van Vught, F., & de Veert, E. (eds.), *Higher education policy: An international comparative perspective*. Oxford: International Association of Universities and Pergamon Press, 1993, pp. xiv, 362. Price: \$83.00.

Reviewed by Robert Pike, Queen's University.

The research programme which led to this book was initiated and funded by the Bertelsmann Foundation in Germany, administered by the Center for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) in the Netherlands, and forms one of a series focussing on Issues in Higher Education which is edited by Guy Neave, Director of Research at the International Association of Universities in Paris. The series is intended to be "resolutely comparative" in its approach, and the Bertelsmann Foundation has given much attention to projects which focus upon means of increasing efficiency and improving performance in the public sector. Not surprisingly, therefore, the issues of authority, accountability and quality assessment are recurrent themes in the book which examines recent higher educational policy developments in 11 countries – or, more exactly, nine countries

plus Ontario and California – with each national or regional report structured around the same guiding principles in order to facilitate comparative analysis. This analysis occurs mainly in the final chapter where, utilising the 11 reports, the CHEPS editors provide an international overview of the main trends and issues in higher education policy.

In addition to Ontario and California, the nine countries are Australia, Denmark, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. The rationale for choosing these particular countries is that, as a group, they “were perceived to be exemplary for the developments as regards higher education policy all around the industrialized world” (p. xii). Within each country, the report was written by a “national expert” (p. xii) on higher education in accordance with a draft questionnaire which asked him – there was no “her” – to describe the following: higher education structure; authority distribution in higher education; higher education policy; and the impact of structure, authority and policy on the functioning on the higher education system. This was a tall order given the limited space available, and reasonably well met by the authors. Nonetheless, the reader who is unfamiliar with a particular national higher education system will not find herein a concise and easily understood account of its main features couched within the context of the wider social structure. This book is primarily for specialists in policy studies.

In accordance with the editors’ questionnaire, most of the contributors refer to Burton Clark’s trilogy of forces – state authority, academic oligarchy, the market – which determine, through their interaction, the way in which higher education is coordinated. The three forces form, in Clark’s typology, the corners of a triangle of coordination within which national higher educational systems can be positioned on the basis of the relative influence upon them of each of the forces. Perhaps the most important message to come from this book is that there is an apparent paradox, in many countries, between a recent tendency by one the forces – governments – to foster policies which favour greater de-regulation and institutional autonomy in higher education, and the growing perception of another – many academic groups – that direct state control is on the increase. The editors explain this paradox by noting that many recent policy trends – tight budgets, calls for greater institutional accountability and efficiency, greater reliance on market forces, increased emphasis on institutional management – can easily be interpreted in their impacts as indicative of the subtle enhancement of government regulation and loss of autonomy: though, as in the case of the Netherlands, the shift towards deregulation has often lifted the heavy hand of the state from direct control of the minutiae of administration. On the other

hand, there are also frequent warnings throughout this book, notably with respect to such countries as Australia and the United Kingdom, that institutional autonomy is indeed a fragile flower. Thus, in Australia, where no buffer body now exists between the federal government and higher education institutions, the prospect of a further strengthening of that government's hand at the expense of the state legislatures is one which, so claims the national expert, "could be disastrous for both academic freedom and institutional autonomy" (p. 44). Similarly, the notion that quality assessment can be used as a tool of government control is given some credence by the way in which it is so pervasively utilised in British universities and colleges (see, notably, p. 343).

So, where does Canada stand in all this? Actually, we do not really find out where Canada stands, because the editors have made Ontario a surrogate for Canada, just as California is made a surrogate for the United States. The logic behind this decision is not entirely clear, but presumably it was either believed that there was no true "national expert" who could write on higher education throughout the country (which is patently incorrect) or that Canadian higher education was too complex to deal with in 30 pages or so (in which case, Ontario cannot stand in for Canada). This being said, G.A. Jones of Brock University provides a useful, if slightly dated, overview of Ontario's higher education structure and policies, and concludes that the provincial system "...represents an example of a relatively healthy, publicly funded postsecondary system with a high level of institutional autonomy, little direct government intervention (especially in the university sector) and limited competition (between institutions)" (p. 237). In turn, building on Jones' overview, the editors conclude that, in terms of degrees of change, "Ontario seems the most stable of the systems addressed in this study" (p. 347).

It puts things into perspective to learn the ever-increasing government intrusion into the affairs of Ontario's universities and colleges looks pretty small potatoes in the international scheme of things. But this is one of the main goals of comparative analysis – to provide a wider framework within which to judge internal developments. In particular, the concluding synoptic chapter of this book offers some keen interpretative insights, and warnings, about policies intended to foster institutional quality and accountability. Amongst them, the warning that "an over-emphasis on quality control mechanisms and narrow definitions of relevance and accountability, could force higher education into a straight-jacket that serves the interests of no one" (p. 344), should be taken to heart in the myriad committees on accountability and quality indicators which now dot the academic landscape.