

Joint Research

Trends Toward Private Secondary Education
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Introduction

The socialization of the young has always been a societal concern as well as a family responsibility. However, with the emergence of public schooling during the 19th century, the role of family, teachers, school and state became much more clearly delineated in the socialization process. The interplay between these agencies of socialization became one of changing power balances. As state education emerged, the question of what level within the state should be the centre of administration and the centre of determining standards was open for debate. The power and role of teachers in this process was one which was to become problematic. Moreover, prior to the state assuming such a prominent role in education, religious denominations in Western societies and elsewhere had played a strong role in conjunction with the family in the cognitive as well as the spiritual development of the child. In Canada, the association of the family and religion was highly salient for many denominations and this association continued to play a strong determining role in the structure of education. It is against this background that we examine developments in Japan and Canada over the last 30 years.

The percentages of students in private schools in Canada and Japan are different. In Canada, the percentage of students attending private schools increased from 2.44 in 1970–71 to 4.96 in 1993–94 (*Canada Year Book*, 1997). Students enrolled in private schools in Canada, even with this increase, are a very small minority. In Japan, the number of students attending private high schools has varied little over the last 30 years and those enrolled in private senior secondary schools have been between 25–30 percent. However, in Japan the composition of students in the private school sector has changed significantly. In both countries, the changes seem to have been due to changes in educational policy in the public educational sector which resulted in responses from families concerned about these changes.

It is important to remember that in Canada there is little in the way of private education. While there are private day care centres and nursery schools, these are not usually classified as educational institutions. Junior kindergarten and kindergarten (for students age 4 and 5 which precede grade 1 entry at age 6) are part of the provincial public education systems. Many private schools have junior schools but the largest enrolments are in the private secondary schools. In contrast to Japan, where about 75 per cent of university enrolments are in the private sector, Canada has virtually no private universities. This places the private schools in Canada in a different position than in the United States where an elite system of private universities

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