

1. Introduction

The intertwining forces of government-controlled uniformity and program-based diversification have impacted teacher education policies internationally. It is not clear, however, to what extent teacher education curriculum is subject to such dynamics. This paper intends to fill the gap by analyzing the curriculum of secondary teacher education programs in Taiwan, a society that has experienced a swing back and forth between the two forces on teacher education policies over the past six decades. It is interesting to explore how diversified or uniformed is the course structure and courses content offered by teacher education programs across the country. Such investigation may advance our understanding of how the two forces have an impact on the “process” of teacher education.

This article is organized as follows: An overview of relevant literature is first presented in Section 1, followed by a description of the purpose and specific questions for the study, before an account of the research methods was presented in Section 3. The research outcomes, including: a detailed account of the course structure, offerings, and content of the 41 secondary teacher education programs in Taiwan will be provided in Section 4, followed by an in-depth discussion on the historical and socio-cultural roots of such developments and implications of the findings in the final sections.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Dynamics between governmental control vs. program diversity

Internationally, two opposing forces have been underlying the recent development of teacher education: first, deregulation of teacher education, which argues for program-based deregulation and diversification; and second, regulation of teacher education, advocating stronger governmental control for uniform standards and criteria (Apple,

2001; Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2005; Furlong, Barton, Miles, Whiting, & Whitty, 2000). Both approaches attempt to pursue teacher quality, yet through contrasting strategies. The former assumes that diversity and competition among various teacher training institutions will inspire innovations and creativity and ensure the strongest and best to emerge; the latter argues that only through establishing uniformed standards by central authorities can teacher quality be achieved (Apple, 2001; Furlong et al., 2000; Hill, 2006, 2007).

For instance, in the U.S., while diverse teacher training paradigms and alternative teacher training programs have been multiplied, the government has implemented stricter regulations and higher standards for controlling teacher quality and accountability under the current reform movement (Feiman-Nemser, 1990; Lucas, 1999; Popkewitz, 1995; Tsai, 1997; Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). In the UK, the government has recently intensified its control over the instalment of teacher education programs while loosening regulations to allow some qualified secondary school consortia to take up teacher training (Landman & Ozga, 1995; Lee, 2008). In Germany, while diverse models for teacher education have been developed across the country, the central government has implemented two levels of national teacher qualification examinations to ensure teacher quality (Yang, 1999, 2006). In addition, Japan allows universities to set up diverse teacher education programs with various admission criteria and curriculum standards; however, the government controls the quality in the end through employment screening tests (Liang, 2008; Morris & Williamson, 2000). Evidence from these countries has demonstrated the ever intertwining tensions between increasing diversification through diverse forms of teacher training and heightened uniformity due to stricter governmental control (Apple, 1995, 2000, 2001; Hill, 2006). Such dynamics may have a great impact on the input, process, and output of teacher education.

2.2 Impact on teacher education internationally

“Input” refers to the mechanism with which teacher education programs select